



NORTHBRIDGE PLANNING BOARD

MINUTES

Tuesday, October 18, 2011



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

The following members of the public were in attendance: Lori Lofstrom, Shelley Buma, Michael Wilkes, Paul Beaudoin, George Murray, Joseph Marinella (JF Marinella Dev), Mark Anderson (Heritage Design Group), and Paul Hutnak (Heritage Design Group).

I. CITIZENS FORUM

None

II. ANR PLAN –REVIEW/DECISION

None

III. THE CAMELOT SUBDIVISION -DISCUSSION/DECISION

Model Home request (Lot #1)

Janet Dolber explained the Planning Board continued its discussion on this matter (October 11, 2011) as Board members needed additional information prior to making a formal decision; specifically a schedule and sequence of construction. Additionally, the Board also wanted to advise and solicit input from the two (2) abutting properties on Hill Street. Mr. Bechtholdt noted that letters were sent to the abutting property owners notifying them of the Planning Board discussion this evening.

Joseph Marinella (JF Marinella Dev) indicated that he would like to start construction on the model home (foundation) as soon as possible, noting by the time the house is completed most of the roadway work within Phase I would be done. Mr. Marinella explained that he would like to start marketing the project, having a model home to view would help facilitate this effort.

Ms. Dolber indicated the she understands the present market conditions and the Board needs to be sensitive to the current environment, noting the Board wants to see all of its subdivisions completed.

Edward Palmer stated in his time on the Planning Board, this has never been done before. Lots are released only after the work is done or a bond is put in place to guarantee the completion, after which a building permit may be issued. Why should the Board do it differently now?

Mr. Marinella understands the subdivision process on lot release and the issuance of building permit, suggesting it's not like he would pull a building permit tomorrow and have the house completed the next day, would like to get the foundation started and do the home construction this winter. Mr. Marinella provided the Planning Board with an updated construction schedule dated October 18, 2011.

Barbara Gaudette agreed with Mr. Palmer, stating the rules are specific; this request does not fit the model and fears the Board would loose control. Mr. Dolber indicated that she disagrees.

Richard Griggs mentioned that he is new to the Planning Board, however given the current real estate market conditions and economic climate overall, allowing this to happen may help advance the project,

noting that he too would like to see the development completed and succeed. Mr. Palmer commented if the developer wanted to start home construction this winter then they should have started the roadway sooner. Ms. Gaudette stressed consistency and agreed with Mr. Palmer.

Mark Anderson (Heritage Design Group) clarified that his client is not looking for a lot release from the Covenant, simply looking to further and help facilitate the project by constructing a model home of the first lot. Mr. Anderson suggested that they could put a trailer on the site if desired; does not see the harm in allowing a model home.

Mr. Palmer explained that no one is arguing the idea of a model home; certain things need to be met. Mr. Anderson added we are not looking to do things out of sequence, not looking to sell the lot. We view this as great for sales for the development.

Ms. Gaudette repeated; should follow the process we have been doing. Questioning, what happens if the house is done and the roadway does not advance.

Mr. Anderson replied, not a release of the Covenant, the lot would remain restricted and could not be sold. The Marinellas are currently working within Phase I, the landscaping at the entrance will be done; inspection have been done with numerous onsite reviews (JH Engineering Group, the Board's consulting engineer), the drainage is working; Phase I will be done and working as construction on the model home is completed. Marinellas are trying to attract people into the development; this would help accelerate the project, a large project (65-house lots).

Mr. Griggs agreed and concurred with Mr. Anderson, suggesting it would be a win-win for everyone. Ms. Gaudette stated that she is willing to take a risk and wished the Marinellas well. Mr. Anderson respects the opinions of the Board and assured them their concerns would be addressed. Ms. Gaudette suggested that a decision to grant should include language specific to restricting the release of the lot from the Covenant (referencing the Covenant).

