



COMMUNITY PLANNING & DEVELOPMENT

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MEMORANDUM

Date: October 14, 2014

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

From: R. Gary Bechtholdt II, Town Planner 

RE: **QUARTERLY REPORT (JULY – SEPTEMBER 2014)**
Community Planning & Development Office

COPY

Please accept this as the Community Planning & Development 3rd 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 (approx. 20 building permits for new homes has been issued). JH Engineering Group, LLC continues to oversee construction of the subdivision development on behalf of the Planning Board.

Farnum Circle –Two lot subdivision terminating in a cul-de-sac located off Hill Street (near Sprague Street); originally approved in 2002, roadway remain incomplete. Planning Board called in the performance bond and has been working with the property owners in prioritizing completion of remaining work. It is anticipated that a third-party contract will address the scope of work; to include underground utilities, paving and landscaping in the Spring of 2015.

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; now consisting of 21 townhouse units (Senior Living Dev.) and 31 single-family house lots (Flexible Development). Remaining units within Pine Knoll, including the three (3) affordables has been purchased; the new Owner has petition the Zoning Board of Appeals for a variance concerning the affordable unit

requirement; upon granting the variance the Owner shall solicit the Planning Board (Special Permit Granting Authority) to modify the Special Permit issued for Pine Knoll Senior Living Development. Developer (J&F Marinella) has installed binder course to Phase III (last phase of project) and is currently addressing the waterline looping out onto Adams Circle. Developer is also looking to the Planning Board to amend its conditions of approval specific to Smith & Gendron Street improvements. JH Engineering Group, LLC continues to oversee construction of the subdivision development on behalf of the Planning Board.

Hillside Garden Estates -Located off Thurston Avenue (Deane Way); originally approved in 2005 for 18-unit Senior Living development, subdivision modified in 2010 to nine (9) single-family house lots. Developer (John Barges) recently installed top course pavement in preparation for street acceptance at the 2015 Spring/Fall Annual Town Meeting. JH Engineering Group, LLC continues to oversee construction of the subdivision development on behalf of the Planning Board. Concerns specific to Lot #10 –Deane Way have been referred to and reviewed by the Inspector of Buildings /Zoning Enforcement Officer where the lot development was found to be in compliance with zoning.

Leonardo Estates –To be located off (603) Highland Street; Planning Board issued Certificate of Approval - Definitive Subdivision (dated May 30, 2014) for eighteen (18) single-family house lots (and 2 frontage lots) to be serviced by public water and municipal sanitary sewer. Appeal period has expired; definitive plan shall be endorsed by the Planning Board and recorded at the Worcester Registry of Deeds prior to commencement of construction, etc.

Presidential Farms -Located off Hill Street; consisting of Washington Street, Kennedy Circle, Wilson Street, Roosevelt Drive, and extending through Lincoln Circle; this single-family subdivision includes 105 house lots and ±40 acres of open space for passive & active recreation. Home construction continues within Phases III & IV (approx. 70 building permits for new homes has been issued). Developer, David Brossi remains responsive to addressing Planning Board concerns. House lot development within Phase IV currently underway; JH Engineering Group, LLC continues to oversee construction of the subdivision development on behalf of the Planning Board.

Shining Rock Golf Community -Majority of the development has been completed; house lot development on Shining Rock Drive (extension) and Fairway Drive remain. JH Engineering Group, LLC continues to oversee construction of the subdivision development on behalf of the Planning Board.

ANR PLANS

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

- Roosevelt Drive –Conveyance of land between two (2) adjacent house lots.

SITE DEVELOPMENTS

4 & 16 North Main Street –Planning Board issued site plan 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; redevelopment of site has yet to commence.

Linwood Mill Lofts –EA Fish Development (Developer) installed a pedestrian crosswalk on Linwood Avenue, within the vicinity of one of its driveways. Work was coordinated and completed under the supervisor of the Department of Public Works.

