TOWN OF NORTHBRIDGE, MASSACHUSETTS

COMMUNITY PLANNING & DEVELOPMENT

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MEMORANDUM

COPY

Date: October 09, 2013

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

From: R. Gary Bechtholdt II, Town Planner

RE: QUARTERLY REPORT (JULY-SEPTEMBER 2013)
Community Planning & Development Office

Please accept this as the Community Planning & Development's quarterly report for July-September 2013. Provided below is a summation of projects, applications, meetings, and initiatives considered.

RESIDENTIAL SUBDIVISIONS

The Camelot –Home construction continues to progress with seventeen (17) homes completed or under construction with the potential of an additional six (6) building permits pending. The Planning Board approved an amendment to the project phasing allowing for five (5) additional house lots to be included in Phase I of the development. Developer shall work with the Sewer Superintendent in addressing known concerns specific to the sewer pump station installed within the subdivision.

Carpenter Estates –Planning Board considered and granted a construction change to allow developer to design and employ Low Impact Development techniques to address stormwater within a portion of the approved subdivision development. As part of its consideration the Planning Board solicited input from JH Engineering Group (consulting engineer), the Conservation Commission and the Department of Public Works. Low Impact Development (LID) is a stormwater management option where stormwater is collected on site, filtered through vegetation and recharged into the ground; where appropriate a more natural alternative to conventional stormwater collection systems.

Farnum Circle & Green Meadow Court –Subdivisions are incomplete and/or remain unaccepted public ways; the Planning Board may look to review and revisit these developments after the Fall Annual Town Meeting.

Hemlock Estates/Pine Knoll –The senior living development known as Pine Knoll is complete/built-out; fifteen (15) of the thirty-one (31) single-family house lots have also been developed or under construction. Developer is to provide the Planning Board with an updated status report/construction schedule regarding remaining phase(s) and current outstanding issues. Developer shall work with the Sewer Superintendent in addressing known concerns specific to the sewer pump station installed within the subdivision.

Hillside Garden Estates –Due to the developer's continued lack of response and failure to address concerns the Planning Board issued directive to withhold sign-off on future building permits until such time the developer addresses known outstanding issues; includes abandoned waterline services; roadway construction; streetlights; etc. Six (6) of the nine (9) single-family house lots have been developed (site may also includes a potential retreat lot). Developer recently contacted Whitinsville Water Company regarding abandoned services and plans to meet with the Planning Board in October to review outstanding concerns and seek permission to develop one of the remaining house lots.

Presidential Farms -Construction continues within Phase III & IV; developer shall work with the Planning Board concerning required playground & bikeway/walking path improvements or provide for suitable alternative(s) prior to commencement of Phase V.

Shining Rock Golf Community -Majority of the lot development has been completed; home construction on Shining Rock Drive (remaining portion) and Fairway Drive is ongoing; foundation permits for the 14-townhouse units have been issued; with building construction of the 5-plex underway. Norwood Bank continues to oversee construction of homes on Shining Rock Drive.

ANR PLANS

The Planning Board approved three (3) ANR plans; with an additional application withdrawn.

SITE DEVELOPMENTS

Ashton Place –Redevelopment of property (formerly Northbridge Nursing Home) is nearing substantial completion; eleven (11) of the 23-apartment units have been issued occupancy permits. Planning Board and members of the Zoning Board conducted a site visit earlier this quarter and seemed very pleased with the work to date.

Linwood Mill Lofts –Developer met with Safety Committee (July 17, 2013) to review potential pedestrian crosswalk locations on Linwood Avenue. DPW –Highway Superintendent and Director of Public Works are to provide developer with guidance documents and town specifications, after which the Safety Committee will revisit proposal; at this time still awaiting input from the DPW.

Marston Heights –Planning Board met with developer and residents of the private development (Quarry Road/Edmond Circle) located within the Hills at Whitinsville subdivision to review ongoing outstanding issues specific to site development plan. As a result of meeting(s) developer addressed a number of concerns; Planning Board and developer mutually agreed to set a date of November 12, 2013 to complete remaining punchlist items, after which Planning Board shall contact the Building Inspector/Zoning Enforcement Officer regarding potential zoning violations of the site development approval.

Osterman Commence Park –Planning Board issued Special Permit [Planned Business Development] and Site Development Plan approvals [Phase 1 & 2] for subject property located off Church Street Extension. Planned Business Development (PBD) will include a ±4,600 LF roadway (private drive); ±26.4 acres of dedicated open space; and ±206,500 square-feet of building space at build-out; Phase 1 includes ±1,575 LF of roadway from Church Street Extension, a ±24,000 SF Medical office building and a ±12,000 SF Office

building; Phase 2 includes ±1,2750 LF of roadway (wetland/resource crossing). Reference is made to Planning Board Certificate of Approval dated July 31, 2013 and Special Permit Decision [01-SPP-2013].

St. Camillus Health Center –Planning Board issued Site Development Approval (July 31, 2013) for addition of eight (8) parking spaces, landscaping and restriping of existing parking area; original application was reduced in scope and longer includes additional parking to the rear of the property. Planning Board is awaiting receipt of revised plan and narrative from Applicant/Engineer.

Self-Storage Units - Planning Board issued Site Development Approval (August 14, 2013) for construction of a ±2,500 square-foot self-storage units to be sited on abutting parcel of 546 Providence Road (Harbro).

ZONING AMENDMENTS

Large-Scale Solar Photovoltaic Installation –Planning Board conducted public hearing (September 17, 2013) pursuant to Mass General Laws Chapter 40A Section 5; upon taking public testimony Board voted (4-0) to support and recommend zoning amendment article(s), noting provision would provide the town with clear and concise procedures for siting facilities in the future. Presently large-scale solar may be considered a power plant permitted within the industrial zones however no formal review or approval process established. Planning Board also voted its support to permit such use within the Industrial-1 & Industrial-2 as well as the Business-3 Zoning District.

