



NORTHBRIDGE PLANNING BOARD MINUTES

Tuesday, March 22, 2011



Janet Dolber, Chair called the meeting to order at 7:00 PM. Barbara Gaudette, Edward Palmer, Richard Griggs and Kevin Curtin were in attendance. R. Gary Bechtholdt II, Town Planner was also present.

The following members of the public were also in attendance: Stan DeHaan and Roy Uthoff.

I. CITIZENS FORUM

Roy Uthoff (Clubhouse Lane) advised the Planning Board that his wife, Judi Uthoff has been reviewing the state's model bylaw for the siting of wind turbines and should have some information to the Planning Board for consideration very soon.

II. ANR PLAN –REVIEW/DECISION

None

III. PUBLIC HEARING/MEETINGS –REVIEW/DECISION(S)

None

OLD/NEW BUSINESS

Minutes –March 08, 2011

Upon motion duly made (Palmer) and seconded (Griggs) the Planning Board voted (5-0) to APPROVE the meeting minutes of March 08, 2011.

Housing Production Plan –Public Workshop Tuesday, May 24, 2011 (6PM –Planning office)

Mr. Bechtholdt confirmed with the Planning Board the date, time and location for the Housing Production Plan Public Workshop.

Massachusetts Sustainable Communities Conference (April 15th –Marlborough)

Mr. Bechtholdt informed the Planning Board of the 1st Annual Sustainable Communities Conference scheduled for Friday, April 15, 2011 from 8AM to 4PM at the Marlborough Holiday Inn. Mr. Bechtholdt noted that he may have provided an email commutation earlier; however will forward information to the Planning Board members should they wish to attend.

Shining Rock Golf Community Streetlights –Construction Change (per DPW)

Mr. Bechtholdt reminded the Board that this matter was tabled from previous meetings as Board members wanted the opportunity to observe the area to determine whether or not certain streetlights should be eliminated. Members indicated that they have since visited the site individually.

Mr. Palmer explained the location of the streetlights should remain and lights originally approved by the Planning Board should be installed, as the overall project density, amount of vehicular traffic and mixed-use nature of the development which includes housing units and a golf course necessitate the need to have those streetlights installed and not eliminated. Ms. Gaudette and other Board members agreed with Mr. Palmer's position.

Upon motion duly made (Palmer) and seconded (Gaudette) the Planning Board voted (5-0) not to support the elimination of certain streetlights within the Shining Rock Golf Community as outlined and requested by Norwood Cooperative Bank in letter dated February 17, 2011.

In taking such action the Planning Board noted due to the overall project density, vehicular traffic, pedestrian movement, and mixed-use nature of the development the streetlights shall be installed at the locations delineated on the approved Definitive Subdivision plan. The Planning Board acknowledged receipt of the Director of Public Works memo dated February 16, 2011 regarding the town's policy on streetlights and determined based upon safety concerns the additional lights should be installed.

Spring Annual Town Meeting (SATM) –Tuesday, May 03, 2011

Mr. Bechtholdt informed the Planning Board that the Finance Committee will be meeting on Wednesday, March 23, 2011 (6PM –Town Hall) to review warrant articles and vote on their position.

Ms. Gaudette and Mr. Griggs mentioned that they will make efforts to attend this meeting on behalf of the Planning Board.

Mr. Bechtholdt also advised the Planning Board that at the close of the warrant (Friday, March 18th) no petition zoning articles were received and as such just the three (3) zoning amendment articles sponsored by the Planning Board will be considered at the Spring Annual Town Meeting.

Subdivision Development Status -General Discussion

Mr. Bechtholdt suggested that the Planning Board start the status reviews of the following incomplete subdivision developments: Castle Hill Estates; Farnum Circle; Green Meadow Court; and Highland Hills for the purpose of getting the roads complete and ready for street acceptance in the fall, noting that the Board may need to pursue provisions of Mass General Laws CH 41 SEC 81U to complete the necessary improvements such as the case for Castle Hill Estates discussed last fall.

Mr. Bechtholdt offered that he will contact the Town Treasurer and Town Accountant to confirm the surety amounts held for each of the subdivisions. Mr. Bechtholdt added that Highland Hills is Rumonoski Drive, which was acted on at Town Meeting in the 90's the surety was released, however the roadway was never recorded, adding back in 2007/2008 he provided Town Counsel with a packet of information for review in preparation for reconsideration on street acceptance.

