



NORTHBRIDGE PLANNING BOARD MINUTES

Tuesday, April 03, 2012



Janet Dolber, Chair called the meeting to order at 7:00 PM. Barbara Gaudette, Edward Palmer and Richard Griggs were in attendance. R. Gary Bechtholdt II, Town Planner was also present. Cindy Key, Associate member was absent. Note: One (1) Planning Board vacancy.

The following members of the public were in attendance: Howard DeVries; Marlene DeVries; Deb Gauthier; Scott Lindgren (PARE Corporation); Janet M. Slemenda (HKT Architects); James Shuris (DPW Director); Denis LaTour; and Ted Haringa.

I. CITIZENS FORUM

Denis LaTour asked if any of the Planning Board members had recently seen the exterior alterations made on the back side of the King Jade located in the plaza on Providence Road; he believes at one time there was a site approval for the building. Mr. Palmer mentioned that he did notice it the other day and suggested that the Building Inspector to stop by and take a look. The Town Planner will mention this to the Building Inspector.

II. ANR PLAN REVIEW

None

III. ZONING AMENDMENT –PUBLIC HEARING

§173-47 B (2) –Planned Business Development

Ms. Dolber read the public hearing notice: In accordance with M.G.L. Ch. 40A Sec. 5, the Northbridge Planning Board will hold a public hearing on Tuesday, April 03, 2012 at 7:05 PM, in the Selectmen's Room of the Northbridge Town Hall, 7 Main Street, Whitinsville, MA to consider amendment to the Northbridge Zoning Bylaws; Section 173-47 B (2) Planned Business Development; establishing a 50-foot setback for buildings abutting a residential district boundary. A copy of the proposed zoning amendments are on file at the Office of the Town Clerk (7 Main Street) and with the Community Planning & Development office (14 Hill Street) and may be reviewed during normal office hours. The purpose of this hearing is to provide an opportunity for public comment; anyone wishing to be heard should attend said hearing at the time and place designated.

Mr. Bechtholdt indicated notification requirements for the proposed zoning amendment article(s) have been satisfied. The Planning Board opened its public hearing. Mr. Bechtholdt reminded Board members the proposed is a result of the Planning Board discussing and reworking the zoning amendment original proposed for the Special Town Meeting (February 21, 2012) received by petition (Henry Lane). This proposed amendment under consideration by the Planning Board is specific to the town's Planned Business Development (PBD) bylaw; where under this provision commercial and/or light-industry may be permitted by special permit by the Planning Board within the Industrial zones.

Mr. Bechtholdt reviewed with the Planning Board the proposed zoning amendment article to amend the Northbridge Zoning Bylaw Section 173-47 B (2) –Planned Business Development by ADDING subsection (I)

as follows: (I) “No building or structures (except fencing) in a Planned Business Development shall be erected within 50-feet of a residential district boundary”. The Board concurred since commercial uses are typically less intense than industrial operations the setback requirements may be reduced from 100-feet to 50-feet for a Planned Business Development.

Denis LaTour noted that a Planned Business Development may be authorized by special permit by the Planning Board and as such the Board would have additional oversight and control as to how a PBD would be permitted on a particular site.

Ms. Gaudette mentioned she attended the Finance Committee meeting of March 28, 2012 to review the zoning article; unfortunately due to scheduling change of the Finance Committee (originally scheduled for April 04, 2012) the hearing of the Planning Board was not complete and as such the Finance Committee decided to take no position on the zoning amendment article. Board members expressed their concerns of coordinating with others and the Finance Committee as they were told FinCom would meet on April 4th in order to finalize the booklets for printing. Ms. Gaudette mentioned apparently there is a problem with their third-party printer and needed to get the booklets completed sooner than originally thought. Board members questioned why the town utilizes an outside source to prepare and mail the Town Meeting booklets and suggested that town, in the very least should contract with someone with a quicker turn-around than 5-weeks.

Mr. Bechtholdt mentioned that he has draft a memorandum for the Planning Board to the Board of Selectmen concerning the timing of closing the warrant and printing the booklets. Mr. Bechtholdt will review with the Board at its next scheduled meeting.

