



NORTHBRIDGE PLANNING BOARD MINUTES

Tuesday, September 08, 2015

Recognizing the presence of a quorum Chairman Brian Massey called the meeting to order at 7:00PM with George Murray, Mark Key and Pamela Ferrara in attendance. R. Gary Bechtholdt II, Town Planner and Cindy Key, Associate member were also present. [1 vacancy of the Planning Board]

The following members of the public were in attendance: Joyce Augustus & Kenneth Konicki

I. CITIZENS FORUM

None

II. FORM A

None

III. SUBDIVISION RULES & REGULATIONS -CONT. PUBLIC HEARING

MGL CH 41 81Q (Amendments)

Mr. Bechtholdt reminded the Planning Board that the public hearing was opened June 23, 2015 and continued to July 28, 2015; the Board reviewed Community Planning & Development memorandum dated May 29, 2015, a listing of the subdivision provisions under consideration.

Mr. Bechtholdt reviewed with the Planning Board proposed amendments: §222-9 A (adding a provision for the submission of digitized copy of plan on CD or similar format); §222-10 (location of street trees); §222-12 & §222-13 (eliminating requirements for fire alarm call box); §222-13.1 (street light policy, street light standards & installation procedures); §222-27 (allowing sloped-granite w/in cul-de-sac); §222-28 (requiring double-sided street signs); §222-30 (increasing width of grass strip from 4 to 5-feet); §222-36 (referencing an inspection sign-off sheet); §222-37 (requiring roadway as-built plan prior to lot release); Table I (increasing the right-of-way widths); and Table II (eliminating or reducing the size of the island cul-de-sac).

The Planning Board indicated that they were agreeable to adding a provision for the submission of digital plans (§222-9 A); Mr. Bechtholdt will look to provide draft language.

Planning Board members discussed options of requiring street trees (§222-10); Mr. Massey explained that DPW has expressed concerns with planting of street trees within the grass strip or too close to the roadway (maintenance, etc.) Mr. Massey noted that he met with the Highway Department, noting they are concerned when the street trees grow and their roots move, crack and heave the sidewalks. Mr. Bechtholdt added that DPW would like to see the trees planted on private property where homeowners are responsible for them. Board members expressed concern with homeowners not wanting street trees and removing them if they were outside the right-of-way. Board members considered locating street trees away from roadway within the limits of the right-of-way; located street tree at the limit of the right-of-way. Mr. Key indicated that he liked the look of trees running along the street, breaks up things; would support widening the grass strip to accommodate street trees. Board members expressed concerns with the limits of the right-of-way and maybe increasing the width of the right-of-way. Mr. Murray suggested allowing the Developer to plant 2

46 trees per lot, located at the discretion of property owners. Mr. Murray noted the street trees are more likely
47 to survive the further away from the road (road salt, etc.). Mr. Murray expressed concern with long-term
48 maintenance of the town and replacing dead trees, putting on private property would become the
49 responsibility of the individual homeowners. Board members expressed concerns with instances where
50 homeowners may decide to cut down trees or their desired placement of the required street trees: Mr.
51 Murray suggested setting a limit on the distance from the road or right-of-way. Mr. Massey asked what if
52 homeowners decided they did not want the trees to be planted; Mr. Murray suggested the developer will be
53 paying for them and the trees will add value to the property (2 trees per lot would be required). Mr. Massey
54 mentioned that the Developers will need to educate the homeowners; Mr. Murray suggested the trees
55 would be part of their selling feature and the owners would know before buying the property that two (2)
56 along the frontage will be planted in the front yards as required by the Developer. Mr. Murray did not think
57 placement of trees should be that complicated and is resolved to the fact that the DPW will not take care of
58 the trees.

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60 Mrs. Key inquired about the street tree listing; Mr. Bechtholdt confirmed that a recommended street tree
61 listing for various settings, etc. is included in the Board's Best Management Practices Guidebook.

62
63 The Board briefly reviewed examples of different right-of-way widths, location of underground utilities, etc.
64 and how these factors may influence the placement of trees.

