



COMMUNITY PLANNING & DEVELOPMENT

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MEMORANDUM

Date: December 03, 2015

To: Theodore D. Kozak, Town Manager
NORTHBRIDGE BOARD OF SELECTMEN

From: R. Gary Bechtholdt II, Town Planner

RE: **COMMUNITY PLANNING & DEVELOPMENT**
July 2015 – December 2015

COPY

Provided below is a summary brief of the topics I plan to review with the Selectmen during their meeting of Monday, December 07, 2015.

SUBDIVISIONS

The Planning Board continues to oversee the construction and completion of six (6) residential subdivisions: *the Camelot* (located off Hill Street); *Carpenter Estates* (located off Carpenter Road); *Hemlock Estates* (located off Sutton Street); *Leonardo Estates* (located off Highland Street); *Presidential Farms* (located off Hill Street); and *Shining Rock Golf Community*. With *Hillside Garden Estates* (Deane Way) completed and recently accepted by the town as a public way. The Planning Board is also working with the property owners with *Farnum Circle* to address remaining punchlist items.

SITE PLAN DEVELOPMENT

Osterman Commerce Park (located off Church Street Extension) -continues with its Phase 1 build-out, with a two-story 16,800 square-foot medical office building currently under construction. At full build-out the office park will have upwards of approx. 200,000 square-feet of Medical/Office/Industrial space.

4 & 16 North Main Street –Planning Board issued site plan approval for a gas station, convenience store with drive-thru in March 2014; redevelopment of site has yet to commence.

135 Providence Road (Salvation Army Thrift Store) –Planning Board granted site development approval for building expansion to include three (3) additional business/retail space totaling an additional ±19,308 square-foot in September 2014; expansion of site has not commenced.

Main Street Commercial Property (located off Main Street/Water Street) –Planning Board is currently reviewing site development plans for a proposed 4,500 square-foot retail with gas station, drive-thru, and carwash. The Planning Board met with Traffic Engineering during its last meeting and is awaiting recommendation from the Safety Committee. Site Plan review continued to January 12, 2016.

Whitinsville Christian School –Planning Board is currently review site development plans for a planned ±31,500 square-foot Fine Arts and Athletics Center to include 214 additional parking spaces. The Planning

Board is working with its consulting engineer on the review of the stormwater management system and is scheduled to review this application again on December 08, 2015.

ZONING BYLAW –CHAPTER 173

On November 10, 2015 the Planning Board hosted a Zoning Public Workshop (poorly attended); attendees reviewed the town's Zoning Map, use regulations and strategies for improving economic development opportunities within the town. The Planning Board shall look to host a similar meeting in February/March 2016 in advance of the Spring Annual Town Meeting (May 2016); the Board hopes to have improved participation from town residents and officials.

SUBDIVISION RULES & REGULATIONS –CHAPTER 222

The Planning Board is currently considering amendments to its Subdivision Rules & Regulations aimed to address outdated provisions and known concerns including eliminating the requirement for fire alarm systems; placement of street trees; location of required street lights; width of sidewalks and right-of-ways; and modifying the standards for a cul-de-sac (diameter, turning radius, landscape island, etc.) The Board has continued its public hearing to December 08, 2015.

SUTTON/NORTHBRIDGE SEWER EXTENSION (WALMART)

It is the understanding of the Planning Board that the Walmart facility located off Main Street intends to extend and connect to Sutton's municipal sanitary sewer system (via an Inter-Municipal Agreement). The Planning Board is encouraged that the sewer extension will create and allow for enhanced economic development opportunities in Northbridge along Main Street and Lasell Road with this added infrastructure benefit.

FOREST CUTTING PLAN

The Conservation Office continues to receive phone calls concerning the tree clearing activity off Church Street and Providence Road. The Forest Cutting Plan is issued through the Commonwealth of Massachusetts Department of Conservation & Recreation (DCR); no local approvals required (Notice of Intent) in accordance with MGL CH 132 [Forest Cutting Practices Act, 304 CMR 11.00]. The Conservation Office has copies of the three (3) Certificates issued; those who may have questions are directed to speak with Guy LaChance, the agent from DCR overseeing the forest cutting at (978)368-0126 ext. 127. I believe a correspondence from the Conservation Office was provided to the Selectmen regarding Mr. LaChance's monitoring of the forest cutting operations (November 19, 2015).

