



**NORTHBRIDGE PLANNING BOARD
MINUTES**

Tuesday, April 27, 2021



Pursuant to Governor Baker's March 12, 2020 Order Suspending Certain Provisions of the Open Meeting Law, MGL Chapter 30A Section 18 and the Governor's March 15, 2020 Order concerning imposition on strict limitations on the number of people that may gather in one place, meetings of the Northbridge Planning Board shall be conducted via remote participation to the greatest extent possible. No in-person attendance of members of the public will be permitted, but every effort will be made to ensure that the public may adequately access the proceedings as provided in the Order.

Recognizing the presence of a quorum, Chair Brian Massey called the meeting (held via ZOOM) to order at or about 7:05 PM with Harry Berkowitz, Rainer Forst and James Berkowitz in attendance; Abdul Kafal was absent. R. Gary Bechtholdt II, Town Planner was also present with Andrew Howden, newly appointment Associate Member.

The following members of the public were also present: Stephen O'Connell, Duane Boucher, Paul Bernon, Michael Dryden, Paula Thompson, Matt Mrva, and Brandon Giblin.

I. CITIZENS FORUM

None

II. FORM A's

None

III. STONE HILL CONDOMINIUMS -REVIEW/DECISION

Unit Layout Modification

Stephen O'Connell (Turning Point Engineering) on behalf of Stone Hill Partners, LLC reviewed his letter dated April 02, 2021 requesting modification (minor modification) of the unit layout within Stone Hill Condominiums, an approved senior living development consisting of 104-units located off Church Street currently under construction.

S. O'Connell and Duane Boucher (Stone Hill Partners, LLC) explained due to water/fire suppression specification requirements of the Whitinsville Water Company, above and beyond what the State Building Code requires for 3-unit buildings, they have decided to eliminate the tri-plex units and have only single & duplex-units; the cost associated with installing the water services based on a commercial building vs. residential was cost prohibited.

S. O'Connell noted the total number of units will remain unchanged at 104-units; explaining in order to do so some of the units were relocated within the site. Mr. O'Connell explained the roadway layout will remain unchanged and confirmed that the overall drainage and stormwater management of the site will not be impacted.

Planning Board reviewed proposed revised layout as shown on plan dated 03/31/2021 [revised unit configuration]. prepared by Turning Point Engineering, Inc. Mr. O'Connell indicated that the Northbridge

Fire Chief, David White has reviewed the revised layout and noted no concerns. Board members questioned why the Whitinsville Water Company would not have made this known before now. The Board supported request to eliminate the 3-unit buildings.

R. Gary Bechtholdt II, Town Planner suggested if the Planning Board supports proposal as a minor modification and is ready to act on request the Board should consider including a condition that the Applicant/Engineer, as part of the building permit application (/occupancy) for units 50 & 51 (specifically) they provide a supplemental landscaping plan showing additional screening along the northwesterly side of Rolling Ridge Drive be provide and such landscape/screening be installed prior to issuance of occupancy. The intent of additional landscaping is to provide added screening to abutting properties on Deane Way.

Upon motion duly made (H. Berkowitz) and seconded (J. Berkowitz) the Planning Board voted (4-0) to consider request as a minor modification.

Upon motion duly made (H. Berkowitz) and seconded (J. Berkowitz) the Planning Board voted (4-0) to approve request to modify the unit layout as described in letter dated April 02, 2021 and shown on plan sheet entitled "Overall Layout & Materials Plan" dated 03/31/2021 [revised unit configuration].

In taking said action the Applicant/Engineer shall provide a supplemental landscaping plan showing and providing for additional screening along the northwesterly side of Rolling Ridge Drive; to be provided as part of the Building Permit application(s) for unit 50 & unit 51. Issuance of occupancy (unit 50 & 51) shall be restricted until such time the additional landscaping/screening is installed and approved by the Planning Board or its designee.

IV. CASTLE HILL FARM PROPERTY -INFORMAL REVIEW Conceptual Buildout

Matthew Mrva (Bohler Engineering) on behalf of Brendon Giblin (Brendon Properties) and Paul Bernon (Owner) reviewed his letter dated March 23, 2021 and accompanying conceptual buildout plan for the Castle Hill Farm property showing 193 residential units, consisting of ANR lots, Retreat lots, Flexible Development subdivision, & Senior Living Development. M. Mrva provided an overview of the proposed buildout shown on "Concept Master Plan" dated February 26, 2021 consisting of one (1) sheet.