65
66 The Planning Board discussed options concerning the requirements for a grass strip (§222-30); Mrs. Key
67 asked about the width of the grass strip and the location of sidewalks; separated from the road 4 to 5-feet or
68 right up against it. Mr. Massey indicated that he had initially thought about eliminating the grass strip
69 however after some additional observations he feels the grass strip should remain. Board members
70 considered increasing the grass strip from 4 to 5-feet.

71
72 Mr. Bechtholdt suggested if the Board was to eliminate the grass strip (between the sidewalks and road)
73 presents opportunity for mailboxes to occupy the width of sidewalks and creating conflicts with ADA, etc.
74 The Board noted they do not have jurisdiction on the placement of mailboxes (local US Post Office); Mr.
75 Bechtholdt cited examples where mailboxes are installed in the sidewalk where a wheelchair, stroller, etc.
76 would not be able to maneuver around on the sidewalk (Sutton Street and Fir Hill Lane).

77
78 Mr. Key felt the Board was minutia-diving, suggesting the grass strips do not look any better than the street
79 trees; likes the thought of having the two trees planted where they are where they are more likely to be
80 cared for. The Board will explore the option Mr. Murray suggested.

81
82 The Planning Board discussed §222-12 [Utilities] & §222-13 [Fire alarm systems] and the request of the Fire
83 Chief to eliminate the requirement for fire alarm call boxes as the town no longer utilizes this system.
84 Planning Board will look to eliminate references and requirements of fire alarm systems in their regulations.

85
86 The Planning Board reviewed existing provisions for street lights (§222-13.1 –Street lighting) Mr. Bechtholdt
87 suggested that he would like to reference the town's Streetlight Policy however the Selectmen need to
88 formalize and vote on the policy; Mr. Bechtholdt and Mr. Murray explained that it appears when the town
89 considered a Streetlight Policy during the 1990's they approved a proposal and did not formalize a proposal.

Mr. Murray noted that the Safety Committee had brought this to the attention of the Selectmen some time ago however is awaiting action or resolution.

Mr. Bechtholdt also suggested the Planning Board may want to include reference and/or guidance on street light standards and installation procedures; noting thanks to Mr. Murray's persistence with DPW National Grid has put together a packet of information for Developers and towns. Mr. Murray suggested including some language that would direct the Developer to obtain copies of National Grid's packet through DPW as they will need to coordinate with the Developers and National Grid.

Mr. Massey inquired about requiring the street light installation and operation prior to lot release; Mr. Bechtholdt explained currently the Planning Board requires, as a condition of its approval that street lights be installed within "occupied areas" of a subdivision prior to the issuance of occupancy. Mr. Bechtholdt noted often times however this is not satisfied; noting when the Building Inspector reviews a home for the issuance of an occupancy permit he is limited to the requirements of the building permit and does not look at street lights. Mr. Bechtholdt suggested in an effort to make sure the street lights are installed and operational before homeowners occupy the homes (subdivision lots) the thought was to require installation prior to lot release where the Planning Board can have the oversight. Mr. Bechtholdt reminded the Board of instances where homeowners have called the Planning office about missing or inactive streetlights within subdivisions; safety concerns.

Mr. Murray understood what was trying to be accomplished however felt because DPW is lax in the necessary coordination for the installation of streetlights indicates that this requirement may be problematic for Developers, adding often times when lots are sought for release all the utilities are not in where they need to be for streetlight installation, etc.

Mr. Bechtholdt acknowledged Mr. Murray's concerns and noted there appears to be no mechanism to have the Developer install the required streetlights (in a timely manner) so the town ends up chasing the Developer(s) to get the streetlights done; suggesting in a perfect world the roadway binder is in, drainage ponds in, sidewalks in, all utilities in, streetlights are in, etc. and then the Developer posts a bond for the remaining improvements and gets the lots released. Mrs. Key agreed that the streetlights should be installed sooner and not allowed to be bonded in the occupied areas. Mr. Key suggested this would put pressure on the DPW from another direction to act quicker and shoulder their part of the responsibility (coordination with National Grid and Developer).