Upon motion duly made (Griggs) and seconded (Gaudette) the Planning Board voted (3-1 [Palmer opposed]) to ALLOW for the issuance of a building permit for the construction of a "model home" to be constructed on Lot #1 (AP 16/LOT 209) Rebecca Road within the Camelot subdivision. In making said determination the Planning Board noted said lot (Lot #1) shall remain restricted to the Covenant and shall not be subject to lot release at this time.

IV. 279 DOUGLAS ROAD (BERKOWITZ TRUCKING) -REVIEW/DECISION

§173-49.1 [Site Plan Review]

Janet Dolber read meeting notice. R. Gary Bechtholdt II, Town Planner noted that the meeting notice requirements had been satisfied. Upon motion duly made (Griggs) and seconded (Palmer) the Planning Board opened its meeting to consider the site plan application of Douglas Road Industrial Realty Trust for proposed site improvements which include site clearing for an exterior gravel storage area adjacent to the Berkowitz Trucking facility; the subject property is located on Douglas Road (Assessors Map 3 Parcel(s) 119, 120, 122 & 123) and within the Industrial –One (I-1) Zoning District.

Paul Hutnak (Heritage Design Group) reviewed site plan, noting proposal includes utilizing the existing curb-cut at 279 Douglas Road (Berkowitz Trucking); application to clear and re-grade adjacent property for outdoor storage of trucks and dumpsters. Mr. Hutnak explained site improvements would include gravel storage area with fencing along Douglas Road, and an infiltration basin to capture stormwater. Mr. Hutnak briefly reviewed the existing the proposed grading of the site. Mr. Hutnak noted that a Request for Determination of Applicability (RDA) would be filed with the Conservation Commission as part of this proposal in regards to its proximity to Meadow Pond.

Ms. Dolber opened discussion with members of the Planning Board and then solicited input and comment from residents in the audience.

Edward Palmer questioned if the dumpsters would be full or empty when stored; Mr. Hutnak indicated that the dumpsters would be empty. Mr. Palmer indicated that he did not have a problem with the proposal.

Paul Beaudoin of 37 Hastings Drive inquired about precautions made to minimize impacts to adjacent wetlands and screening along the rear of the property. Mark Anderson (Heritage Design Group) explained that the storage area would be 10 – 12 feet lower than the rear of the property; the gravel storage area will be situated in a “bowl” which will help screen and direct runoff.

Mr. Beaudoin expressed concerns of proximity to the residential neighborhood citing additional noise and increased visibility. Richard Griggs asked if proposal would result in an expansion of operations at the Berkowitz Trucking facility. Mr. Hutnak responded; no, it would not.

A resident inquired about the distance from the gravel storage area to the proposed fencing along Douglas Road; commenting that the dumpsters and/or vehicles could damage the fence. Mr. Hutnak suggested a buffer or rip-rap swale could be installed to lessen the likelihood of dumpster and trucks being stored too close to the fence. Additionally, resident questioned if the “chipper” would be relocated onsite, closer to the residential properties and asked about hours of operation.

Barbara Gaudette inquired if the property was entirely within the Industrial zone; Mr. Hutnak noted the site was within the Industrial –One (I-1) Zone, which runs along Douglas Road.

Mr. Anderson reiterated previous statement made by Paul Hutnak; that the proposal before the Planning Board does not include an expansion of any operations, just an outdoor storage area for the trucks and dumpsters.

Lori Lofstrom of 61 Cliffe Road asked about the types of vehicles and dumpsters to be stored onsite and who owns the trucks.

Shelley Buma representing the Citizens for the Preservation of Northbridge reviewed with the Planning Board comments and concerns which are detailed in a communication dated October 18, 2011 (copies of which distributed to the Board and included in the file).

Ms. Buma reminded Planning Board members the purpose of site plan review is to protect the health, safety, convenience and general welfare of the residents of Northbridge. Ms. Buma suggested that the application is grossly deficient and the Board should withhold action until all requirements are satisfied.