R. Gary Bechtholdt II, Town Planner reviewed his memorandum dated April 22, 2021, noted the subject property, known as Castle Hill Farm, consists of four (4) parcels along Castle Hill Road. G. Bechtholdt noted the proposed ANR plans shown do not meet current zoning as the lots are not serviced by public sewer, as such the frontage and lot area do not satisfy minimum requirements.

As noted in G. Bechtholdt's correspondence, existing water service within Castle Hill Road and Whitin Avenue are undersized and would need to be upgraded as part of buildout of site. Mr. Bechtholdt also noted existing sewer on Whitin Avenue is very old and would need to be evaluated to determine condition, sewer system capacity, etc. The sewer service on Castle Hill Road only extends approximately 150-feet from Douglas Road and would require a comprehensive sewer analysis as part of an extension permit to determine if the existing system can handle future projected flows. M. Mrva acknowledged, suggesting the next step in their evaluation would be to review existing conditions for water and sewer.

Mr. Bechtholdt suggested although the plan provided reads well it was difficult to determine if the zoning provisions have been satisfied to determine densities shown on the plan, noting typically a proposal would be for a single type of development (conventional subdivision, flexible development, or senior living) and not a combination of all three (3). Board members expressed a preference to senior living but was not sure of demand; J. Berkowitz indicated he was okay with some variety if it met the bylaw. B. Massey expressed concerns with the density (total number of lots/units) and proposal including flexible development, senior housing, etc.

B. Massey questioned how many of the proposed lot configurations shown would qualify under current conditions; G. Bechtholdt suggested none of the lots shown on the plan meet current zoning based on the need to extend sewer up through Castle Hill Road. Mr. Bechtholdt also noted a number of the proposed ANR lots (including retreat lots) would not qualify as frontage lots and would require subdivision approval to create lots beyond the end of Castle Hill Road layout and Whitin Avenue.

Mr. Bechtholdt suggested the concept plan is very aggressive, noting only ANR lots satisfying the minimum lot area and frontage requirements would be considered by-right; noting both the flexible development and senior living are only authorized by special permit.

Mr. Bechtholdt noted the Planning Board received a preliminary plan in 2005, showing a 75-lot conventional subdivision. Mr. Bechtholdt indicated that he did not support or agree with the proposed density/layout for the senior living or the flexible development, noting the remnant stone barn, if to be preserved should be reserved with more open space and not surrounded by multiple housing units. Mr. Bechtholdt indicated he would not support issuance of the required special permits for the current unit density and layout for this historic property.

Having no additional comments or questions Mr. Mrva, Mr. Bernon and Mr. Giblin thanked the Planning Board for their time and initial comments.

V. DELWYN BARNES ESTATES -REVIEW/DECISION
Minor Modification Request (Open Space)

Stephen O'Connell (Turning Point Engineering) on behalf of Eastland Properties, Inc. reviewed his letter dated April 05, 2021 requesting the Planning Board consider a minor modification to allow the formerly designated open space within the D&B Estates (Delwyn Barnes Drive) to become a building lot. S. O'Connell reviewed letter issued by the Planning Board dated April 25, 2001 to the Building Inspector at the time, noting a subdivision modification would be required. S. O'Connell then reviewed definitive plan sheet (3 of 3) for D&B Estates, showing the open space designation with the following notation "remaining land of Delwyn K. Barnes to be preserved as open space or remain as undeveloped land unless further approvals are obtained".

H. Berkowitz noted that he was on the Planning Board in 1996, noting the open space was created as a buffer for the abutting properties and believes it should be maintained as open space. Mr. Berkowitz also noted the property consists of a detention basin for stormwater management for Delwyn Barnes Drive and wetlands. Mr. O'Connell noted the property does contain a stormwater basin and indicated the wetland delineation shown on the 2001 plan is outdated, noting he is currently working with the Conservation

Commission on reviewing the wetland resource area. Mr. Berkowitz added, that back in 1996, the town did not convey open space to Conservation Commission or other entities, where now we have.