Mr. Bechtholdt recommended the Board incorporate by reference the town's Best Development Practices Guidebook into §222-20 [General requirements] of the Subdivision Rules & Regulations; Planning Board agreed.

Mr. Bechtholdt reviewed with the Planning Board §222-27 [Curbing], noting a typical waiver issued by the Board is to allow for sloped-granite curbing within the cul-de-sacs and landscaped islands. Mr. Bechtholdt noted that the Fire Department prefers slope-granite within the cul-de-sacs; the Board may want to consider simply allowing for it in the regulations. Mr. Massey suggested the Board perhaps consider waiving the landscape islands entirely and eliminate them. The Board discussed elimination of the landscape island at part of its Table II Standards for cul-de-sac discussion. Mr. Murray suggested that provisions should be included to allow for LID –Low Impact Development where curbing may not be utilized (example Carpenter

Estates). Mr. Bechtholdt agreed, noting that was a unique project (first of its kind in Northbridge) which required a number of waivers for its approval; Mr. Bechtholdt will look to incorporate provisions for LID techniques. Mr. Murray suggested the Town Planner look to examples from other towns for Low Impact Development and cape-cod berm standards.

Mr. Massey asked about street signs. Mr. Bechtholdt explained that when subdivision applications are received he provides the Applicant/Engineer with a packet which includes information provided by the Water Company, street tree lists, lighting standards and street sign specifications from the Department of Public Works. Mr. Bechtholdt indicated that the DPW Director (and Highway Superintendent) prefer double-sided signs rather than two signs back-to-back. Mr. Bechtholdt noted that he is looking to the DPW to update their standards for street signs.

The Planning Board reviewed existing provisions for planting strips (§222-30). The Board considered increasing the sidewalk width and altering the width of the grass strip (increasing width of grass strip from 4 to 5-feet). Mr. Murray suggested keeping everything away from the street; placing the utilities on the backside of the sidewalk. If the utilities were allowed within the grass strip then you may have instances where the junction boxes and electrical dog-houses are exposed and get banged up by plows, etc.

Mr. Bechtholdt explained to the Planning Board that he put together a subdivision inspection checklist which he distributes to Developers, Engineers, DPW, etc. at the pre-construction meetings. Mr. Bechtholdt asked the Board if they would like to reference the checklist in §222-36 [Inspections] provisions. Mr. Bechtholdt indicated that he put the checklist together to help and assist the town (DPW –Highway, DPW –Sewer, etc.) in tracking the progress and noting concerns of individual subdivision projects. Mr. Bechtholdt suggested however it appears the town and Developers do not utilize the checklist (for sign-offs and inspections).

The Planning Board discussed options concerning the requirements for lot release (§222-37 Lot release). Mr. Bechtholdt suggested the Board consider requiring as-built plans to confirm location of the right-of-way and subdivision improvements (utilities, etc.). Mr. Bechtholdt explained there had been instances in the past where it was discovered that a portion of the roadway was constructed outside the right-of-way (Clubhouse Lane -Shining Rock Golf Community). This creates problems later on especially when the lots are sold and conveyed to individual private homeowners where the layout of the road may encroach. Mr. Bechtholdt suggested adding a provision requiring the preparation of as-built plans (progress prints) prior to lot release. The Planning Board was agreeable to adding a provision.

The Planning Board discussed and reviewed Table I –Street Design Standards. Mr. Bechtholdt reminded the Board depending on what provisions are amended Table I may also need to be updated accordingly. The Board looked at increasing minimum of roadway right-of-way width from 40 to 50-feet.

The Planning Board discussed and reviewed Table II –Standards for Cul-de-sacs. Mr. Bechtholdt indicated that he likes the landscaped islands however understands that DPW and others would like them eliminated as they are commonly not maintained and according to DPW are difficult to plow around in the winter. Mr. Bechtholdt indicated that the Fire Department has approved the design and layout of cul-de-sacs with landscape islands, noting the Department has confirmed that their apparatus is able to maneuver around the islands. Mr. Bechtholdt explained that the Planning Board has in the past granted waivers to allow for sloped-granite curbing within the cul-de-sacs based upon the requests and recommendation of the Fire

Department. Mr. Bechtholdt explained to the Board that in addition to taking input from the DPW he also spoke with the Fire Chief who would support eliminating the landscaped islands. Mr. Bechtholdt noted access around the cul-de-sacs may be limited when vehicles park within them. Mrs. Key offered if landscape islands are to be provided then provisions for no parking should be included.

