



NORTHBRIDGE PLANNING BOARD MINUTES

Tuesday, December 14, 2010



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

The following members of the public were also in attendance: Cindy Key (Clubhouse Lane), Mark Key (Clubhouse Lane), Tammi Yiakoumatos (Clubhouse Lane), Rebecca Siegle (Clubhouse Lane), Sue Green (Clubhouse Lane), Pat Schmitt (Clubhouse Lane), Bill Mancini (Clubhouse Lane), John Hesse (Clubhouse Lane), Roy Uthoff (Clubhouse Lane), Judith Uthoff (Clubhouse Lane), Marilyn MacIvane (Clubhouse Lane), Randeem Zanca (Rumonoski Drive), Richard Sasseville (Jefferson Ave), Thomas Melia (Heritage Drive), Richard Gabriel (Clubhouse Lane), Jim Marzec (Samuel Drive), Melanie Howe (Linkside Court), Pat McDonald (Linkside Court), George Murray (Spruce Street), Mark Mastroianni (Pulte Homes), David Welch (Shining Rock Drive), Cheryl Gucwa (Clubhouse Lane), Theodore Kozak (Town Manager), Tim Gordon (Shining Rock Golf Club), Ken Marino (Shining Rock Drive), John Cahill (Clubhouse Lane), Greg Cahill (Clubhouse Lane), George Hodgeman (Linkside Court), John Martin (Linkside Court), Cheryl Peterson (Heritage Design Group), Maryann Hodgeman (Linkside Court), Nancy Shor (Linkside Court), Lorraine Bates (Linkside Court), Linda DeHaan (Linkside Court), and Charles McCauley (Clubhouse Lane).

I. CITIZENS FORUM

None.

II. ANR PLAN (477 CHURCH STREET) –REVIEW/DECISION

The Planning Board tabled this matter and will endorse the plan at the end of the meeting. Reference is made to Planning Board action taken November 09, 2010 concerning subject property, where Board withheld endorsement until special permit issued by the Zoning Board of Appeals is recorded and noted on plan.

III. CASTLE HILL ESTATES –DISCUSSION STATUS /DPW DEFICIENCIES

The Planning Board briefly met with Henry Lane, Blackstone-Chicago Corporation who provided the Board with copy of Deed for “open Space” within the Castle Hill Estates. Mr. Lane also noted that he reviewed the communication from the DPW Director (September 16, 2010) and suggested that the town should consider calling in the bond as he does not presently intent on completing work as outlined. Ms. Gaudette suggested that the Planning Board include this matter on an upcoming agenda and review the process of calling in a bond.

IV. GREEN COMMUNITIES ACTION PLAN –DISCUSSION AS-OF-RIGHT SITING WIND ENERGY FACILITIES

Mr. Bechtholdt provided an overview on the intent of the Planning Boards discussion. Mr. Bechtholdt also acknowledged members of the Board of Selectmen (Selectman Melia & Selectman Marzec) the Town Manager, as well as members of the Green Committee (Mr. Sasseville) who were in attendance. Mr.

Bechtholdt suggested before we get things started wanted to let everyone know that tonight's discussion on Green Communities and specifically Green Energy or Wind Energy is meant to begin and initiate a dialogue to address one of the action plans identified in Criteria #1 of the town's Green Action Plan, noting that the Planning Board would likely hold subsequent discussions, as will the Green Committee and perhaps the Board of Selectmen on this topic. Mr. Bechtholdt reviewed, noting that the Planning Board has been designated as one of the committees/boards in the Action Plan to assist the town in achieving the requirements of Criteria #1, which may include by-right siting for wind energy facilities (wind turbines). As part of this effort, Mr. Bechtholdt noted that the State (DOER -Department of Energy Resources) has prepared and offered a model bylaw for communities to consider. Mr. Bechtholdt added that the town's Green Communities Action Plan has been included on the town's website and the model bylaw will also be included, noting like all zoning amendments this would require a Town Meeting action with a public hearing of the Planning Board. Mr. Bechtholdt concluded, stating again that the Planning Board felt it was important to include this discussion on tonight's agenda to start the dialogue and to please understand that the Planning Board will host similar discussions as the town continues with this initiative (Green Communities designation).

