



COMMUNITY PLANNING & DEVELOPMENT

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MEMORANDUM

Date: April 01, 2013

To: Theodore D. Kozak, Town Manager
Northbridge Board of Selectmen

From: R. Gary Bechtholdt II, Town Planner

RE: QUARTERLY REPORT (JANUARY–MARCH 2013)

Community Planning & Development Office

COPY

Please accept this as the Community Planning & Development 1st Quarter Report for 2013. Provided below is a summation of projects, applications, meetings, and initiatives during this quarter.

SUBDIVISIONS

Carpenter Estates -Located off Carpenter Road this single-access roadway was originally approved in 2007; includes 18 single-family homes and 45 acres of dedicated open space. Developer has decided to (re)file definitive subdivision for approval -to include LID stormwater management techniques. Soil testing for the proposed stormwater revisions were conducted and witnessed by the Planning Board's consulting engineer (JH Engineering Group). In addition to modifying the definitive subdivision the developer has hired a new engineering firm (Coneco Engineers & Scientists) who conducted 12 deep holes for verification of the soil classification for purposes of determination of infiltration rates. Upon receipt of subdivision modification the Planning Board shall initiate its review.

The Camelot -Located off Hill Street and Hillcrest Road (the Hills at Whitinsville), subdivision development is to include 65 single-family house lots. Home construction continues within Phase I; 15 building permits have been issued with 7 occupancies granted (sold). The subdivision development recently switched over from the temporary pump to the permanent sewer pump station located w/in Phase I; Planning Board consulting engineer (JH Engineering Group) in working with the Sewer Superintendent conducted an initial inspection with minor concerns; later this month/next a full inspection of the back-up generators/pumps/etc is scheduled. Developer (J&F Marinella) may look to start construction within Phase 2 this spring.

Farnum Circle -Two lot subdivision terminating in a cul-de-sac located off Hill Street (near Sprague Street); originally approved in 2002 the roadway and certain improvements remain incomplete. Planning Board has met with one of the property owners concerning the status of the subdivision; efforts have been made to contact the developer (Mike Lambert) however has not resulted in any dialogue or resolution. The Planning Board's consulting engineer (JH Engineering Group) prepared a punchlist of outstanding issues; Board will consider modifying subdivision and/or calling in the performance bond.

Hemlock Estates -Located off Gendron Street; originally approved in 2004 for 102-unit Senior Living development (Special Permit -Pine Knoll, an Adult Living Community) subdivision was modified in 2008; consisting of 21 townhouse units (Senior Living Dev.) and 31 single-family house lots (Flexible Development). Developer (J&F Marinella) continues to delay satisfying affordable housing component required by the special permit. Home construction has also been slowed due to the downturn in the economy. Developer has yet to fully satisfy conditions of the subdivision approval; subdivision roadways remain unaccepted.

Hillside Garden Estates -Located off Thurston Avenue (Deanne Way); originally approved in 2005 for 18-unit Senior Living development, subdivision modified in 2010 to single-family house lots. Roadway and subdivision improvements remain incomplete; developer (John Barges) has been responsive to concerns raised however often delayed in taking action to address ongoing concerns. The Water Company requests developer to remove inactive stubs (w/in roadway); Planning Board however has expressed concerns with potentially compromising the overall integrity of the roadway in order to accommodate the Water Company's desire. Developer is scheduled to meet with the Planning Board and Whitinsville Water Company concerning the abandoned waterlines (April 2013).

Presidential Farms -Located off Hill Street; consisting of Washington Street, Kennedy Circle, Wilson Street, Roosevelt Drive, and extending through Lincoln Circle; single-family "flexible development" subdivision includes 105 house lots and ±40 acres of open space for passive & active recreation. Home construction continues within Phase II; developer (David Brossi) to meet with Planning Board to review open space requirements (bikeway/walkway) and commencement of Phase IV (April 2013).

Shining Rock Golf Community -Majority of the development has been completed; house lot development on Shining Rock Drive (extension) and Fairway Drive remain. Norwood Bank continues to oversee construction of homes on Shining Rock Drive and is marketing undeveloped lots on Fairway Drive; permitted for up to 14 townhouse units. Arrangements made for Board to review performance surety; consider bond reduction (April 2013).