Mr. Murray noted it was important to confirm what the swing radius of the town's ladder truck was to make sure emergency vehicles can maneuver around the islands. Mr. Murray suggested reducing the size of the islands and allowing for less landscaping within them (less elaborate landscaping plans); smaller shrubs and grass that is low maintenance and drought tolerant that still looks nice.

Mr. Massey supports eliminating the landscaped islands, citing in the Town of Douglas they do not have islands and the DPW simply plows right through them; quicker, cleaner and less maintenance. Mr. Massey understands that the DPW does not have the resources to maintain the landscape islands.

Mrs. Key offered her support in keeping the landscaped islands; adds value and provides habitat, etc. Mrs. Key noted she would support reducing the size of the islands and allowing for sloped-granite curbing. Mrs. Key was less concerned about the maintenance.

Mrs. Ferrara commented on areas in town her neighborhood included where weeds grow along the roadway and sidewalks. Mr. Key suggested at some point departments (DPW) will need to be held responsible for their responsibilities (clearing sidewalks, maintaining landscape islands, etc.)

Having the need to consider amendments further the Planning Board looked to continue the public hearing.

Upon motion duly made (Ferrara) and seconded (M. Key) the Planning Board voted (4-0) to continue the Subdivision Rules & Regulation public hearing to Tuesday, October 13, 2015 (7:35PM –Town Hall) to afford additional time for review and public comment.

IV. MAIN STREET Assessors Map 2 Parcel(s) 36, 37 & 45 -CONT. PUBLIC HEARING

Special Permit [§173-47 B.2 -Planned Business Development]

Site Plan [§173-49.1 –Site plan review by Planning Board]

Mr. Bechtholdt informed the Planning Board that he is in receipt of a letter requesting a continuance for tonight's public hearing. Mr. Bechtholdt read aloud letter dated September 03, 2015 from Heritage Design Group on behalf of the Owner/Applicant.

Upon motion duly made (M. Key) and seconded (Ferrara) the Planning Board voted (5-0) to continue the site plan review/special permit application to Tuesday, October 13, 2015 (7:05PM –Town Hall) at the request of the Applicant/Engineer.

OLD / NEW BUSINESS

Approval of Meeting Minutes –May 26; June 09; June 23; July 28; & August 25, 2015

Upon motion duly made (Ferrara) and seconded (M. Key) the Planning Board voted (4-0) to approve the meeting minutes of May 26, 2015 as amended. Planning Board tabled action on remaining items.

2015 Fall Annual Town Meeting (FATM) –Tuesday, October 27, 2015 (7:00 PM)

Point of information –no discussion.

2015 FATM Planning Board Warrant Articles –Status/Update

Mr. Bechtholdt advised the Board that the warrant closed on Friday, August 28, 2015 and noted that no zoning petition articles were received. Mr. Massey indicated that he would attend the Finance Committee meeting tentatively scheduled for September 23, 2015 (6PM –Town Hall) to review the two (2) Planning Board articles (Deane Way –Street Acceptance & Highland Street –Land Donation).

Economic Development –Zoning Public Workshop (October/November)

Mr. Bechtholdt looked to the Planning Board to host a public workshop on zoning; the Board agreed to hold the workshop Tuesday, November 10, 2015 from 6PM to 7:00PM (Town Hall).

Open Space & Recreation Plan Update –Scheduling of next meeting

Tabled –no discussion.

Subdivision/Site Developments –Status/Update(s)

Mr. Bechtholdt noted receipt of letter from Whitinsville Water Company concerning Carpenter Estates; JH Engineering report dated August 28, 2015 specific to Carpenter Estates site visit (08/03/2015); copy of extension request of the Order of Conditions issued for Carpenter Estates; Certification of completion from Geisser Engineering Corporation for 369 Douglas Road (WGM Fabricators, LLC).