Theodore Kozak, the Town Manager briefly reviewed the Green Communities initiative and the benefits to the town, not only potential grant funds but cost savings in renewable energy and protecting the environment. Mr. Bechtholdt briefly reviewed the 5 Criteria for Green Communities. Mr. Bechtholdt again mentioned that the town's Green Communities Action Plan as well as a link to the State's Smart Growth / Smart Energy toolkit will be included on the town's website.

Linda DeHaan (Linkside Court) read a prepared statement (copy provided to the Planning Board) regarding her opposition (as well as others in the Shining Rock Golf Community) to language in the model bylaw, objecting to allow wind turbines to be built within 1.5 miles of any residence, educational or health care facilities or any planned residential development. Ms. DeHaan also spoke to concerns of Senate Bill #2260 currently before the Massachusetts Senate which may completely eliminate a towns ability to make zoning choices on green energy. Ms. DeHaan continued by expressing property values concerns and health and safety risks.

Randeen Zanca (Rumonoski Drive) spoke in support of wind energy and suggested the importance of picking the right sites. Cindy Key (Clubhouse Lane) inquired about potential setbacks. Ms. Gaudette offered when the time comes the Planning Board, in working with the Green Committee and Board of Selectmen will need to look at identifying areas in town and possibly creating an overlay. Judi Uthoff (Clubhouse Lane) would like to know where areas in town have been designated. Mr. Bechtholdt explained that the town has not designated areas in town, noting that Mass Collaborative a few years ago prepared a state-wide map that showed sustained wind velocities, this map did include locations in Northbridge that may support wind turbines. Mr. Bechtholdt mentioned that Northbridge is in a valley and was not sure what the required wind velocities were to support a wind turbine and added that the town has not designated any areas in town; this would be part of the zoning amendment process.

Judith Uthoff (Clubhouse Lane) provided overview of her concerns relative to a recent Zoning Board of Appeals application and hearing on the Mass Wind LLC application. Mr. Bechtholdt noted that a copy of her letter (Roy & Judi Uthoff) dated December 03, 2010 was provided to the Planning Board and included in their packet for this evening.

Tammi Yiakoumatos (Clubhouse Lane) expressed concerns with the noise and invasive nature of taking over the landscape. Richard Gabriel (Clubhouse Lane) described safety concerns liking icing and other flying debris. Ken Marino (Shining Rock Drive) suggested the town look at the economics of a project and the possible abandonment. Charles McCauley (Clubhouse Lane) echoed concerns and presented the Planning Board with various studies, reports and two books (“The Wind Farm Scam” by Jonathan Etherington and “Wind Turbine Syndrome” by Nina Pierpont, MD, PhD) which he is willing to donate to the town. Mr. McCauley recommended that the town approach this in terms of safety, turbine explosions, blade throws, fires, health issues, sleeping disorders, heart disorders, and the economics to the surrounding properties, property devaluation, general welfare and the potential impacts to the town, additional fire equipment that may be required to put a fire 200-feet up. Any bylaw proposed should address all these concerns.

Randeen Zanca (Rumonoski Drive) stated Holy Name in Worcester has a wind turbine right next to the school, lets look at these situations when they work too, not just when they do not, there are multiple locations where wind turbines work just fine. Richard Sasseville (Green Committee) briefly commented on the discussions and noted that the Green Committee is currently seeking to fill a vacancy and would be helpful to have more residents participate in the discussion on Green Energy. Mr. Sasseville provided members in the audience with information on how to submit a talent bank form to be a part of the Green Committee. John Martin (Linkside Court) suggested that the town should look at other types of renewable energy that could have a direct benefit to the town, such as installing solar panels on the schools.

Ms. Dolber thanked everybody for their input and reminded everyone that this discussion was meant to initiate the dialogue and that the Planning Board will look to continue these discussions at a later date as the town continues its green community’s initiative. Ms. Dolber added that it would be great if residents to Mr. Sasseville up on his offer and signed up for the Green Committee. Mr. Bechtholdt suggested before the Planning Board discusses the Green Communities Action Plan again he will indicate the date on the Planning Board agenda in advance so residents will know about two-weeks ahead of time to coordinate their schedules if needed.

V. SHINING ROCK GOLF COMMUNITY –PUBLIC HEARING

SPECIAL PERMIT / DEFINITIVE SUBDIVISION MODIFICATION

The Planning Board opened the public hearing a waived the reading of the hearing notice. Mr. Bechtholdt indicated that the notice requirements had been satisfied. Reid Blute of Pulte Homes of New England (applicant) provided an overview of the site and the request to modify the six (6) single-family house lots to sixteen (16) townhome units and how the proposal will tie in with the existing townhouses and Noble Vista planned for the abutting property in Upton.