Gilmore Drive -Single-access industrial roadway within South Sutton Commerce Park subdivision located in Sutton (& Northbridge). Northbridge Planning Board voted to sponsor roadway for street acceptance (to be laid out by the Board of Selectmen prior to Town Meeting). Town of Sutton accepted their portion of Gilmore Drive. Inter-Municipal Agreement to be executed with Sutton; whereby Sutton assumes all repairs and maintenance of the roadway.

ANR PLANS

Hemlock Estates -Conveyance of land (parcel A) from Lot 6 to Lot 5; addressing zoning/setback issue regarding existing residential driveway (Lot 5).

SITE DEVELOPMENTS

Ashton Place -Redevelopment of property (formerly Northbridge Nursing Home) to 23-unit apartments is currently underway. Easement has been conveyed to the town for the purposes of maintaining existing culvert at Providence Road.

North Main Street –Planning Board granted site plan development approval (February 2013) for a gas service station, maintenance garage and convenience store for 4 North Main Street. Special Permit issued by the Zoning Board for convenience store (use).

Osterman Propane Facility -Construction of the ±12,500 square-foot maintenance facility is currently underway (Church Street –extension).

St. Camillus Health Center –Planning Board is in receipt of site plan development application for parking lot expansion (totaling 18 spaces); the commercial use (non-profit health care facility) is considered a pre-existing nonconforming use; proposed expansion (parking) requires a special permit finding from the Zoning Board of Appeals. Applicant/Engineer shall address stormwater management concerns and reduce impacts to abutting residential properties. This review has been continued through April 2013.

ZONING AMENDMENTS

Medical Marijuana –The medical marijuana law allows for the establishment of up to 35 dispensaries within the state the first year (with a maximum of 5 per county). Many communities, like Northbridge are currently reviewing their options for zoning changes in preparation for Town Meeting /local adoption. Some municipalities have already revised their zoning bylaw/ordinances to prohibit medical marijuana dispensing sites (Reading, Wakefield and Melrose) while others have considered moratoriums. A moratorium would allow Northbridge the opportunity to review the Department of Public Health’s regulations (scheduled to be released May 01, 2013 –draft issued 03.29.2013)) and to prepare a local zoning bylaw appropriate for the town. In action taken January 28, 2013 the Board of Selectmen voted to sponsor temporary zoning moratorium on “Medical Marijuana Treatment Centers” the Planning Board held its public hearing on March 12, 2013, recommending the temporary zoning moratorium; the Planning Board shall provide its report and recommendation at the Spring Annual Town Meeting (May 07 2013). In March 2013, the Office of the Attorney General issued two decisions specific to medical marijuana: (1.) municipalities cannot enact local bans (-see Wakefield) and (2.) cities & towns are allowed to adopt temporary moratoriums (-see Burlington). The AG’s decision also re-affirmed cities & towns may adopt local zoning to regulate and set conditions where such facilitates may operate. As noted previously Medical (Marijuana) Treatment Centers” as defined in the Acts of 2012 Chapter 369 (An Act for the Humanitarian Medical Use of Marijuana), dispensaries may also include growing/cultivation and manufacturing operations –unlike a CVS or other local pharmacies. A temporary moratorium is consistent with the town’s authority to impose reasonable time limitations on development while it conducts planning studies and considers the implication of the Department of Public Health regulations, which is expected to be issued in May 2013.

STREET ACCEPTANCE

Gilmore Drive –In action taken February 25 2013 the Planning Board voted to sponsor street acceptance article for Gilmore Drive (portion of). At its meeting of March 12 2013 the Planning Board voted recommending layout of Gilmore Drive subject to Inter-Municipal Agreement with Sutton –see Gilmore Drive/Subdivision above. Northbridge & Sutton Board of Selectmen signed an Inter-Municipal Agreement whereby Sutton shall assume maintenance and repair responsibilities for the entirety of the roadway. BOS vote to layout has been filed with the Town Clerk. Pursuant to Mass General Law, the

Selectmen's layout vote and the layout plans shall be filed with the Office of the Town Clerk at least 7 days prior to the Spring Annual Town Meeting (May 07, 2013).

