



NORTHBRIDGE PLANNING BOARD MINUTES

Tuesday, August 10, 2010



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

The following members of the public attend the meeting: John Hendrick (331 Goldthwaite Road), Glen Bloem (335 Purgatory Road), and William J. Mello Jr. (Green Committee). Mike Yerka (Yerka Engineering) was also in attendance.

I. CITIZENS FORUM

None

II. FORM A'S

None

III. (7:05PM) FAIRLAWN CHRISTIAN REFORMED CHURCH –PUBLIC MEETING

Site Plan Review

Janet Dolber read meeting notice, the Planning Board opened meeting and the Town Planner noted the required posting and notifications were satisfied for this public meeting. Mike Yerka of Yerka Engineering provided an overview of the project, noting proposal to construct a 5,630 square-foot addition and formalizing the parking area would be broken down into multiple phases depending on funding of the church.

Board members reviewed site plan entitled "Site Plan Design Phase II –Fairlawn Christian Reformed Church" dated June 01, 2010 with Mr. Yerka and Mr. Bloem. Mr. Yerka noted that the Conservation Commission has reviewed proposal and has given the okay to proceed with the additions, however noted that the Commission will review the planned parking lot expansion/reconfiguration before any site construction begins.

Mr. Yerka provided an overview on the various phases of what is being called Phase 2, noting completion may not be realized until 5 to 10 years. Mr. Yerka explained that phase 2a would consist of the first addition to the church, phase 2b another addition to the church, 2c...etc. Mr. Bechtholdt reminded Mr. Yerka that a project narrative detailing the proposed uses and planned construction sequencing would be very helpful and suggested that the title of the site plan be changed from "Site Plan Design Phase II –Fairlawn Christian Reformed Church" to something like Site Master Plan for Fairlawn Church and identify on the plan the various project phases, including Phase I which was approved in 2009.

Mr. Yerka explained that a Technical Review meeting was held in July, where representatives from the Whitinsville Water Company, Inspector of Buildings, Town Planner, and the Director of Public Works provided initial comments. Mr. Yerka provided the Board members with an Existing Conditions plan to better show current site conditions, noting that the site plan submitted showed existing and proposed on one sheet. Mr. Yerka offered an overview of the drainage and planned parking lot reconfiguration.

Ms. Gaudette noted that she recalls (Donna Williams) MassAudubon/Blackstone River Coalition may have been looking for pilot projects to do low impact design of parking areas and thought perhaps the church's proposed parking lot reconfiguration with drainage swale and landscape-island would be a good candidate for the program. Mr. Bechtholdt agreed and indicated that he would contact Ms. Williams to see if they are looking for projects.

John Hendrick of 331 Goldthwaite Road, abutter to the parking lot expansion (property southwest of Fairlawn Church), inquired about the overall proposal noting that he recently purchased and asked if additional shrubs or screen could be planted to further screen the parking area. Mr. Yerka and Mr. Bloem agreed to work with Mr. Hendrick, indicating that they would be willing to plant an additional tree/shrub. Mr. Hendrick noted that he was not opposed to the project and just wanted to gain an understanding of what was being proposed.

Mr. Bechtholdt noted that he has provided Yerka Engineering and the Planning Board with the following communications: Review Report form dated July 08, 2010; Site Plan Review Checklist prepared August 05, 2010; Technical Review memorandum dated July 15, 2010; Facsimile to Mr. Yerka dated August 06, 2010; and Conservation Commission memorandum dated July 28, 2010. Mr. Bechtholdt noted that a number of town departments have yet to provided their comments and will kindly remind those to provide input to the Planning Board.

Mr. Bechtholdt reminded the Board that they voted to engage the services of Cullinan Engineering to review the drainage and asked if the Planning Board wanted Mr. Yerka to provide additional prints and information at this time. The Board agreed the no additional prints (site plan) would be required at this time and suggested that they may consider the proposed addition(s) separate from the planned parking lot expansion/reconfiguration and review of the proposed drainage structures. The Board members agreed because the project was to be phased out over a period of multiple-years that they could consider the parking and drainage later. Mr. Bechtholdt asked Mr. Yerka to provide the project narrative and note the various phases along with projected time tables and he would begin to draft up a decision for the Planning Board.