MEDICAL MARIJUANA TREATMENT CENTERS

Since the adoption of a temporary zoning moratorium (2013 Spring Annual Town Meeting) the Community Planning & Development office has been working with the Board of Health Administrator in reviewing Department of Public Health (DPH) regulations as well as potential land use and other local regulations; multiple meetings have been held with the Town Manager, Building Inspector and Police Chief to discuss next steps. A follow-up meeting is scheduled for October to review (draft) model bylaws offered by Town Counsel. Initial discussions have been had with the Board of Health and Planning Board; a zoning amendment establishing land use provisions and siting of potential treatment centers will be considered at the 2014 Spring Annual Town Meeting.

OPEN SPACE & RECREATION PLAN UPDATE

The Community Planning & Development office continues to assist the Planning Board and the Ad-hoc update committee on updating the town's 2002 Open Space & Recreation Plan. The OSRP update shall help facilitate future preservation and protection of Northbridge's natural/historic landscapes; improve and expand recreation opportunities; as well as identify priority land for habitat and water resource protection. Updating the plan will provide the town with the means to assess existing inventory, indentify potential improvements and expansions; maintain and enhance community character; and promote the preservation and management of land for wildlife habitat, water quality and public recreation.

COMMUNITY PRESERVATION ACT (CPA)

The Planning Board has had informal discussion regarding potential public outreach specific to local adoption considerations of the Community Preservation Act (CPA). The CPA may be adopted by ballot

referendum, where a percentage (up to 3%) is surcharged on local property tax; CPA funds (with a match from the state) may be used for open space protection, historic preservation, affordable housing and (now) outdoor recreation.

TOWN HALL RESTORATION PROJECT

Over the past several months the Community Planning & Development office has overseen and administered the Massachusetts Historical Commissions Mass Preservation Projects Fund (MPPF –Round 18), a state matching-grant awarded to Northbridge ($45,000.00) for the Town Hall window restoration. A webpage devoted to track the Town Hall Restoration project was created by the Planning office earlier this year and will remain available online for the public to view. A Project Completion Report was submitted to Mass Historical Commission in July 2013; full reimbursement of the grant funds have been received by the town.

WASTEWATER SYSTEMS 20-YEAR CAPITAL IMPROVEMENT PLAN

Community Planning & Development provided comprehensive commentary to CDM-Smith regarding the town's (draft) Wastewater Systems 20-year Capital Improvement Plan. As noted in review memorandum issued, comments intended to assist layperson in understanding final report and how it may be used by local officials and others when funding for potential capital improvements are to be considered.

COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT BLOCK GRANT –DISASTER RECOVERY

In August 2013, the Department of Housing & Community Development (DHCD) announced potential disaster recovery funding as part of its Community Development Block Grant Program (CDBG-DR) /US Department of Housing & Urban Development; CDBG-DR funds may be applied only for specific disaster recovery-related purposes which resulted from five (5) eligible FEMA Disaster Declarations (2011-2012). In working with the Whitin Community Center and CMRPC (regional planning agency) the Town of Northbridge may apply for funds to assist in the acquisition and rehabilitation of buildings; specifically relocate the Rockdale Youth Center from the floodplain to the St. Peter Parish Building #3. At this time DHCD has not issued application or guidelines, once finalized additional information will be provided.

MASS DOWNTOWN INITIATIVE PROGRAM (MDI) –TECHNICAL ASSISTANCE GRANT

The Community Planning & Development office is considering application submittal to the Department of Housing & Community Development for its Technical Assistance program under the Massachusetts Downtown Initiative (MDI), where up to $10,000 in consultant services may be awarded. In talking with the Town Manger, the Planning office may solicit interest from the owner of the Whitin Machine Works (formerly) also known as the Shop to scope a program to prepare an Economic Development Strategy for the mill complex: may include existing conditions assessment; evaluation of tenant space; parking and land use analysis, as well as identify potential marketing for tenant; business start-up and incubator space. The application deadline is November 15, 2013; as discussions progress and scope defined additional information will be provided.

DEPARTMENT HEAD MEETINGS

- None

PLANNING BOARD MEETINGS

The Planning Board met six (6) times during this quarter; all approved meeting minutes of the Planning Board are posted on the town's website:

- July 09, 2013 (approved)
- July 23, 2013 (approved)
- August 13, 2013 (approved)
- August 27, 2013 (approved)
- September 10, 2013 (approved)
- September 17, 2013 (approved)

PLANNING BOARD SITE VISITS

The Planning Board conducted two (2) site visits during this quarter: Ashton Place and Camelot.

PLANNING BOARD VACANCY

By joint-appointment of the Planning Board and Board of Selectmen Mark Key was selected to fill the Planning Board vacancy created as result of the resignation of Edward Palmer; Mr. Key's appointment shall run until the next scheduled election (May 2014).

OPEN SPACE & RECREATION PLAN UPDATE COMMITTEE MEETINGS

The Open Space & Recreation Plan Update Committee (Ad-hoc) met three (3) times during this quarter:

- July 09, 2013; July 23, 2013 & September 12, 2013

SAFETY COMMITTEE MEETINGS

The Safety Committee met twice during this quarter; including a site visit at the Balmer School concerning traffic pattern concerns at the site driveway and along Crescent Street:

- July 17, 2013 & July 23, 2013

BOARD OF SELECTMEN MEETINGS

- September 30, 2013 –Zoning Amendment Article(s) Large-Scale Solar Photovoltaic Installation

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

Cc: Planning Board /File