Ash Street (extension) –Petition article received for street acceptance of Ash Street (remaining portion /cul-de-sac). At its meeting of March 12 2013 the Planning Board voted recommending layout of Ash Street; Town Counsel has reviewed conveyance documents in preparation for street acceptance consideration. BOS vote to layout has been filed with the Town Clerk. Pursuant to Mass General Law, the Selectmen's layout vote and the layout plans shall be filed with the Office of the Town Clerk at least 7-days prior to the Spring Annual Town Meeting (May 07, 2013).

GOVERNOR'S HOUSING INITIATIVE

In November 2012, the Governor outlined an initiative to increase housing (produce 10,000 multi-family units of housing per year) /middle to moderate-incomes aimed to retain and grown workforce housing. On March 13 2013 attended Housing Workshop in Worcester (CMRPC office) where representatives from the Executive Office of Housing and Economic Development and the Department of Housing & Community Development reviewed core elements and discussed potential permitting tools (Compact Neighborhoods & Chapter 40R).

OPEN SPACE & RECREATION PLAN –UPDATE

At the request of the Planning Board the Board of Selectmen has established an ad-hoc Open Space Update Committee aimed to update the town's Open Space & Recreation Plan; updating plan will provide opportunity to assess existing inventory; identify potential improvements & expansions and how the town may go about getting there. As a result of the development boom (residential) open space resources may be threatened while recreational facilities continue to be overused. Open space may be designated for preservation, protection or recreation.

BLACKSTONE VALLEY PRIORITIZATION PROJECTS

The Community Planning & Development office met with Vera Kolias, Principle Planner at CMRPC – Central Mass Regional Planning Commission regarding the Blackstone Valley Prioritization Project; through a series of regional public workshops (June 2012 & November 2013) Northbridge identified various local priorities for land preservation; growth & development, as well as transportation & infrastructure investments. Main Street/Route 146 has been selected for the focus of the next component of this initiative; CMRPC will analyze a collection of regionally significant priority development areas.