Mr. Bechtholdt suggested that the Board continue its review to August 24, 2010, Ms. Gaudette noted that she would not be able to attend. Mr. Yerka and Mr. Bloem agreed to postpone meeting until the first meeting in September. Upon motion duly made and seconded the Planning Board voted (5-0) to continue the site plan review to Tuesday, September 14, 2010 at 7:05 PM to afford additional time for the applicant/engineer to provide additional information and the Town Planner to draft a decision for consideration of the Planning Board.

IV. GREEN COMMUNITIES INITIATIVE -DISCUSSION

Vote to sponsor Zoning Amendment Article(s)

William Mello met with the Planning Board on behalf of the Green Committee and provided a general overview of his thoughts and concerns relative to the Stretch Code and energy reduction initiatives; noting that a lot of energy conservation may be achieved by simply locating a house to take advantage of position of the sun or to reduce the size of the lots, creating a more tightly-packed dense area to reduce roadway impervious and provide protection from winds.

Mr. Bechtholdt reviewed with the Planning Board the five Criteria of designation for a Green Community; Criteria #1 By-right siting of renewable energy facilities; #2 Expedited permitting; #3 Energy Use Baseline Inventory & Reduction Plan; #4 Fuel Efficient Vehicles; and #5 Minimize Life-cycle cost in Energy (Stretch Code). Mr. Mello then informed the Board of some of his concerns with the stretch code provisions (Criteria 5). Board members also

Mr. Bechtholdt explained that VHB, a consulting firm has been working with the town in preparing an Action Plan for Northbridge, a draft was provided electronically previously however should Board members desire a hardcopy copies will be provided. Mr. Mello mentioned he may have received a copy however has not reviewed. Mr. Bechtholdt suggested that the Green Committee should review the Action Plan prepared for Northbridge.

Ms. Dolber states that the purpose of tonight's discussion with the Green Committee was to gain an understanding of where the Green Committee was at with the 5 Criteria, noting Criteria 1 & Criteria 2 may require zoning amendments to which the Planning Board would need to hold public hearings prior to any Fall Annual Town Meeting action. Ms. Dolber continued, upon the recommendation of the Green Committee the Board may vote to sponsor zoning article(s). The stretch code is a building code provision and such the Board may only take an advisory role. Mr. Bechtholdt added if the Green Committee recommends adoption of the Stretch Code they should recommend that the Board of Selectmen vote to sponsor an article for Town Meeting.

Mr. Bechtholdt asked how often the Green Committee meets; accordingly Mr. Mello noted that the committee meets twice a month (first and third Tuesday) depending on whether or not we can get committee members to attend. Mr. Bechtholdt followed up asking if the Green Committee could review the Action Plan and provide the Planning Board and Board of Selectmen with recommendations so arrangements could be made for any required public hearings prior to Town Meeting.

Planning Board members thanked Mr. Mello for attending.

V. 43D EXPEDITED PERMITTING -DISCUSSION

Vote to sponsor Zoning Amendment Article(s)

Mr. Bechtholdt indicated that he provided the Planning Board previously with copy of communications from CMRPC, Northbridge's regional planning agency who is also contracted to perform a zoning bylaw review/assessment as part of the town 43D initiative. Mr. Bechtholdt added that he hoped to have additional information to share at this time; however receipt of such from CMRPC had been delayed. Mr. Bechtholdt explained that he will look to meet with CMRPC in the coming weeks. Mr. Bechtholdt concluded that it did not appear zoning amendment articles would be ready for consideration at the Fall Town Meeting. Mr. Bechtholdt said he would follow-up with CMRPC and include this matter on the next agenda for update.

OLD / NEW BUSINESS

Minutes –Approval

None

2010 Fall Annual Town Meeting –Tuesday, October 26, 2010

Planning Board noted the date of the upcoming Town Meeting.