Ms. Buma questioned if earth removal triggered additional review/approval from the town's Earth Removal Board and where the excess material may go?

Ms. Buma noted the absence of the signature and address of all owners of record of the 4.86 acre; the deed submitted pertains to 2.15 acres owned by Douglas Road Industrial Realty Trust but does not identify owner of the remaining 2.71 acres. R. Gary Bechtholdt II (Town Planner) asked if easements will be formalized and recorded with the adjacent property for access and drainage.

Ms. Buma suggested that a traffic impact study should also be provided and objected to Mr. Hutnak reference to the Mumford River as Meadow Pond, noting the Conservation Commission has rendered a decision stating this waterbody has riverine characteristics and thus the Wetland Protection Act regulations would apply.

Mr. Bechtholdt reviewed the site plan review submittal process noting upon receipt the Planning office distributes copies of the same to the various municipal departments, boards and commission for review and comment, additionally a technical review meeting is held where the applicant/engineer can review application with department heads for initial comments and questions. Mr. Bechtholdt noted in addition to the Planning office memorandum comments were received from the Board of Health, Sewer Department, Fire Chief (copies of which included in the Planning Board's packet) as well as received communications from the Inspector of Buildings, Conservation Commission and letter from Denise O'Brien of 17 Cliffe Road. Mr. Bechtholdt also noted that Paul Hutnak provided a drainage narrative and revised plan, however the Planning office has not had the opportunity to review.

Given the need for additional review, the Planning Board upon motion duly made (Gaudette) and seconded (Palmer) voted (4-0) to CONTINUE the site plan review to Tuesday, November 08, 2011 at 7:05 PM to allow additional time for receipt of correspondence from municipal departments and provide an opportunity for the Applicant/Engineer to review comments received.

V. THE HILLS @ WHITINSVILLE -DISCUSSION

Open Space Lots

Mark Anderson (Heritage Design Group) met with the Planning Board to provide an update on the open space lots within the Hills at Whitinsville subdivision. Mr. Anderson presented the Board with a plan showing the Open Space Lots dated October 18, 2011, noting the subdivision was approved in 1998 where approximately 120 acres of open space was designated within the development; today the project is 99% complete with home construction and other improvements within the Marston Heights (Condo Lot #2) ongoing. Mr. Anderson explained that Mr. Jolles would like to turnover the open space to the town. Mr. Anderson added that the Conservation Commission is satisfied with the open space.

Mr. Anderson indicated that an ANR plan would be submitted in the upcoming weeks to adjust the lots lines of Open Space Lot 2R and the abutting properties. R. Gary Bechtholdt II (Town Planner) reminded the Board that in addition to submitting the ANR, it was agreed that the Marinellas would also correct the runoff issue from this open space lot, noting that it was his understanding that the Marinellas had already secured permission to tie into the drainage on Morgan Road from DPW and they were simply waiting until after spring when the groundwater levels were lower to allow for such construction and installation.

Additionally, Mr. Bechtholdt also mentioned a special permit application for common driveway is also to be submitted to include all parties of interested, including the property owner where upon the common driveway currents is. Mr. Anderson indicated that the common driveway and drainage concerns have been worked out and application(s) would be submitted within the next few weeks.

Mr. Bechtholdt commented that it has not been an easy process to get all the homeowners on the same page, for a while it did not look like it was going to get done.

Barbara Gaudette expressed concern that the access to the open space lots were unmarked and overtime the open space may be lost, and incorporated into the abutter private lots. Ms. Gaudette suggested some sort of signage or markings should be installed.

Mr. Anderson noted that his client, Len Jolles is not willing to any markings; adding Mr. Jolles is in tax-taking process with the town for the open space, however he would prefer to gift the land town. Mr. Bechtholdt noted he was not aware and suggested perhaps the Marinellas would be willing to erect some sort of markings; Mr. Anderson agreed and said he would talk with them. Mr. Bechtholdt added, not to complicate things but should the Board solicit input form the Conservation Commission on possible signage.