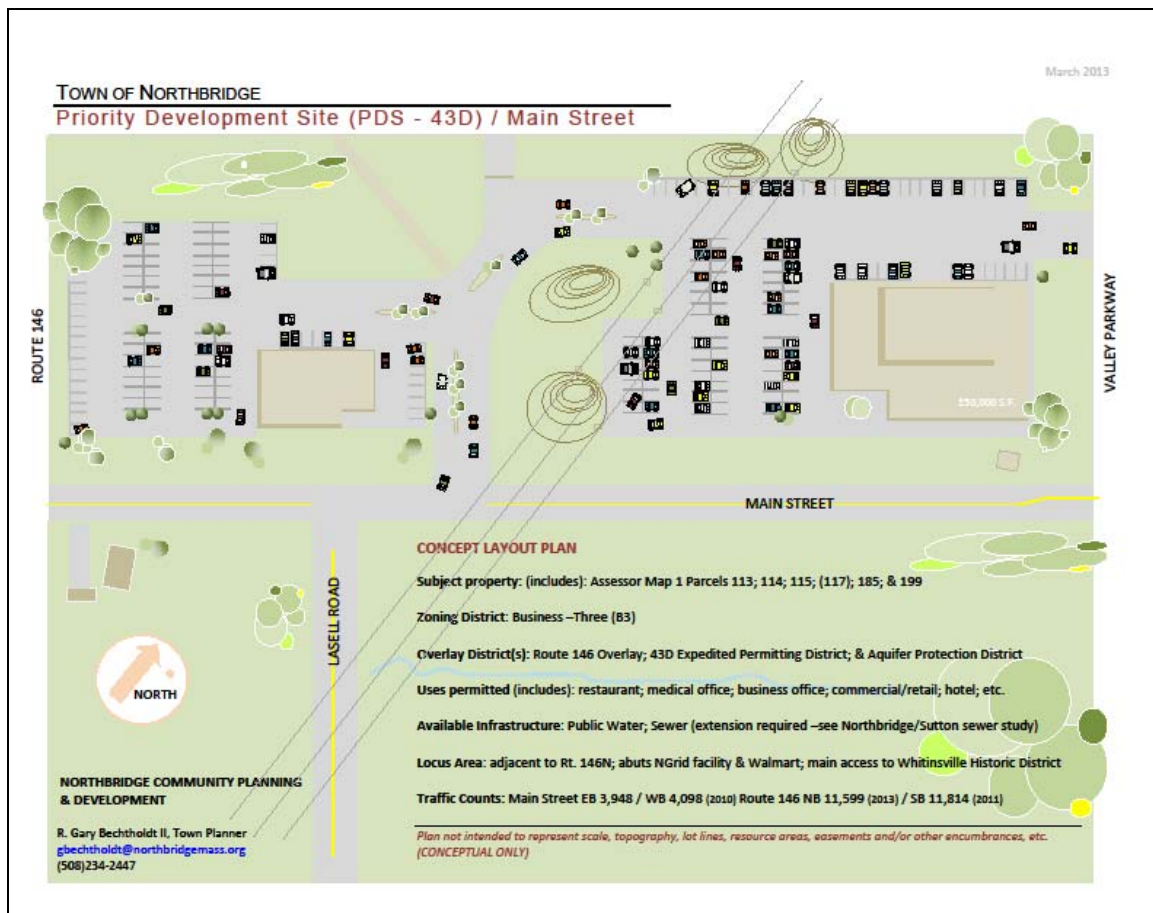
MUNICIPAL GIS

The Community Planning & Development Office, in partnership with CMRPC (regional planning agency) & MassGIS (state) are working together to create a data viewer for the town's webpage –a mapping tool created by the Office of Geographic Information (MassGIS). The "Muni-Mapper" provides access to map information for displaying various data layers such as roadways, water bodies, parcels, zoning districts, etc. Currently the Assessor's office is also working with CMRPC in providing some digital parcel data –

once completed (next couple of weeks) will work with MassGIS to upload data and after about a week's time will be ready for inclusion on the town's webpage.

EXPEDITED PERMITTING INITIATIVE -43D / MAIN STREET

The Community Planning & Development office prepared a conceptual layout plan (see figure below) for the Main Street Priority Development Site (PDS); adjacent to RT 146N abutting the National Grid facility /near Wal-mart. The plan shows potential (re)development of locus area. Area is currently occupied by 4 single-family homes serviced by public water with private septic. It is suggested lack of public sewer may limit the economic development of this area. A sanitary sewer extension study was completed in February 2010 (Sutton/Northbridge). Planning office shall explore MassWorks program for potential funding. Having a report is a good initial start; however may need "construction-ready" docs for funding.



COMMUNITY INNOVATION CHALLENGE GRANT PROGRAM –REGIONAL STORMWATER MANAGEMENT

A meeting was held on March 13 2013 (Nichols College) for participating stormwater communities (now 30 in total –Central Massachusetts Regional Stormwater Coalition). The main objective of the Regional Stormwater Management grant (\$115,000 –CIC grant) is to equip towns with the necessary tools and means to address individual stormwater permits: develop a stormwater training DVD -develop an educational website; create a data management system -integrate stormwater management system;

standardize policies and procedures –sump pump discharge policy, stormwater pollution prevention plan (SWPPP) and salt/sand application benchmarking; as well as, the purchase of portable devices and testing kits for dry/wet water samplings (outfalls). Due to grant fund reduction participating towns shall contribute \$2800 towards this program. The Department of Public Works (DPW) shall be the lead for this initiative. Additional information may be provided as this program progresses.

COMMUNITY INNOVATION CHALLENGE GRANT PROGRAM –ELECTRONIC PERMITTING

Northbridge, along with 7 other communities recently was awarded a Community Innovation Challenge Grant (totaling \$112,980 –CIC grant); we have partnered with CMRPC (our regional planning agency) on this initiative –CMRPC shall serve as the “grantee” on behalf of the communities. On March 28 2013 attended a scoping session to review an RFP for consulting services specific to Online Permit, Licensing & Inspection Tracking. The primary goal of this effort is to create an electronic permitting system –aimed to help in the expedited permitting process by offering an automated option for streamlining the permit, licensing & inspection process. The request for proposals shall solicit proposals from various vendors experienced in providing such services. The CIC grant funds awarded shall pay for the services to establish the online system, include a training program for the municipalities & one-year of maintenance; after which an additional cost per municipality will be charged. As the designated Steering Committee member representing Northbridge the Planning office has sought input from the various department heads as it relates to the drafting of the RFP. Additional information shall be provided as this effort continues.