Mr. O'Connell noted he is aware of concerns from property owners along Glenn Avenue regarding poor drainage along the private way and believes development proposal for this lot could help address those concerns. B. Massey questioned if the Planning Board should change the designation of this property from open space to a potential building lot, suggesting if they did all the other owners of "open space" would likely seek similar modification. Mr. Massey stated that he did not believe this was a minor modification; H. Berkowitz and J. Berkowitz agreed.

Upon motion duly made (H. Berkowitz) and seconded (J. Berkowitz) the Planning Board voted 3-1 to deny request for minor subdivision modification; R. Frost was the dissenting vote.

Accordingly, a subdivision modification (requiring a public hearing) shall be required to consider request to change the designation of open space within the D&B Estates subdivision.

OLD/NEW BUSINESS

Approval of Meeting Minutes –January 12 & April 13, 2021

Upon motion duly made (H. Berkowitz) and seconded (J. Berkowitz) the Planning Board voted (4-0) to approve the meeting minutes of April 13, 2021. Planning Board tabled action on meeting minutes for January 12, 2021.

2021 Spring Annual Town Meeting (SATM) -Tuesday, May 04, 2021 (7:00 PM)

Point of information -no discussion.

Floodplain Bylaw Provisions -Zoning Amendment (public hearing TBD)

G. Bechtholdt advised the Board that Planning has not received any feedback or guidance from the Building Inspector/Zoning Enforcement Officer regarding required updates to the town's floodplain bylaw. Mr. Bechtholdt suggest he would contact the State NFIP Coordinator to advise them Northbridge may simply look to delete in its entirety our existing bylaw and look to adopt new provisions (model bylaw) offered by the State.

Housing Choice Act of 2020 (Bill 5250) -Zoning Amendment (public hearing TBD)

G. Bechtholdt advised the Board that Planning has not received any feedback or guidance from the Building Inspector/Zoning Enforcement Officer regarding required updates to the town's zoning required to comply with the Housing Choice Act of 2020, noting he understands the Inspector may be busy, but needs to offer some guidance on necessary zoning updates (amendments) to comply.

MGL CH 41 SEC 81U -Proceedings /Hemlock Estates

G. Bechtholdt explained once Graves Engineering, Inc. (Consulting Engineer) prepares an updated punchlist of remaining improvements, the Planning Board may look to initiate calling in the performance surety held; until then this item shall be tabled to a future agenda.

Subdivision/Site Development -Status/Updates

Planning Board noted receipt of letter dated April 02, 2021 from Turning Point Engineering, Inc on behalf of Developer (Phase 2 & 3 -Camelot), certifying stormwater system has been constructed and working as designed. G. Bechtholdt indicated Graves Engineering (Consultant) has reviewed letter and site conditions, confirming same. Mr. Bechtholdt explained as part of the conditions of approval the Applicant/Engineer is to certify drainage is in prior to formal lot release; Mr. Bechtholdt informed the Board once the consultant confirm same the Form P [Lot release form) was provided to the Developer for recording at the Registry of Deeds. Planning Board acknowledged receipt of updated construction schedule for Camelot (phase 1A & 1B) and construction sequencing for Phase 2 & 3 from the Developer's contractor. Planning Board acknowledged receipt of updated construction schedule from the Developer for Hemlock Estates; Mr. Bechtholdt advised the Board that Planning is looking to arrange for a site visit with the Developer and Planning Board Consultant to review overall status of Hemlock Estates (TBD).

Planning Board Concerns

H. Berkowitz noted a power surge issue resulting from the solar farm of Puddon Street; Mr. Bechtholdt suggested, although not a Planning Board issue he contacted the solar team and National Grid of this concern; National Grid has their engineers reviewing to determine cause and to correct situation.

Mail -Review

Planning Board acknowledged receipt of electronic copy (pdf) of mail received, including notices from abutting towns.

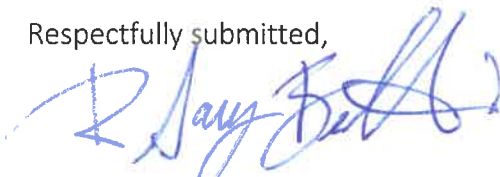
Other

None

ADJOURNMENT

Having no additional business, the Planning Board adjourned its meeting of Tuesday, April 27, 2021 at or about 8:30 PM.

Respectfully submitted,



R. Gary Bechtholdt II
Town Planner

Approved by the Planning Board: 05/11/2021

Cc: Town Clerk
/File