Mr. Palmer inquired about additional parking. Mark Mastroianni (Pulte Homes) provided an overview on the approach to satisfying the requirements of the original approval and the Open Space Development zoning provisions, noting that they satisfy requirements with the exception of possibly three: density; setback and buffer. Mr. Mastroianni also noted that a Technical Review meeting was held with the various town departments as well as a meeting with the Safety Committee was conducted as part of this application, noting that the Safety Committee approved the modification request.

Mr. Mastroianni noted as a result of the Technical Review meeting certain changes to the plan were made such as adding a concrete apron to access the sewer easement. Mr. Griggs expressed concerns with the proposed setbacks between the buildings. Ms. Dolber then sought comment from the public.

Marilyn MacIlvane (Clubhouse Lane) described her concerns with the proposed additional curb-cuts on Clubhouse Lane, the lack of a stop sign at the intersection, and no cul-de-sac at the end of the road.

Rebecca Siegle (Clubhouse Lane) noted concern with water pressure to satisfy the additional units. Tammi Yiakoumatos (Clubhouse Lane), representing the mothers expressed concerns with the number of additional vehicles; sixteen additional units could easily mean 33 additional cars. Mark Key (Clubhouse Lane) detailed concerns with infrastructure capacity, such as water pressure and Charter Communication services, noting they are current issues and has a blue-colored booster pump in his basement already.

Melanie Howe (Linkside Court) asked about the sewer pump station. Mr. Blute suggested that townhome units along Sandtrap Court would be included in the Homeowners Association for what they will call Ridgeway at Shining Rock, similar to the Fairways at Shining Rock. The association would be responsible for the pump station. Charles McCauley (Clubhouse Lane) spoke in support of the modification.

Joe Antonellis, representing the golf course noted that he has met with Pulte Homes on the proposed modification and are working to resolve minor concerns and potential issues with construction. Cindy Key (Clubhouse Lane) suggested that the stamped-concrete originally approved for the intersection may have been required to provide traffic calming. Ms. Key also expressed concerns with parking provisions for the proposed units, noting concerns of 16 additional families (traffic) and no provisions for additional landscaping. Rebecca Siegle (Clubhouse Lane) indicated that she prefers condos, however may be too dense and shares the concerns about units fronting on Clubhouse Lane. Lind DeHaan suggested if they reduce the number of units could provide additional parking.

Mr. Curtin expressed concerns with the number of units (16 -sixteen) requested in the modification. Board members inquired if the density would be similar to that along Sandtrap Court and Linkside. Ms. Gaudette expressed her concern with the number of units requested, suggesting they should scale it back so it works; right now it is too dense.

Having the need for additional time to review and public comment the Planning Board upon motion duly made (Gaudette) and seconded (Palmer) voted (5-0) to continue the public hearing to January 11, 2010 at 7:05PM.

OLD / NEW BUSINESS

Minutes –Approval

November 09, 2010 –tabled to the next meeting of the Planning Board.

Central Massachusetts Brownfields Program –Nomination of 2040 Providence Road

Mr. Bechtholdt provided the Planning Board with copy of letter dated December 02, 2010 from CMRPC (regional planning agency) regarding the selection of 2040 Providence Road (Northbridge Auto) for Phase I Site Assessment as part of the federal Brownfields Assessment grant aimed to facilitate clean up and redevelopment.

Shining Rock Golf Community –Performance Bond Reduction (Phase I & II)

Mr. Bechtholdt informed the Planning Board, that he spoke with John Galvani (Norwood Cooperative Bank) earlier in the day. The purpose of this call was to advise Mr. Galvani that he (Mr. Bechtholdt) drove through the subdivision to review the streetlights, upon returning to the office and reviewing the approved subdivision plan it was realized additional streetlights may still need to be installed, with that information Mr. Galvani suggested it would best at this time to table the discussion until such time the streetlights have been resolved. Accordingly, the Planning Board tabled discussion relative to the performance bond surety reduction request for Phase I & II.

Shining Rock Golf Community –Lot Release (Phase III/Shining Rock Drive)

As stated for reasons noted above, the Planning Board tabled this matter.

