



COMMUNITY PLANNING & DEVELOPMENT

R. Gary Bechtholdt II, Town Planner
7 Main Street Whitinsville, MA 01588
Phone: (508) 234.2447 Fax: (508) 234.0814
gbechtholdt@northbridgemass.org

MEMORANDUM

Date: April 04, 2014 / April 07, 2014

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

From: R. Gary Bechtholdt II, Town Planner 

RE: **QUARTERLY REPORT (JANUARY–MARCH 2014)**
Community Planning & Development Office

COPY

Please accept this as the Community Planning & Development 1st Quarter Report for 2014. Provided below is a summation of projects, applications, meetings, and initiatives during this quarter.

SUBDIVISIONS

Carpenter Estates -Located off Carpenter Road this single-access roadway was originally approved in 2007; includes 18 single-family homes and 45 acres of dedicated open space. Planning Board endorsed revised subdivision plan for Low Impact Development modification; construction has yet to commence. Reference is made to (original) Definitive Subdivision plan entitled "Carpenter Estates" dated June 20, 2006 prepared by Heritage Design Group [PL BK 861 PL No. 12]; Flexible Development Special Permit dated January 11, 2007 [BK 41827 PG 249]; Planning Board Certificate of Approval dated May 10, 2007 [BK 41827 PG 233]; Planning Board action dated July 26, 2013 [Low Impact Development]; & (new) Covenant dated October 24, 2013 [BK 52019 PG 367].

Camelot -Located off Hill Street and Hillcrest Road (w/the Hills at Whitinsville), subdivision development is to include 65 single-family house lots. Home construction continues within Phase I (as revised by the Planning Board). The developer (J&F Marinella) is to provide the Planning Board with an undated construction schedule and status report concerning outstanding issues (to be reviewed by the Board on April 22, 2014). JH Engineering Group, LLC has been engaged by the Planning Board to oversee construction of improvements approved for this subdivision development. Construction meetings with the various municipal departments will continue during this next construction season.

Farnum Circle –Two lot subdivision terminating in a cul-de-sac located off Hill Street (near Sprague Street); originally approved in 2002 the roadway and certain improvements remain incomplete. Planning Board, in an effort to have the developer complete work modified the definitive approval pursuant to MGL Ch 41 Sec 81W; waiving requirements for curbing, street trees, etc. Pursuant to MGL Ch 41 Sec 81U the Planning Board will notify developer (M. Lambert) of the remaining punchlist items (subdivision improvements); failure to complete work within 45-days may result in the Board to apply bond [Deposit of Money] for the benefit of the town to complete work to the extent possible (process undertaken for Castle Hill Estates and Rocky Road).

Hemlock Estates -Located off Gendron Street; originally approved in 2004 for 102-unit Senior Living development (Special Permit -Pine Knoll, an Adult Living Community) subdivision was modified in 2008; consisting of 21 townhouse units (Senior Living Dev.) and 31 single-family house lots (Flexible Development). Developer (J&F Marinella) continues to delay satisfying affordable housing component required by the Special Permit. Developer has yet to fully satisfy conditions of the subdivision approval (streetlights, looping waterline, etc); as such subdivision roadways remain unaccepted and incomplete. The developer is to provide the Planning Board with an updated construction schedule and status report concerning outstanding issues (to be reviewed by the Board on April 22, 2014). JH Engineering Group, LLC has been engaged by the Planning Board to oversee construction of the subdivision improvements approved for this subdivision development. Construction meetings with the various municipal departments will continue during this next construction season.

Hillside Garden Estates -Located off Thurston Avenue (Deanne Way); originally approved in 2005 for 18-unit Senior Living development, subdivision modified in 2010 to nine (9) single-family house lots. Roadway and subdivision improvements remain incomplete; the developer (John Barges) has been responsive to concerns raised however often delayed in taking action. Concerns raised by the Whitinsville Water Company (removing abandoned water services) have now since been addressed. The developer is to provide the Planning Board with an updated construction schedule and status report concerning outstanding issues (to be reviewed by the Board on April 22, 2014). JH Engineering Group, LLC has been engaged by the Planning Board to oversee construction of the subdivision improvements approved for this subdivision development. Construction meetings with the various municipal departments will continue as needed.

Presidential Farms -Located off Hill Street; consisting of Washington Street, Kennedy Circle, Wilson Street, Roosevelt Drive, and extending through Lincoln Circle; this single-family "flexible development" subdivision includes 105 house lots and ±40 acres of open space for passive & active recreation. Home construction continues within Phases III & IV; developer (David Brossi) has been very responsive to addressing concerns. Developer is to provide the Planning Board with an updated construction schedule and status report concerning outstanding issues, if any (to be reviewed April 22, 2014). JH Engineering Group, LLC has been engaged by the Planning Board to oversee construction of the subdivision improvements approved for this subdivision development. Construction meetings with the various municipal departments will continue as needed.