2010 FATM Warrant –Friday, September 10, 2010 (closed)

Planning Board noted date/time for the closure of the Fall Annual Town Meeting warrant. Mr. Bechtholdt informed the Board that they have one more meeting scheduled before the closing of the warrant.

Planning Board's Peer Review (Malley Engineering) –Discussion

The Planning Board discussed with the Town Planner James Malley's performance (Malley Engineering) and his future role in providing engineering oversight on behalf of the Board. The Planning Board agreed to a four (4) month review period, where they would re-evaluate performance standards. The Board directed the Town Planner to contact Mr. Malley and review with him standards and overview of his services which include: construction oversight (roadway, utilities, drainage, etc) to ensure conformance with the Planning Board approval(s) and state/local standards; coordinate roadway & utility inspections; inspect erosion control measures; prepare monthly progress reports (and as required); and attend construction meetings and inspections as needed. Planning Board also mentioned that Mr. Malley should also utilize the subdivision inspection form in addition to his reporting.

Open Space Plan / Master Plan Update –Status

Mr. Bechtholdt suggested that it may be a good exercise for the Planning Board to host another public workshop as part of the Master Plan and Open Space updates. Mr. Bechtholdt expressed his concerns with weaning interests from committee members and felt hosting a public workshop would (1.) help re-energize folks and (2.) bring new interests from other residents to assist on the updates.

Mr. Bechtholdt noted that he is concerned that in the eyes of the general public there is not much to show for his and the Board's efforts. Ms. Gaudette felt the Town Planner has done a quite a bit to advance the Master Plan and Open Space Plan updates. Ms. Gaudette added that she believes the Open Space Plan update could be completed this fall/winter. The Planning Board agreed to host a public workshop on Tuesday, September 28, 2010 7:00PM (Town Hall) for the Master Plan and Open Space Plan updates.

Whitinsville Local Historic District –Discussion

Planning Board noted that the Board of Selectmen vote (08/09/10) to create an ad-hoc Local Historic District Study Committee. Mr. Bechtholdt suggested additional information would be provided at a later date.

Green Meadow Court –Status/Street Acceptance

Mr. Bechtholdt noted that the Planning office is still looking for something in writing from the Highway Superintendent confirming no issues relative to the subdivision roadway and specifically the drainage pond. Mr. Bechtholdt added that Mr. Magowan on several occasions has stated that the drainage pond is all set and the developer does not need to perform any additional work and reminded the Board that the homeowner where the drainage pond is located (drainage easement) has express concerns in the past about the developer and was hesitant in signing-off on certain documents prepared by Attorney Henry Lane on behalf of the developer in preparation for street acceptance. Mr. Bechtholdt indicated that he would contact the Highway Superintendent once again to solicit a written report on the status of Green Meadow Court; similarly Mr. Bechtholdt will contact Mr. Lane about formal street acceptance.

Rocky Road –Street Acceptance

Mr. Bechtholdt informed the Planning Board that he had sent communication to Town Counsel regarding the formal acceptance of this roadway some time ago and reminded the Board that though the town called in the bond and has contracted with third parties Mr. Charlie Michaud, the developer has been very cooperative and has provided additional supplemental documentation that may be helpful in the formal acceptance of this roadway. Mr. Bechtholdt noted that he hopes that Planning Board will sponsor an article for the Fall Town Meeting to accept Rocky Road.

Ash Street (Extension) –Status

Mr. Bechtholdt noted, like Green Meadow Court he will need to check with Attorney Henry Lane (represents developer) on the status of Ash Street, adding that the Board will recall consideration for street acceptance has come up before only to be withdrawn at Town Meeting. Ms. Gaudette recalled there was an issue with an easement which she thought was resolved, however apparently not.

Castle Hill Estates -Status

Mr. Bechtholdt reminded the Planning Board that the Planning office has requested on multiple occasions the Department of Public Works provide, as requested by the Board a report of the Castle Hill Estates subdivision to noting any discrepancies (sidewalks, drainage, roadway, etc). Mr. Bechtholdt again noted that he arranged and attended two (2) separate site inspections with the DPW in May 2010, however no reporting has been received to date from the Department of Public Works. The Planning Board needs the input from the DPW so they may provide the developer with a list of discrepancies and advise the developer (Blackstone-Chicago) that he has x-days to complete the necessary work or the Planning Board will initiate the process of calling in the performance bond.