Hillside Gardens (Deane Way) –Status/Update

Mr. Bechtholdt informed the Board that John Barges, Developer met with DPW and remains confident that he can address concerns; Mr. Bechtholdt indicated that he spoke with the Fire Chief who will provide a letter confirming that the Fire Department has no outstanding issues with the subdivision development. Mr. Barges will attend the September 22, 2015 meeting to review with the Planning Board, abutters, etc. the status of the subdivision and the Board's consideration of street acceptance (recommendation on the layout). Mr. Bechtholdt explained that the property owners and abutters will have an opportunity to offer comment and note any concerns prior to Town Meeting action; in an effort to try and avoid situations where a resident (voter) may come forward at Town Meeting opposing street acceptance for reasons that should have been reviewed prior to with the Planning Board.

Green Meadow Court –Status/Update

Tabled –no discussion.

Farnum Circle –Status/Update

Mr. Bechtholdt reminded the Planning Board that at the last meeting the Board agreed to allow Joyce Augustus and Kenneth Konicki to pursue on their own some potential contractors for the underground utility work. Joyce Augustus and Kenneth Konicki of 14 Farnum Circle met with the Planning Board to provide them with an update. Ms. Augustus explained that she is awaiting receipt of three (3) to four (4) proposals; noted they received a scope of work and estimates from C.R. Hansen Construction, LLC. Mr. Bechtholdt informed the Board that a copy of the proposal is included in the Planning Board packet. Ms. Augustus mentioned that she is also waiting to hear back from a local electrician; left a message with Quarry Hill Excavating but has not heard back. Mr. Bechtholdt asked if Ms. Augustus spoke with Caya Construction as suggested by Mr.

Murray at a previous meeting; Ms. Augustus recalled but did not contact them at this point. Mr. Bechtholdt explained to the Board that the proposal received is not all inclusive and does not include items originally requested, suggesting at this point to hold-off. Ms. Augustus agreed and indicated that she is hopeful to receive all the proposals by the end of the week. Ms. Augustus also mentioned that she needs to follow-up with Verizon (telephone) and Charter (cable) to see if they know if the conduit is already being utilized (underground) and to see what is required to snake it through without additional digging, if not currently being used. The Board will need to review the proposal received. Ms. Augustus expressed concerns with timing to complete the work this year; Planning Board members shared concerns. Mr. Bechtholdt explained that the Planning Board issued the proposal (scenario 1) noting no responses were received, the Board may look to redefine the scope of work (scenario 2) to solicit a reprioritization of the remaining work. The Board briefly reviewed the proposal received by C.R. Hansen Construction, LLC. Mr. Bechtholdt questioned Ms. Augustus if she asked the contractor to provide quotes for items not included in the Board's original scope of work. Ms. Augustus indicated that she did; Ms. Augustus indicated that she has spoken with someone who may have some different ideas to address concerns. Mr. Bechtholdt suggested the Board would need to review and cautioned that the work to be done needs to be consistent with the punchlist items identified. Mr. Murray indicated that he spoke with the original developer (Mike Lambert) who explained to him that the conduit is in from the road to the transformer; suggesting there is enough conduit exiting for power, cable and phone. The Board agreed to include this matter on the next scheduled Planning Board meeting.

Mixed Use Bylaw –Outline/Review

Tabled –no discussion.