Osterman Commerce Park – (Phase 1), the ±24,000 square-foot medical office building “Milford Regional Medical Center” completed construction; Phase 2 (wetland crossing) underway with construction activity within remaining phases underway in preparation for planned build-out; 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 ±1,275 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];

Large Scale Solar Photovoltaic Installation –Planning Board granted site development approval (with conditions) a 1.3MW solar electrical generating facility pursuant to Article XX –Large Scale Solar Photovoltaic Installations of the town’s Zoning Bylaw. Reference made to Certificate of Approval dated April 25, 2014. Development of site has yet to commence.

135 Providence Road (Salvation Army Thrift Store) –Planning Board granted site development plan approval dated September 23, 2014 for building expansion to include three (3) additional business/retail space totaling an additional ±19,308 square-foot.

ZONING AMENDMENTS

Table of Height & Bulk Regulations –Planning Board conducted its public hearing (September 16, 2014) pursuant to Mass General Laws Chapter 40A Section 5; upon taking public testimony including letters of support from the Inspector of Buildings and the Fire Chief the Board voted (4-0) to support and recommend the zoning amendment article to (1) increase the maximum height permitted within the Industrial –One and Industrial –Two Zoning Districts from 30-feet & 45-feet (respectively) to 60-feet and (2) increase the maximum number of stories within the I-1 & I-2 Zoning Districts from 2 and 3-stories (respectively) to 4-stories.

OPEN SPACE & RECREATION PLAN –UPDATE

The Open Space & Recreation Plan Update Committee convened two (2) public meetings during this quarter; the Committee hopes to present a formal draft in the Spring of 2015 and plans to present a general overview to the Board of Selectmen during the next quarter.

COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT BLOCK GRANT –DISASTER RECOVERY FUNDS (DHCD)

The Community Planning & Development Office continues to administer and oversee the Disaster Recovery grant funds for the Rockdale Youth Center Relocation Project; procurement for Designer Services

(Architect) concluded in September 2014 with Northbridge issuing an Award of Contract to Dixon Salo Architects, Inc. (Worcester, MA) for a scope of work (\$65,000.00) to include preparing construction documents and overseeing construction; the Environmental Review Record was submitted to DHCD (Department of Housing & Community Development) in August 2014; in correspondence dated September 2014 DHCD issued Northbridge its Environmental Release; as a result of the need to hire a Construction Manager/Architect and the requirements of the Flood Buyout Program the budget originally proposed (awarded) will need to be increased (amended) by an additional sum of ±\$180,500.00; discussions with DHCD specific to the need for additional funds was initiated earlier this year.

DISTRICT LOCAL TECHNICAL ASSISTANCE PROGRAM -PRIORITY DEVELOPMENT AREA

In August 2014, Northbridge was selected for District Local Technical Assistance -Round II where CMRPC (Central Massachusetts Regional Planning Commission) has worked with the Community Planning & Development Office in the preparation of a Reuse Plan for 2040 Providence Road, a designated Priority Development Area of the Blackstone Valley Regional Prioritization Initiative Program; the subject property, a former auto salvage yard had a Phase I and Phase II Environmental Site Assessment completed in 2011-2012 (Fuss & O'Neil) as part of a Brownfields Assessment Grant awarded to Northbridge from the US Environmental Protection Agency; preparation of a Reuse Plan will help identify new uses and encourage clean-up and redevelopment of the site for economic development (-see 2040 Providence Road below).

ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT INITIATIVES

MassWorks Infrastructure Grant Program –In August 2014, the town submitted a MassWorks Infrastructure Grant application for economic development to be done in conjunction with the planned build-out of the recently approved Osterman Commerce Park located off of Church Street Extension (includes the new Milford Regional Medical Center); the public infrastructure project requested, to be known as the “Church Street Extension Corridor Project” is to consist of roadway and geometry improvements to Church Street Extension and Quaker Street (totaling \$1.72mil); the project will include extending sidewalk from its current terminus on Church Street Extension through to the Blackstone River & Canal Heritage State Park; signalization of the Church Street and Quaker Street intersection and creation of a left-turn lane on Church Street Extension to Osterman Commerce Park.