Shining Rock Golf Community -Majority of the development has been completed; house lot development on Shining Rock Drive (extension) and Fairway Drive remain. Shining Rock Developers, LLC has purchased remaining lots; a performance surety in the amount of \$68,988.50 (Form K) has been established with the town (Planning Board) to secure the completion of Fairway Drive. The developer is to provide the Planning Board with an updated construction schedule and status report concerning outstanding issues, if any (to be reviewed April 22, 2014). JH Engineering Group, LLC has been engaged by the Planning Board to oversee construction of the subdivision improvements approved for this subdivision development. Construction meetings with the various municipal departments will continue as needed.

ANR PLANS

The Planning Board reviewed/approved one (1) ANR plan during this quarter:

- Camelot subdivision -Conveyance of land, Parcel A (not a separate building lot) from Lot 43 to Lot 41 and conveyance of land, Parcel B (not a separate building lot) from Lot 44 to Lot 43; creating Lot(s) 41R, 43R & 44R along Joseph Circle and Rebecca Road within the Camelot subdivision.

SITE DEVELOPMENTS

4 & 16 North Main Street –Planning Board granted site plan development approval [Certificate of Approval dated March 12, 2014] for a gas station, convenience store and Dunkin Donuts (donut/coffee shop) for 4 & 16 North Main Street. Previous site approval (dated February 25, 2013) was for a gas station, auto service maintenance garage and convenience store for 4 North Main Street. With an option to purchase abutting parcel (16 North Main Street -former barber shop) the Applicant modified proposed site development plan, substituting the auto maintenance service garage with a Dunkin Donuts. As part of the (new) site development approval the Owner/Applicant has agreed to subsequent and secondary reviews of the Planning Board specific to queuing of vehicles (drive-thru service lane); if so determined by the Planning Board, the Owner/Applicant shall submit plan revisions and make physical alterations to the site entrance/exits to improve and promote safe pedestrian and vehicular travel on the public ways. Reference made to Special Permit decision [17-SP-2012] and Special Permit decision [14-SP-2013] issued by the Northbridge Zoning Board of Appeals regarding use(s).

Osterman Propane Facility -Construction of the ±12,500 square-foot maintenance facility is complete; Owner/Applicant is currently seeking Certificate of Compliance from the Conservation Commission and the issuance of a (full) Certificate of Occupancy from the Building Department.

Linwood Mill Lofts –At its meeting of March 19, 2014, the Safety Committee again reviewed with the Director of Public Works (and Highway Superintendent) the status of DPW providing EA Fish Development (developer) with town specification and requirements for installing a pedestrian crosswalk on Linwood Avenue; the DPW was to provide the developer with guidance documentation (in July 2013), however in March 2014 the Highway Superintendent provided (only) a link to the Town of Brookline which describes requirements for Brookline (not Northbridge); the Planning Board at its meeting of March 25, 2014 once again expressed its frustration with DPW (continued lack of action) and asked the Town Planner to contact the developer to review the pedestrian crosswalk installation.

Osterman Commerce Park (Phase I) –In action taken January 28, 2014 the Planning Board approved modification of the 24,000 square-foot medical office building (Phase I construction); to accommodate two (2) patient drop-off locations. As a result, a separate entrance driveway will now be sited along the private drive; the original access/egress drive will become an exit-only. Parking along the front of the building has also be relocated to accommodate the patient drop-off locations; the number of handicapped parking spaces has been maintained, however overall parking has been reduced by approximately twenty (20) from 160 to ±140 spaces. As per the town's Off-Street Parking Standards, one parking space is required for every 250 square-feet of net floor space; the medical office building

requires 96 parking spaces. Construction of the facility and other associated site improvements continue.

Large Scale Solar Photovoltaic Installation –The Planning Board is in receipt of application for a solar facility to be located off Lasell Road (& 25 Oakhurst Road –Sutton, MA); the Board commenced its review on March 25, 2014 continuing discussions to April 22, 2014. The proposed 1.3 MW solar electric generating facility (in Northbridge, MA) was filed pursuant to the town’s recently adopted Large-Scale Solar Photovoltaic Installation zoning bylaw (adopted October 2013). The Northbridge Safety Committee has reviewed proposal requiring a Knox-box or similar to be installed at the gated entrance for fire department personnel in the event of an emergency. Pursuant to the town’s zoning provision a financial surety may be required to ensure removal following decommissioning of use. The Sutton Planning Board is currently reviewing a similar site development application for proposal in Sutton.

ZONING AMENDMENTS

Registered Marijuana Dispensary –In action taken February 11, 2014 the Planning Board voted to sponsor two (2) zoning amendment articles for the 2014 Spring Annual Town Meeting: (1) amend §173-18.4 by deleting in its entirety “Temporary Moratorium on Medical Marijuana Treatment Centers” and replacing therewith a new §173-18.4 entitled “Registered Marijuana Dispensary” and (2) add Registered Marijuana Dispensary to §173-12 [Table of Use Regulations] to be permitted by Special Permit of the Planning Board within the Industrial-Two (I-2) Zoning District. At the close of its public hearing, the Planning Board on March 11, 2014 voted (5-0) to recommend zoning amendment articles (Art. 18 & 19).