Mr. Bechtholdt then briefly reviewed with the Board the status/remaining issue(s) concerning Green Meadow Court and Farnum Circle. Mr. Bechtholdt explained that he would need to reach out to the Town Manager once again regarding potential liability concerns of the sidewalks within Castle Hill Estates as they do not meet ADA standards. Mr. Bechtholdt noted that the Board would be best served if they (re)initiated this effort (addressing incomplete subdivision developments) sooner than later, as the DPW Director and the Highway Superintendent are both scheduled to retire this summer.

Other

Mr. Bechtholdt provided the Planning Board with copy of Zoning Board of Appeals application for Osterman Inc, (998 Church Street) to allow expansion of propane facility. The proposed activity is within the

Floodplain District and requires a Special Permit from the Zoning Board. The application will be heard on April 14, 2011.

The Planning Board noted receipt of same and suggested proposal may require a separate filing from the Conservation Commission but did not appear to trigger a formal site plan review of the Planning Board. Mr. Bechtholdt will confirm same with the Building Inspector and will provide a memorandum to the Zoning Board acknowledging receipt of application in conjunction with their scheduled hearing.

Mr. Bechtholdt provided the Planning Board with copy of letter dated February 28, 2011 from TEC Associates to the Conservation Commission regarding renewal of Providence & Worcester Vegetation & Management Plan in accordance with the Wetland Protection Acts (Request for Determination).

Additionally, Mr. Bechtholdt informed the Planning Board that the Board of Selectmen have asked that they attend their next schedule meeting of Monday, March 28, 2011 (7PM –Town Hall) to discuss lot size for residential properties.

Mr. Bechtholdt provided the Board members with copy of the recently released 2010 census data for Northbridge from the U.S Census Bureau.

Mr. Griggs mentioned he pulled some information online from the Mass Department of Education, as he was curious about the numbers for the student population over the past several years.

Mr. Bechtholdt mentioned he spoke with the Town Clerk earlier in the week to review population numbers for the town which are published in the Annual Town Reports. According to the census data for Northbridge; the population for the town is 14,708; which is an increase of approximately 20% compared to 2000 numbers.

Mr. Bechtholdt then briefly reviewed with the Planning Board, Worcester Telegram & Gazette article “US Census: Worcester sees 10-year increase in population” by John J. Monahan (March 22, 2011), noting those communities that saw the greatest increase (w/in Worcester County) are those within the Blackstone Valley. Mr. Bechtholdt added this should not be a bigger surprise to many, as the Planning Board in working with the Master Plan Update Committee hosted a public workshop back in 2009 with Mass Audubon as part of their “Losing Ground” series, wherein it details rate of growth over the past five-years and communicates such as Northbridge, Grafton, Upton, and Douglas are in the top 5% in the state.

Planning Board members indicated that they would be available and all plan to attend the Board of Selectmen meeting of March 28, 2011. Mr. Bechtholdt will post a meeting notice with the Town Clerk.

Mail –Review

In addition to the mail listed (see attached) the Planning Board noted receipt of the following communications: (drat) meeting minutes for March 08, 2011; memorandum dated March 01, 2011 from the Zoning Board of Appeals concerning E. Osterman, Inc special permit application; copy of TEC Associates letter dated February 28, 2011 to the Conservation Commission regarding the Providence & Worcester Request for Determination; copy of email communication received March 21, 2011 regarding Finance Committee meeting of March 23, 2011; Worcester Telegram & Gazette (on-line –March 22, 2011) article

“US Census: Worcester sees 10-year increase in population” by John J. Monahan; email communication received March 17, 2011 from CMRPC (Central Mass Regional Planning Commission) regarding Community Snapshots; and copy of US Census Bureau data for the Town of Northbridge.

Adjournment

Having no additional business the Planning Board adjourned its meeting of Tuesday, March 22, 2011 at 7:35 PM.

Respectfully submitted,

Approved by Planning Board –April 26, 2011

R. Gary Bechtholdt II
Town Planner

Cc: Town Clerk