Sewer Extension (Sutton/Northbridge) –It is the understanding of the Planning Office that the Board of Selectmen may look to formalize an inter-municipal agreement with the Town of Sutton to allow for sanitary sewer (Sutton) to extend into Northbridge to provide an initially connection to the Walmart facility located on Main Street; as you will recall in 2009 the Planning Office, as part of the town’s 43D –Expedited Permitting Initiative worked with Graves Engineering, Inc. in the preparation of a Northbridge/Sutton Sewer Extension Feasibility Study (February 2009); extending sewer as described in Feasibility Study will improve and enhance development options for the subject areas, including Main Street and Lasell Road; as detailed in the Study a sewer pump station (on Main Street) will be required, as well as other associated infrastructure; in talking with the Town Manager and Sewer Superintendent the Planning Office reminded them of the need to install necessary improvements not only to satisfy the Walmart facility but to allow for the project build-out for future economic development within the area.

2040 Providence Road –Reuse Study –On August 26, 2014 the Planning Board hosted a public workshop specific to 2040 Providence Road in conjunction with the preparation of a Reuse Study for the property; workshop was well attended with approximately a dozen neighbors and residents attending; public workshop was aimed at starting the conversation and brainstorming about potential reuse of the site, a former auto salvage yard located within walking distance of downtown Rockdale, direct access to the Blackstone River and along the route of the recently established WRTA busing; study will examine existing conditions, environmental assessment (brownfield) and explore potential redevelopment opportunities that are economically viable, environmentally friendly and complementary to the surrounding area; possible rezoning/zoning amendments may be considered for mixed-use at the 2015 Spring Annual Town Meeting.

Blackstone Valley Chamber of Commerce –On September 14, 2014 the Town Planner and I met with Jeannie Hebert (Blackstone Valley Chamber of Commerce) and April Anderson Lamoureux (Anderson Strategic Advisors, LLC) a consulting firm working with the Worcester Regional Chamber of Commerce (as mentioned by Tim Murray during the 7/14 BOS meeting); reviewed the various economic development initiatives currently underway in Northbridge, including the Reuse Study for 2040 Providence Road, the potential to extend Sutton municipal sewer to service designated Priority Development Sites along Main Street; the MassWorks Infrastructure Grant to improve Church Street Extension and Quaker Street intersection (Osterman Commerce Park build-out), the economic development strategies for increased job creation and new business opportunities within the Whitin Machine Works (Mass Downtown Initiative Program /DHCD), as well as, potentially partnering with MassDevelopment on the town-owned industrial land on Providence Road.

MassDevelopment –On October 08, 2014 had an initial discussion with representatives from MassDevelopment regarding the town-owned land off Route 122 (Providence Road) to see if there was an opportunity to partner with MassDev on the evaluation of the property for economic development; they plan to visit the site in the upcoming weeks and will coordinate a subsequent meeting with MassDevelopment including their real estate division as part of a potential predevelopment analysis.

NORTHBRIDGE MEMORIAL TOWN HALL –INTERIOR STUDY

In working with the Town Manager, the Town Planner met with McGinley Kalsow & Associates, Inc. to discuss scope of work to identify interior improvements within the Great Hall and the Board of Selectmen's Chamber; initial report (with cost estimates) is anticipated to be received on or before October 31, 2014.

DEPARTMENT HEAD MEETINGS

- None

TECHNICAL REVIEW MEETINGS

The Community Planning & Development Office hosted one (1) Technical Review Meeting during this quarter: August 06, 2014 (135 Providence Road).

PLANNING BOARD MEETINGS

The Planning Board met six (6) times and hosted one (1) public workshop this quarter; all approved meeting minutes of the Planning Board are posted on the town's website

- Planning Board meetings -July 08, 2014 (approved); July 22, 2014 (approved); August 12, 2014 (approved); August 26, 2014; September 16, 2014 (approved); & September 23, 2014 (draft)
- Planning Board public workshop –August 26, 2014 (2040 Providence Road)

BOARD OF SELECTMEN MEETINGS

- July 14, 2014 –Farnum Circle & Blackstone Valley Chamber/Worcester Chamber of Commerce

SAFETY COMMITTEE MEETINGS

- August 20, 2014

FINANCE COMMITTEE MEETINGS

- September 17, 2014 –Zoning Amendment Article (Planning Board Chairman)

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

Cc: Planning Board
/File