Mail –Review

In addition to the mail listed (-see attached) the Planning Board noted receipt of the following communications: September 8, 2015 agenda; Draft agendas for the September 22, 2015, October 13, 2015 and October 20, 2015 meetings; Memo dated May 29, 2015 to Planning Board with cc: to Town Manager, BOS, DPW Director, and Fire Chief from Town Planner regarding Subdivision Rules and Regulations Amendments; Chapter 222 Subdivision Rules and Regulations pages 1-5, 68-70; Letter dated July 28, 2015 to Town Planner from Building Inspector concerning Main Street Site Plan & Special Permit; Letter dated August 20, 2015 to Town Planner with cc: to Conservation Commission from JH Engineering concerning Main Street Commercial Site Plan "Peer Review;" Letter dated August 20, 2015 to Town Planner from Whitinsville Water Company concerning Main Street Commercial Site Comments; Memo dated July 21, 2015 to Planning Board from Conservation Commission concerning Main Street Site Plan Review; Memo dated July 7, 2015 / July 15, 2015 to Planning Board and Heritage Design Group with cc: to Town Manager, BOS, DPW Highway, JH Engineering, Board of Health, DPW Sewer, Owner / Applicant, Building Inspector, Fire Chief, Attorney H. Lane, Conservation Commission and Whitinsville Water Company from Town Planner concerning Main Street Commercial Special Permit and Site Plan Review; Technical Review Meeting Notes dated July 15, 2015 with distribution to Building Department, DPW Sewer, Whitinsville Water Company, Applicant / Engineer(s), Conservation Commission, Fire Chief, Board of Health, H. Lane, DPW Highway, JH Engineering Group, and Planning Board concerning Main Street Commercial Planned Business Development / Site Plan; Site Plan Review Checklist dated July 7, 2015 concerning Main Street Commercial; Memo dated July 15, 2015 to Planning Board with cc: to Applicant / Engineer and Fire Chief (Safety Committee) from Town Planner concerning Main Street Commercial Site Visit Observations; Memo dated August 27, 2015 to Town Manager and Board of Selectmen with a cc: to Planning Board and DPW Director from Town Planner regarding Deane Way Layout/Street Acceptance 2015 FATM Warrant Article; Letter dated August 27, 2015 to WRT

Management Corporation with a cc: to Town Manager / BOS, Planning Board, and Town Counsel from Town Planner concerning Highland Street Land Donation 2015 FATM Warrant Article; Letter dated August 26, 2015 to Town Clerk with cc: to Town Manager / BOS, Town Moderator, Conservation Commission, Finance Committee, and WRT Management from Town Planner concerning Highland Street Land Donation 2015 FATM Annual Town Meeting; Letter dated July 14, 2015 to Town Planner from WRT Management concerning Granite Hills Land Donation; Plan of Lots Highland Street dated July 14, 2015; Assessor's Map 15; Highland Street – Land Donation (Proposed) [Draft] 2015 Fall Annual Town Meeting; Memo dated August 13, 2015 to Board of Selectmen from Conservation Commission concerning Granite Hills Land Donation; Memo dated August 31, 2015 to Joyce Augustus from Town Planner regarding Northbridge Project Quote for Farnum Circle; Document from C.R. Hansen regarding the scope of work for Farnum Circle; Request for Services (Construction) Price Proposals – Scenario 1 dated May 13, 2015; Septic As-Built prepared by Environmental Design Consulting for 1938 Hill Street (21 Farnum); 3 Plans of Farnum Circle; Email dated August 31, 2015 to Whitinsville Water Company with a cc: to Andrews Survey & Engineering, DPW Director, Quarry Hill Construction, Mujeeb Construction and Planning Board Chair from Town Planner concerning Carpenter Estates; Email dated August 31, 2015 to Pulte Homes with a cc: to Town Planner, DPW Director and Town Manager from Whitinsville Water Company regarding Shining Rock Area; Planning Board 2015 Meeting Schedule.

Other

Mr. Bechtholdt advised the Board that he has spoken with John Barges (Developer) Hillside Garden Estates, noting that Mr. Barges did meet with DPW to review remaining punchlist items. Mr. Bechtholdt indicated that Mr. Barges is confident that he can address DPW's comments before the Board is scheduled to meet next on September 22, 2015; Mr. Massey inquired about Whitinsville Water Company comments specific to an existing water lateral on an adjacent lot; Mr. Bechtholdt noted that Mr. Barges is aware and currently working with the Water Company and the adjacent property owner; Mr. Bechtholdt confirmed for the Planning Board the parcels to be included in the Highland Street land donation article.

ADJOURNMENT

Having no additional business the Planning Board adjourned its meeting of Tuesday, September 08, 2015 at or about 8:35 PM.

Respectfully submitted,

Approved by the Planning Board –

R. Gary Bechtholdt II
Town Planner

Cc: Town Clerk