Provided below is a general overview (summary) of the zoning amendment articles:

- Article #18 -This article will amend the town’s zoning bylaw by adding a new zoning provision entitled “Registered Marijuana Dispensary”. As you may recall at the 2013 Spring Annual Town Meeting the town adopted a temporary zoning moratorium on Medical Marijuana Treatment Centers; this moratorium will expire on June 30, 2014. Article #18 proposes to delete the temporary moratorium section of the zoning bylaw and replace it with a new provision for Registered Marijuana Dispensary (RMD). The new provision will define and regulate the siting of RMDs in Northbridge; allowing RMDs within the Industrial-Two (I-2) Zoning District by Special Permit of the Planning Board. The proposed RMD provision includes siting requirements and restrictions to minimize potential adverse impacts on adjacent properties. Passage of this zoning amendment article will provide the town with local oversight and safeguards in addition to the regulations established by the Department of Public Health. Failure to adopt the zoning article may potentially allow for RMDs, recognized as a legal use in Massachusetts to locate in Northbridge within in any non-residential zoned property with little or no local control.
- Article #19 -This zoning article is a companion amendment to Article #18; passage of this zoning article will add Registered Marijuana Dispensary (RMD) to the Table of Use Regulations [Section 173-12] allowing RMDs within the Industrial-Two Zoning District by Special Permit.

SPECIAL TOWN MEETING -JANUARY 14, 2014

At the Special Town Meeting of January 14, 2014 Northbridge amended the town's Zoning Map; changing the zoning designation of the locus area including property formerly known as the China Pacific from Industrial to Business-One (B1). Additionally, Northbridge amended its zoning bylaw, Section 173-27 A; by adding provisions to allow certain relief for retail and services uses within buildings constructed prior to November 1967.

OPEN SPACE & RECREATION PLAN –UPDATE

The Open Space & Recreation Plan Update Committee (ad-hoc) convened three (3) public meetings this quarter; in total the Committee has held nine (9) such meetings. A public workshop is scheduled for Tuesday, April 08, 2014 where Melissa Cryan of the Division of Conservation Services (Executive Office of Energy & Environmental Affairs) will review the requirements and benefits of adopting an Open Space & Recreation Plan, additionally Committee members will review results of the Open Space Survey conducted earlier in the year, as well as solicit input and comments from the public in attendance.

COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT BLOCK GRANT –DISASTER RECOVERY FUNDS (DHCD)

Northbridge is to receive Disaster Recovery grant funds in the amount of \$601,654 from the Department of Housing & Community Development (through HUD) for the Rockdale Youth Center Relocation Project; prior to executing the State Contract (awarding of funds) the town is awaiting receipt of a signed lease agreement between the church (St. Peter's) and the Whitin Community Center; continued delay has postponed the submission of the required Environmental Notifications, etc. It is the understanding of the Planning office that the lease agreement has been finalized and is to be signed by the bishop within the next few days. The Planning office has had conversations with representatives from DHCD concerning possible under-funding of the project; once bid responses are received the overall budget will be discussed with DHCD. In accepting the Disaster Recovery funds to relocate the Rockdale Youth Center, it shall be agreed that no additional buildings, etc. may be located at the former site (on Providence Road).

MASSACHUSETTS DOWNTOWN INITIATIVE (MDI) –TECHNICAL ASSISTANCE GRANT

Northbridge was not selected for this year's Technical Assistance grant for the Massachusetts Downtown Initiative program (MDI) administered by the Department of Housing & Community Development; the Town of Maynard was selected for (the category of) Economics of Downtown to update its downtown marketing plan. The Planning office has contacted DHCD requesting information on all the awardees (8 in total) in the hopes of strengthening a future application.

HOUSE BILL No. 1859

Also known as the Zoning and Land-Use Reform Bill; an Act Promoting the Planning and Development of Sustainable Communities was reported favorably from the Legislature's Joint Committee on Municipalities and Regional Government in March; the bill continues to be debated and will be sent to

additional legislative committee for consideration. Additional information (draft changes, etc) may be viewed online from various sites including the MMA –Massachusetts Municipal Association.

DEPARTMENT HEAD MEETINGS

- February 04, 2014: FY2014 and FY2015 budgets & the town’s social media policy
- March 26, 2014: FY2015 budget recommendations, health insurance & result of town auction

TECHNICAL REVIEW MEETINGS

The Community Planning & Development Office hosted two (2) Technical Review Meetings during this quarter: January 22, 2014; Leonardo Estates, definitive subdivision and March 12, 2014; ground-mounted solar facility & 77-79 Union Street, preliminary plan

PLANNING BOARD MEETINGS

The Planning Board met five (5) times during this quarter; all approved meeting minutes of the Planning Board are posted on the town’s website

- January 07, 2014 (approved)
- February 11, 2014 (approved)
- February 25, 2014 (approved)
- March 11, 2014 (approved)
- March 25, 2014 (draft)

SAFETY COMMITTEE MEETINGS

- January 15, 2014
- March 19, 2014

BOARD OF SELECTMEN MEETINGS

- February 10, 2014 –Department update
- March 03, 2014 - Registered Marijuana Dispensary (zoning amendments)

FINANCE COMMITTEE MEETINGS

- March 26, 2014 –Registered Marijuana Dispensary (zoning amendments)

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

Cc: Planning Board
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