The Camelot, Definitive Subdivision -Construction Change (Sloped Granite Curbing)

Mr. Bechtholdt informed the Planning Board that as part of the Conservation Commission approval of the Camelot subdivision portions of the curbing is required to be sloped-granite. Accordingly the Planning Board is asked to consider and allow as a construction change.

Upon motion duly made (Palmer) and seconded (Griggs) the Planning Board voted (5-0) to consider and allow construction change for slope-granite curbing along Joseph Circle, from Station 6+00 through 9+00; Rebecca Road, from Station 26+00 through 29+00 & Grace Street, from Station 2+00 through 7+00 as required by the Northbridge Conservation Commission.

The Camelot, Definitive Subdivision –Covenant Review (Vote to Sign)

The Planning Board upon motion duly made and seconded voted (5-0) to sign Covenant dated November 25, 2010 for the Camelot Definitive Subdivision.

The Camelot subdivision shall be constructed pursuant to Certificate of Approval dated February 18, 2010 issued by the Planning Board; Order of Conditions dated November 10, 2010 issued by the Conservation Commission and the Department of Public Works memorandum dated December 14, 2010. The Covenant is to be recorded at the Worcester Registry of Deeds with the Definitive Subdivision plan entitled the same dated September 25, 2009 (last revised December 06, 2010).

2011 Planning Board meeting dates –Review/Approval

Upon motion duly made and seconded the Planning Board voted (5-0) to set the following meeting dates for the 2011 calendar year: January 11th & 25th; February 8th & 22nd; March 8th & 22nd; April 12th & 26th;

May 10th & 24th; June 14th & 28th; July 12th & 26th; August 9th & 23rd; September 13th & 27th; October 11th & 18th; November 8th & 22nd; and December 13th & 27th.

Unless otherwise noted, the Planning Board shall meet the 2nd & 4th Tuesday of each month (Northbridge Town Hall – Selectmen’s Room). Pursuant to Mass General Laws; notice of meetings shall be posted with the Office of the Town Clerk 48 hours prior. All meetings are open to the public.

Housing Production Plan –Status/Review

This item was tabled to a future Planning Board meeting.

Linwood Mill Lofts –Status/Update

Mr. Bechtholdt provided the Planning Board with copy of Notice of Finding and Intent to Request Release of Funds by MassHousing for the Linwood Mill project.

12/28/10 meeting –Vote to Cancel

Upon motion duly made and seconded the Planning Board voted (5-0) to cancel the December 28, 2010 Planning Board meeting due to potential lack of quorum. The next scheduled meeting of the Planning Board is Tuesday, January 11, 2011

Permit Extension Act –FAQs

Mr. Bechtholdt provided the Planning Board with copy of Frequently Asked Questions document about the recent permit extension act.

Mail –Review

In addition to the mail listed (see attached) the Planning Board noted receipt of the following communications: email communication to Henry Lane (Blackstone-Chicago) concerning Castle Hill Estates; copy of DPW memo (September 16, 2010) regarding Castle Hill Estates deficiencies; Planning Board meeting minutes of October 12, 2010 concerning Castle Hill Estates; Green Communities Action Plan (September 2010); Model As-of-right siting of Wind Energy Facilities; letter dated December 03, 2010 from Roy & Judi Uthoff concerning Zoning Board of Appeals application and hearing on the Mass Wind LLC application; Planning Memorandum dated December 06, 2010 regarding Uthoff letter; Guidance documents prepared by DOER (June 2009) regarding compliance with Green Communities Act; copy of Wind Power information from the State’s Smart Growth / Smart Energy toolkit (webpage); Pulte Homes of New England letter(s) dated October 26, 2010 and November 16, 2010 regarding special permit / definitive subdivision modification request; copy of Pulte Homes special permit application and definitive subdivision modification application; Planning Memorandum dated December 09, 2010 regarding special permit / definitive subdivision modification –Shining Rock Golf Community; copy of Review Report Form dated November 01, 2010 to various municipal departments regarding special permit / definitive subdivision modification –Shining Rock Golf Community; Whitinsville Water Company letter dated November 10, 2010 regarding special permit / definitive subdivision modification –Shining Rock Golf Community; Conservation