BLACKSTONE RIVER BIKEWAY

In August 2015, met with the Blackstone Heritage Corridor, Inc., neighboring town planners (Grafton, Millbury & Sutton) and Fuss & O'Neil, the firm recently awarded planning design services for the segments of the planned Blackstone River Bikeway from Millbury to Plummers Land in Northbridge. The purpose of this meeting was to review potential bikeway alignment and identify encumbrances such as steep slopes, river crossings, P&W right-of-way, and property ownership. Sara Lewis of Fuss & O'Neil will look to coordinate conceptual layouts with individual communities in the upcoming months.

CDBG-DR ROCKDALE YOUTH CENTER RELOCATION PROJECT

The Community Development Block Grant –Disaster Recovery (CDBG-DR) awarded to the Town of Northbridge was increased to \$1,620,255.00 for the Rockdale Youth Center Relocation Project. A pre-construction conference is scheduled for Tuesday, December 08, 2015 with the site contractor Construction Dynamics, Inc. with a project completion date of October 31, 2016 (substantial completion August 05, 2016).

OPEN SPACE & RECREATION PLAN

In accordance with Board of Selectmen action taken November 23, 2015 (Aris Group, LLC /Pine Knoll Special Permit modification) the town shall engage the services of Beals + Thomas, Inc. for consulting services for the preparation of the Town's Open Space & Recreation Plan pursuant to and as may be required by the Executive Office of Energy & Environmental Affairs (EOEEA) for state and local approval. A kick-off meeting shall be scheduled in January 2016 with a projected completion date of August 2016.

HOUSING PRODUCTION PLAN

In accordance with Board of Selectmen action taken November 23, 2015 (Aris Group, LLC /Pine Knoll Special Permit modification) the town shall engage the services of Karen Sunnarborg, Housing Planning & Community Development Consultant for consulting services for the preparation of the Town's Housing Production Plan in accordance with the Massachusetts Department of Housing & Community Development (DHCD) requirements under 760 CMR 56.03(4) and as required to meet Chapter 40B Comprehensive Permit requirements for affordable housing production in Massachusetts. A kick-off meeting will be scheduled for January/February 2016 with a projected completion date of August 2016.

A Housing Production Plan (HPP) is a community's proactive strategy for planning and developing affordable housing by: creating a strategy to enable it to meet its affordable housing needs in a manner consistent with the Chapter 40B statute and regulations; and producing housing units in accordance with the HPP. The HPP regulation became effective on February 22, 2008 when the DHCD promulgated 760 CMR 56.00, Comprehensive Permit; Low or Moderate Income Housing. The HPP regulation is contained in 760 CMR 56.03(4). HPPs replace Planned Production under 760 CMR 31.07(1)(i).

If a community has a DHCD approved HPP and is granted certification of compliance with the plan by DHCD, a decision by the Zoning Board of Appeals (ZBA) relative to a comprehensive permit application will be deemed "consistent with local needs" under MGL Chapter 40B. "Consistent with local needs" means the ZBA's decision will be upheld by the Housing Appeals Committee.

NORTHBRIDGE MEMORIAL TOWN HALL –INTERIOR RESTORATION

Under the direction of the Town Manager the Community Planning & Development Office is prepared to submit grant application (Round 22) to the Massachusetts Historical Commission as part of its MA Preservation Projects Fund (MPPF) for interior restoration work of the Great Hall decorative plaster. The MPPF is a state-funded 50% reimbursable matching grant program. In November 2014, McGinley Kalsow & Associates completed an assessment of the Northbridge Memorial Town Hall, Great Hall & Selectmen's Chamber.

PLANNING BOARD –VACANCY

The Planning Board is soliciting those interested in serving on the Board (vacancy) to fill out a Talent Bank Form and submit it to the Town Manager's Office. Candidates will be considered for joint-appointment of the Board of Selectmen and Planning Board; term to expire May 2016.

If you should require additional information or have any questions please contact the Planning office.

Cc: Planning Board
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