OLD/NEW BUSINESS

Approval of Meeting Minutes –September 13, 2011 & September 20, 2011

Tabled

Fall Annual Town Meeting –Tuesday, October 25, 2011

Point of information –no discussion

2012 Planning Board Meeting Dates –Review

Having the need to review proposed dated, the Planning Board tabled this matter to its next meeting.

Master Plan Update –Next Steps/Discussion

Tabled

12/27/11 –Vote to Cancel Meeting

Due to potential lack of quorum the Planning Board upon motion duly made (Gaudette) and seconded (Griggs) voted (4-0) TO CANCEL its meeting scheduled for December 27, 2011. Mr. Palmer indicated that he will likely not be available Tuesday, November 22, 2011; as such the Planning Board will consider cancellation/postponement at its next meeting (11.08.11).

Planning Board –Vacancy

Point of information –No discussion

Farnum Circle –Status

Mr. Bechtholdt informed the Planning Board since its last meeting he contacted the (new) Director of Public Works, who did not recall visiting the site with him earlier in September; he would need to be brought up

to speed before offering comments. Mr. Bechtholdt added not having a Highway Superintendent at this time may also delay a follow-up from DPW at this time.

Mail –Review

In addition to the mail listed (see attached) the Planning Board noted receipt of the following communications: J&F Marinella Development, Inc letter dated October 05, 2011; Camelot definitive subdivision plan –sheet 13 of 42 “Phasing Plan”; copies of letter(s) dated October 12, 2011 sent to the two (2) abutting property owners to Lot #1 (model home); site plan review public meeting notice 279 Douglas Road (Berkowitz Trucking); Review Report Form (Douglas Road); Technical Review Meeting notes (Douglas Road); Community Planning & Development memorandum dated October 07, 2011 (Douglas Road); Site Plan Review Checklist (Douglas Road); email communication received October 12, 2011 from Jeanne Gniadek, Board of Health (Douglas Road); email communication received October 12, 2011 from Mark Kuras, Sewer Superintendent (Douglas Road –Berkowitz Trucking); email communication received October 06, 2011 from Fire Chief Gary Nestor (Douglas Road); DRAFT Planning Board meeting dates 2012; Daily Northbridge online news article (Deb Gauthier –October 12, 2011) regarding Master Plan Update workshop; Master Plan Update Workshop handout; letter from Denise O’Brien (17 Cliffe Road) concerning Douglas Road/Berkowitz Trucking; and plan showing the Open Space Lots dated October 18, 2011 (The Hills at Whitinsville).

Other

Mr. Bechtholdt advised the Planning Board that he was contacted by Bill and Patty Giannopoulos concerning modification of the site development of Linwood Mill to include a paved access driveway and additional parking for one of the outbuildings located along the southeasterly side (rear) of the property. Mr. Bechtholdt briefly reviewed plan provided with the Planning Board; members felt proposal was consistent with original approval(s). Mr. Bechtholdt suggested that he would request a more formalized plan showing in greater detail the access and additional parking spaces for an upcoming meeting.

Mr. Bechtholdt mentioned that he was recently contacted by the Planning Director in Sutton concerning Gilmore Drive and efforts to have their portion of the roadway accepted as a public way in Sutton. Due to timing issues with coordinating similar in Northbridge the portion of roadway in town will have to wait until the next Spring Annual Town Meeting (2012). Mr. Bechtholdt advised the Planning Board that the bill to create a National Park was introduced in the House of Representatives on October 13, 2011.

Adjournment

Having no additional business the Planning Board adjourned its meeting of Tuesday, October 18, 2011 at 8:37 PM.

Respectfully submitted,

Approved by Planning Board –

R. Gary Bechtholdt II
Town Planner

Cc: Town Clerk