Mr. Curtin explained to the Planning Board that he visited the Castle Hill subdivision and observed the two repaired catchbasins, however during his visit noticed another sunken structure on Dublin Way. Mr. Bechtholdt thought Dublin Way may be a town accepted roadway, however would need to check as he recalls a portion of one of the roadways may be within two subdivision developments (Castle Hill & Clover Hill). Mr. Bechtholdt will contact the DPW.

The Board expressed disappointment in DPW's continued failures to provide necessary information and questioned why the Director of Public Works has not been receptive to the Planning Board's multiple requests for this project and other subdivision developments in town. Mr. Bechtholdt added that it was his hope to provide the developer with a deficiency list and either work with the developer or a third party, if the town called in the performance bond, and then have the roadways within Castle Hill Estates ready for consideration at this fall town meeting.

Mr. Bechtholdt cautioned the Planning Board, because the status of this subdivision project has not progressed this construction season residents will likely become increasingly frustrated, especially if snow plowing and sanding become an issue like last year. Mr. Bechtholdt suggested when the plowing/sanding calls come in to the DPW office from residents the DPW will likely direct those complaints to the Planning office as they have in the past. The Planning Board expressed their concern and hoped this would not be the case because DPW failed the Board and more specifically the residents of Castle Hill Estates.

The Planning Board directed the Town Planner to write a letter to the Director of Public Works to request reports and to once again inform him of the Boards disappointment in the DPW's lack of response to multiple requests. The Planning Board noted that they understand there is a third-party to review/inspect projects on the Planning Board's behalf however it is understood that because the subdivision roadways will ultimately become town accepted roads they are troubled why the DPW would take such a hands-off approach. Board members also noted that they have look to assist the DPW in preparing the subdivision inspection forms.

Mail –Review

In addition to the mail listed (see attached) the Planning Board noted receipt of the following communications; email communication from DPW Director sent August 05, 2010 regarding Green Committee joint-meeting with the Planning Board; Planning memorandum dated August 05, 2010 regarding Malley Engineering; Malley Engineering report dated July 30, 2010 regarding Presidential Farms Phase 3; email communication form Town Manager sent July 30, 2010 regarding DCR survey; email communication from Town Planner sent July 22, 2010 regarding stretch code; letter dated July 22, 2010 from Attorney Henry Lane regarding proposed wind turbine(s) to be located off Upon Street; copy of letter(s) from Inspector of Building dated July 21, 2010 & July 29, 2010 regarding wind turbines; copy of letter dated July 19, 2010 from FEMA regarding digital flood insurance rate map updates; DPW letter dated July 23, 2010 regarding Shining Rock subdivision water system; copy of letter dated January 20, 2010 from Whitinsville Water Company regarding Shining Rock water infrastructure; email communication from Janice Robins sent August 05, 2010 regarding Hillside Gardens covenant release; copy of Sewer Department letter dated November 09, 2009 regarding the Camelot project; Blackstone Valley Partnership survey form regarding HUD grant application; communication/survey from DCR regarding Zoning of DCR Parks & Forests; and copy of letter dated July 21, 2010 from Massachusetts Historical Commission regarding allocation of additional state rehabilitation tax credit funds for the Linwood Mill.

Other

The Town Planner informed the Board that he had asked the Sewer Superintendent to provide the Planning Board with an update on the review of the proposed sewer expansion for the Camelot residential subdivision and noted that he only received a duplicate copy of a letter dated November 09, 2009. Mr. Bechtholdt suggested that he would talk with the Sewer Superintendent again as it appears he misunderstood what was being requested.

Adjournment

Having no additional business the Planning Board adjourned its meeting of Tuesday, August 10, 2010 at or about 9:30 PM.

Respectfully submitted,

R. Gary Bechtholdt II
Northbridge Town Planner

Cc: Town Clerk