MASS HISTORICAL COMMISSION –MPPF (ROUND 18)

The Community Planning & Development Office continues to administer and oversee the Massachusetts Preservation Project Funds (MPPF matching-grant) awarded to Northbridge for the Town Hall (specific to the window restoration). Campbell Construction Group has begun restoration; majority of windows have been removed from the Town Hall where they will be restored/repaired offsite. A site visit of WW Millworks in West Bridgewater is scheduled for Thursday, April 4th to observe the restoration work and review the mock-ups completed. According to McGinley Kalsow & Associates (project architect) all of the glass and asbestos-bearing window glazing has been removed from all window sashes. This asbestos removal part of the contract is now complete. Approximately two-thirds of the original glass has been salvaged for reinstallation. During the removal process, all window sashes were numbered for correct reinstallation. Once the mock-ups are approved, a more detailed work schedule for the project will be provided by Campbell Construction. The work at the restoration shop will then accelerate. The sash will be stripped of all paint, loose joints repaired, damaged wood replaced, all wood surfaces sanded smooth, primed, re-glazed with salvaged glass and new glass, and then painted on the outside and painted/varnished on the inside. Finished windows could begin to be installed in early May.

CASTLE HILL FARM

Castle Hill Farm was identified as a *High Priority Preservation Site* in the 2012 Blackstone Valley Regional Prioritization Project (prepared by CMRPC) and was listed as one of Massachusetts’ 10 most Endangered Historic Resources by Preservation Massachusetts (2007). For additional information regarding the Blackstone Valley Prioritization Projects initiative –see below. The Community Planning & Development Office has been working with Dick Lundgren (Whitin family), Metacomet Land Trust (Lisa Mosczynski &

Laurie Salmon) and others to help promote the preservation of this historic property. Dialogue has also been initiated with the Trust for Public Lands to see how they may assist and partner on this effort. As part of this ongoing effort the property owner (Paul, Bernon Family Trust) has been contacted and participated in discussions. A presentation by Jack Crawford on the Castle Hill property (farming w/in the Valley, immigration, etc) is scheduled for Monday, April 29, 2013 (7PM -8:30PM) Whitinsville Christian School (media library). A grass-root effort to preserve the property is underway with the idea of creating a "Friends of Castle Hill Farms."

DEPARTMENT HEAD MEETINGS

- March 25, 2013; FY2014 budget & FY2013 transfers

PLANNING BOARD MEETINGS

The Planning Board met 5 times during this quarter; all approved meeting minutes of the Planning Board are posted on the town's website

- January 08, 2013 (approved)
- February 12, 2013 (approved)
- February 25, 2013 (approved)
- March 12, 2013 (approved)
- March 26, 2013 (draft)

SAFETY COMMITTEE MEETINGS

- January 16, 2013

BOARD OF SELECTMEN MEETINGS

- January 28, 2013 -Ashton Place (drainage easement), Medical Marijuana (BOS vote to sponsor zoning article), Linwood Mill (preservation nomination 2012 MHC's Preservation Award) and Open Space & Recreation Plan (ad-hoc update committee)
- March 11, 2013 -Gilmore Drive and Ash Street (vote intent to layout)
- March 25, 2013 -Inter-Municipal Agreement (Sutton/Northbridge –Gilmore Drive), Gilmore Drive & Ash Street (vote to layout), Medical Marijuana Treatment Centers (moratorium), and Open Space & Recreation Plan Update (ad-hoc committee)

FINANCE COMMITTEE MEETINGS

- March 27, 2013 -Medical Marijuana Zoning Bylaw Moratorium, Street Acceptance Article(s) Ash Street & Gilmore Drive

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

Cc: Planning Board
/File