After seeking additional input and public comment concerning the proposed zoning amendments the Planning Board closed its public hearing.

Upon motion duly made (Gaudette) and seconded (Palmer) the Planning Board voted (4-0) to recommend zoning amendment article to amend §173-47 B (2) –Planned Business Development by adding subsection (I) as follows: (I) “No building or structures (except fencing) in a Planned Business Development shall be erected within 50-feet of a residential district boundary”.

IV. NORTHBRIDGE DPW FACILITY -PUBLIC MEETING

§173-49.1 [Site Plan Review]

Mr. Griggs read the meeting notice: In accordance with the provisions of Massachusetts General Laws & the Town of Northbridge Zoning By-Law Chapter 173, the Northbridge Planning Board will hold a public meeting on Tuesday, April 03, 2012 at 7:15 PM in the Selectmen’s Chambers of the Northbridge Town Hall, 7 Main Street Whitinsville, MA, to consider site plan application for the proposed construction of a ±19,300 square-foot Department of Public Works facility with site utilities and exterior activity areas to be located at 11 Fletcher Street, Assessor Map 5 Lot(s) 78 & 79 consisting of 2.37 acres. Copies of the application, supportive documentation and site plan entitled “Northbridge Department of Public Works” prepared by PARE Corporation (Lincoln, RI) and dated March 07, 2012 is on file with the Office of the Town Clerk (7 Main Street) and the Planning office (14 Hill Street) Whitinsville, MA and may be reviewed during normal

office hours. The purpose of the meeting is to provide an opportunity for public comment. Anyone wishing to be heard should attend said meeting at the time and place designated.

Mr. Bechtholdt indicated notification requirements for the public meeting were satisfied. The Planning Board opened its site plan review.

Scott Lindgren, PARE Corporation; Janet M. Slemenda, HKT Architects and James Shuris, DPW Director presented site plan for the proposed DPW facility (Fletcher Street). Mr. Shuris indicated that he was hired in August of 2011 and was charged with finding a suitable location for a new DPW facility. Mr. Shuris explained that he has been working for municipal public works for 17-years and 14 Fletcher Street is the right location; it's an ideal location; Fletcher Street is the right location but needs to be improved. Mr. Shuris spoke in favor of the proposal before the Planning Board; will improve conditions inside and out; exciting about the project. All buildings and most of the storage areas are currently inside the Floodplain; the project will connect the property to town sewer and the site layout will be reworked so that all the buildings will be outside the Floodplain.

Scott Lindgren, PE (PARE Corporation) gave an overview of the current property (14 Fletcher Street) and the proposed project. Mr. Lindgren explained that the Conservation Commission's review is currently also underway, with applications before the Zoning Board for activity within the Floodplain and alternations to a pre-existing nonconforming lot. Mr. Lindgren provided a brief overview of the building size, site layout as well as general description on the day-to-day operations of the DPW yard. As mentioned by Mr. Shuris, Mr. Lindgren indicated site would be upgraded to municipal sewer with the onsite septic abandoned in accordance with Title V regulations.

The Planning Board then reviewed the Floodplain and the existing conditions; as a result of reshaping the floodplain and provided the necessary compensatory storage the proposed buildings will be outside of the Floodplain. Mr. Shuris explained; the new building and salt shed will be outside the Floodplain; noting that they looked at utilizing or saving the existing main building however could not due to the floodplain.

Ms. Gaudette questioned future build-out potential of the site and the need for more space for additional vehicles and equipment as the town grows. Mr. Shuris assured the Board that they have sufficient space; the proposal is designed/built for the next 20-25 years; they may have enough equipment today however most of the vehicles today are not multi-use vehicles; looking to purchase (/replace older equipment) with what is called swap-loaders, where vehicles are used year-round for various tasks and duties. Mr. Shuris noted as part of the redevelopment of the site looked at building life-cycle operations of DPW. Mr. Palmer suggested this should have been done years ago.