Commission memorandum dated November 30, 2010 regarding special permit / definitive subdivision modification –Shining Rock Golf Community; Director of Public Works memo dated December 02, 2010 regarding special permit / definitive subdivision modification –Shining Rock Golf Community; email communication (received December 08, 2010) from Sewer Superintendent regarding special permit / definitive subdivision modification –Shining Rock Golf Community; letter dated December 09, 2010 from Inspector of Buildings regarding special permit / definitive subdivision modification –Shining Rock Golf Community; Fire Department memorandum dated December 09, 2010 regarding special permit / definitive subdivision modification –Shining Rock Golf Community; Safety Committee meeting minutes of November 17, 2010 regarding special permit / definitive subdivision modification –Shining Rock Golf Community; email communication(s) between Town Planner and Tammi Yiakoumatos regarding special permit / definitive subdivision modification –Shining Rock Golf Community; email communication(s) between Town Planner and Lorraine Langille regarding special permit / definitive subdivision modification –Shining Rock Golf Community; letter dated December 02, 2010 from CMRPC regarding Brownfields Assessment Program; letter dated December 07, 2010 to Town Clerk regarding performance bond for Phase 3 Shining Rock Golf Community; (draft) Covenant dated November 25, 2010 for Camelot subdivision; letter dated December 08, 2010 from Heritage Design Group regarding the Camelot approval update; email communication from Randy Swigor of the Whitinsville Water Company (WWC) concerning the water system within the Shining Rock Golf Community; letter dated January 20, 2010 from WWC to DPW Director regarding Shining Rock Water Infrastructure; Planning Memorandum dated December 06, 2010 concerning the Camelot definitive subdivision; Conservation Commission memorandum dated October 27, 2010 concerning review of wetland disturbance (the Camelot subdivision); Tunison Smith reporting to Conservation Commission dated October 25, 2010 (the Camelot); WWC letter dated November 04, 2010 regarding water infrastructure comments; email communication from Bill Richard, Cullinan Engineering, Planning Board consulting engineer (the Camelot); email communication(s) between Heritage Design Group and Cullinan Engineering regarding the Camelot subdivision; Cullinan Engineering reporting dated November 30, 2010 concerning the Camelot –third review; Cullinan Engineering reporting dated November 29, 2010 concerning the Camelot –fee proposal for additional services; 2011 Board of Selectmen meeting schedule; CMRPC November 2010 Newsletter; John H. Chafee Blackstone River Valley National Heritage Corridor Commission newsletter (email communication); Town Manager memorandum dated December 01, 2010 regarding 2011 Annual Reports; Town Manager letter dated December 01, 2010 regarding Riverdale Mill –TIF; and CMRPC Memorandum dated December 01, 2010 regarding DLTA –request for proposals.

Other

Mr. Bechtholdt advised the Planning Board that he met with Mary Arakelian on December 01, 2010 concerning Varky's Cleaners (690 Church Street). Ms. Arakelian is that this property may be considered pre-existing nonconforming and found out after talking with the Inspector of Buildings that the only pre-existing nonconforming use allowed on this property would be a drycleaners. The Board reviewed Planning Memorandum dated December 09, 2010. As described the subject property lies within the Residential – Three (R-3) Zoning District where such use (drycleaners) is not permitted. According to the Building Inspector the current use as a drycleaners may continue within the residential zone, however no-change in use (another business use) would be permitted.

Mr. Bechtholdt suggested, in an effort to clear-up the property zoning designation and current usage Ms. Arakelian is exploring the idea of changing the zone from R-3 to B-1 and has asked me to bring this to the

Planning Board for initial thoughts and comments. The subject property (690 Church Street) is just outside the Business-One (B-1) zoning district within “Plummer’s Corner”. Extending the Business-1 zone would include amending the zoning of three (3) adjacent properties, two of which I am told are owned by Ms. Arakelian. Board members agreed this may be something that Planning Board would sponsor (zone change) for Town Meeting. Mr. Bechtholdt noted that Ms. Arakelian does not drive and would prefer not participating during Town Meeting, however would like to be kept in the loop. Mr. Bechtholdt added that he is scheduled to talk with Ms. Arakelian later in the week and would tell her that the Board may consider sponsoring an article to amend the zoning. Ms. Gaudette thanked Mr. Bechtholdt for meeting with Ms. Arakelian and noted that she had also contact her regarding same.

Adjournment

Having no additional business the Planning Board adjourned its meeting of Tuesday, December 14, 2010 at 9:45 PM.

Respectfully submitted,

R. Gary Bechtholdt II
Town Planner

Cc: Town Clerk