Ms. Gaudette noted that the DPW facility is located within the town's Heritage district; suggesting the public building should be esthetically pleasing and in character with the Heritage District; understanding the cost associated however, should not scream DPW yard. Mr. Shuris agreed, noting the site layout will have a campus-like feel with green space in front and described the main administration portion of the building would be the only portion viewable from the main roadway.

Janet M. Slemenda of HKT Architects provided an overview of the proposed building materials and the interior layout (garage area); steel frame construction with brick/veneer facing along the lower portion of building and will have clear story lighting within the garage areas.

Mr. Lindgren then reviewed with the Planning Board the access from Fletcher Street; noting with the reconstruction of the bridge and redesign of the Douglas Road/Fletcher Street intersection (T-intersection) the DPW entrance will be altered to access from Fletcher Street. Mr. Lindgren reviewed the sightline distances and ASHTO standards. Twenty (20) parking spaces will be designated within the site; ten (10) for employees and ten for overflow and visitors. Mr. Lindgren continued his presentation noting stormwater is a big piece, which he is reviewing with the Conservation Commission now; providing an overview of proposed techniques where currently none exist today. Mr. Lindgren then provided an overview of the ZBA applications. Mr. Shuris indicated that he will bring a copy of the proposed redesign of the bridge and intersection to a follow-up meeting. In closing Mr. Lindgren explained lighting and final landscaping have yet to be determined and asked that both lighting and landscaping be intergraded as part of the final building design for subsequent review and input by the Planning Board. Additionally, any proposed signage will be arranged to not prohibit or conflict with sightlines at the driveway. The lighting may be complementary to the Heritage Zone along the driveway similar to those proposed for the new bridge. As far as fencing along the abutting properties (Fletcher Street), Mr. Shuris suggested that he is willing to engage the neighbors as to what kind of screening they would like to see.

Ms. Dolber solicited comments from residents in the audience. Marlene DeVries inquired about existing examples of the proposed building materials. Although not finalized Ms. Slemenda provided some examples of possible brick/veneer facing and other finishes for the exterior of the building (passed them out to Board and residents in attendance). The Planning Board indicated a liking to the various types of architectural treatment options. Ms. Slemenda suggested the administration portion of the building may be more masonry face for esthetics.

Ms. DeVries expressed concerns of noise from the DPW facility. Mr. Shuris explained as a result of the redevelopment of the site overall noise may be reduced as activity will be inside where vehicles are proposed to be stored rather than outside like today. Ms. DeVries asked how often the current site floods and about wetland and special habitat areas. Mr. Lindgren in referencing plan showing proposed floodplain area indicated the proposal will be raised outside the floodplain; no special habitat areas will be altered however will be reviewed as part of Conservation filing.

Ted Haringa asked if the retaining wall along the river will require any shoring up. Mr. Lindgren explained that he has not done any structural or physical review of the existing banks, however the proposed will minimize areas of disturbance near the wall.

Denis LaTour spoke in favor of the proposal, stating the DPW behind his home is the best neighbors he could have; when he gets home from work they are closed, on the weekends its quite too and during the winter when it snows sure he hears all the equipment but it reminds him that he too need to get up and clear his driveways; has been in favor of the project for years. Mr. LaTour added, as far as flooding within the DPW site has never seen it and it probably will never happen.

After seeking additional comments and input from the residents in attendance Mr. Bechtholdt reminded the Planning Board of the application before the Zoning Board; suggesting if they are ready to offer a recommendation on the Zoning Board applications they may do so at this time.

Upon motion duly made (Palmer) and seconded (Gaudette) the Planning Board voted (4-0) in support of the Floodplain special permit application and the special permit application for alteration to the pre-existing nonconforming site.

Mr. Bechtholdt advised the Board that the Conservation Commission at its last meeting (March 29, 2012) agreed to utilize the services of JH Engineering Group for its peer review.

Upon motion duly made (Palmer) and seconded (Gaudette) the Planning Board voted (4-0) to ENGAGED the services of JH ENGINEERING GROUP, LLC of Worcester, MA to perform consulting services on its behalf for the DPW site development proposal.

The purpose of JH ENGINEERING GROUP, LLC services will be to provide the Northbridge Planning Board (and Conservation Commission) with an independent assessment/review of the proposed redevelopment of the DPW facility located at Fletcher Street; specific to stormwater management & erosion controls pursuant to state/local bylaw regulations.

Mr. Bechtholdt noted receipt of correspondence from various municipal departments (reference made to memorandum dated April 03, 2012 distributed to Board members) and suggested that the Planning Board continue its review to allow time for the consulting engineer review and other boards and commission to review the proposal.

Upon motion duly made (Gaudette) and seconded (Griggs) the Planning Board voted (4-0) to CONTINUE the DPW site development plan review to Tuesday, April 24, 2012 at 7:05 PM to allow addition time for review and public input.

OLD/NEW BUSINESS

Approval of Meeting Minutes- March 27, 2012

Tabled for consideration at the next scheduled meeting.

2012 Spring Annual Town Meeting (SATM) –Tuesday, May 01, 2012

Point of information –no discussion.

Linwood Mill Lofts –Housing Units

Mr. Bechtholdt mentioned that he spoke with Matt Mittelstadt of EA Fish Development and the Building Inspector; the Linwood Mill Lofts project will be seeking a temporary occupancy for the residential units soon. Mr. Bechtholdt mentioned that he briefly reviewed outstanding issues with the Building Inspector and will be meeting with Mr. Mittelstadt later next week to prepare a punchlist of remaining items to be completed; Mr. Bechtholdt will present same to the Planning Board at a subsequent meeting.

Planning Board –Vacancy

Mr. Bechtholdt noted he has not talked with the Town Clerk or Brett Simas since the last meeting.

Mail –Review

In addition to the mail listed (see attached) and as described herein the Planning Board noted receipt of the following communications: application for site plan review –Northbridge Department of Public Works dated March 12, 2012; letter dated March 13, 2012 from PARE Corporation regarding DPW Site plan; review report form dated March 16, 2012 regarding 11 Fletcher Street –DPW Facility; Conservation Commission memorandum dated March 29, 2012 concerning DPW Facility -11 Fletcher Street; email communication from R. Gary Bechtholdt to Barbara Kinney (Conservation secretary) sent March 27, 2012 concerning DPW facility review; email communication from Vera Kolas (CMRPC) received March 30, 2012 regarding Blackstone Valley Compact project; copy of letter dated March 28, 2012 to Town Manager from CMRPC concerning Blackstone Valley Compact (and 495/Metro West Development Compact Plan); email communication from Richard Griggs received March 30, 2012 concerning Camelot construction meeting; CMRPC memorandum dated March 28, 2012 regarding annual development of the TIP Project Listing; & Talent Bank Application from Joy C. Anderson expressing interest on the Open Space Committee.

OtherCamelot –Construction meeting

Mr. Bechtholdt explained to the Planning Board that arrangements have been made for the JF Marinella, Cheryl Peterson, and (Heritage Design Group) to meet with Mark Kuras, Sewer Superintendent and the Board's consultant (Jeff Howland, JH Engineer) on Wednesday, April 04, 2012 to review the status of the sewer pump station to hopefully resolve outstanding issues. Members indicated they would not be able to attend; Ms. Dolber suggested she may attend but would need to double-check her schedule.

Osterman Propane –Site plan review submittal

Mr. Bechtholdt provided Board members with copy of the site plan and application submittal for proposed maintenance facility. Arrangements were made for the Planning Board to review the proposal at its meeting of April 24, 2012 (7:15PM).

The Planning Board upon motion duly made (Gaudette) and seconded (Palmer) voted (4-0) to ENGAGED the services of JH ENGINEERING GROUP, LLC of Worcester, MA to perform consulting services on its behalf.

Adjournment

Having no additional business the Planning Board adjourned its meeting of April 03, 2012 at 8:30 PM.

Respectfully submitted,

Approved by Planning Board –

R. Gary Bechtholdt II
Town Planner

Cc: Town Clerk