



## **NORTHBRIDGE PLANNING BOARD MINUTES**

Monday, June 12, 2012



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

The following members of the public were in attendance: Ross Smith; Nancy Smith; Normand Gamache (Guerriere & Halnon, Inc); Deb Gauthier; and David Brossi.

### **I. PLANNING BOARD REORGANIZATION**

Ms. Dolber sought nominations for Planning Board Chairman, upon motion duly made (Palmer) and seconded (Griggs) Barbara Gaudette was voted (5-0) Chairman; Ms. Gaudette sought nominations for Planning Board Vice Chairman, upon motion duly made (Palmer) and seconded (Dolber) Richard Griggs was voted (5-0) Vice Chairman; Ms. Gaudette sought nominations for Planning Board Clerk; upon motion duly made (Dolber) and seconded (Griggs) Brett Simas was voted (5-0) Clerk.

### **II. CITIZEN FORUM**

David Brossi provided the Planning Board with a brief update on the status of the Presidential Estates subdivision (Phase 3) noting two house lots are under agreement and another two lots are currently under construction. Mr. Brossi welcomed Planning Board members to visit the site; Mr. Brossi shall provide the Planning Board with a written status report detailing completed work and remaining improvements. Mr. Bechtholdt noted if an extension of the completion date is required such request should be made to the Board prior to expiration. Mr. Brossi indicated that he would check with his engineer (Guerriere & Halnon, Inc).

### **III. FORM A'S**

Normand Gamache, Land Surveyor for Guerriere & Halnon, Inc (and Ross Smith) met informally with the Planning Board to reviewed planned ANR submittal for subject property located off West Hill Road and Quaker Street. Mr. Gamache explained the roadway (West Hill Road) was abandoned in 1963 approximately 500-feet from Quaker Street. Mr. Gamache noted there are two existing homes on the remaining public way; his client Ross Smith has an option to purchase the next frontage lot along the abandoned portion of West Hill Road for a house lot. Mr. Gamache provided the Planning Board with plan dated May 1960 entitled West Hill Dam; plan from 1963 entitled Roads to be Abandoned and Road Flowage Rights to be granted by the Town of Northbridge; plan (sheet 4 of 4) entitled Boundary Survey West Hill Dam dated November 1976; conceptual plan prepared by Guerriere & Halnon, Inc showing subject property, flood easement area and limits of public way (West Hill Road). Mr. Gamache indicated based upon the documentation and research completed an ANR endorsement (Approval-Not-Required [81P]) will be requested of the Planning Board. Mr. Gamache indicated that he wanted to provide an overview and background information to the Board now prior to filing the ANR application. Board members and Mr. Bechtholdt thanked Mr. Gamache for bringing this forward in advance of a formal submittal; Mr. Bechtholdt will review and conduct some additional research concerning the status of the roadway and determination on ANR review consideration (access, etc).

**IV. ASHTON PLACE –Residential Development –PUBLIC HEARING****§173-49.1 [Site Plan Review]**

Upon motion duly made (Palmer) and seconded (Dolber) the Planning Board voted (5-0) to waive the reading of the hearing notice. Mr. Bechtholdt noted that the legal advertisement and notification requirements had been satisfied. Ms. Gaudette opened the public hearing.

Normand Gamache, Guerriere & Halnon, Inc (and David Brossi, Applicant) provided the Planning Board an overview of the redevelopment proposal for the former Northbridge Nursing Home located at 2356 Providence Road. Mr. Gamache explained when the building was a nursing home it had 59-beds; this use was discontinued approximately 9-years ago. Since that time a number of unsuccessful proposals have been considered; Mr. Brossi is proposing to convert the building to 23 market rate rental apartments (townhouse-units). Mr. Gamache continued, noting the site will include 48 parking spaces and a full access around the entirety of the building as requested by the Fire Chief; the individual units will separate entrances at ground-level and will be two-stories with the exception of two (2) handicapped accessible units.

In addition to Site Plan Review Mr. Gamache noted the proposed requires approval from the Conservation Commission as well as issuance of a Special Permit from the Zoning Board for use (multi-family dwelling). Mr. Gamache explained that the Safety Committee informally reviewed proposal and a Technical Review meeting was held earlier in May (May 23, 2012) where the Whitinsville Water Company; Highway Superintendent; Building Inspector; Town Planner; Sewer Superintendent; and the Board's consulting engineer, JH Engineering Group reviewed the project and offered initial comments.

Mr. Gamache explained that the Department of Public Works has asked that they inspect and cleanout the existing culvert and the need to maintain/install a trash-rack to prevent debris from blocking the structure so stormwater may travel unimpeded under Route 122 as originally designed. Since talking with DPW concerning this matter Mr. Brossi indicated that a trash-rack had previously been installed however had not been cleaned or maintained.

Mr. Gamache suggested the resulting project will be a tremendous improvement to what currently exists now. Mr. Palmer inquired about buffers from the abutting properties; Mr. Gamache explained they plan to maintain the existing trees and vegetation between the subject property and Upton Street, noting the building is more than 150-feet away from the closed home on Upton Street.

Mr. Brossi explained to the Board that he has also met with the Whitinsville Water Company and will work with Randy Swigor to address a water shut-off valve concern. Mr. Gamache indicated that he has spoken with a representative from the School Department to designate a school bus stop on Providence Road and has requested a meeting with the Safety Committee.

Mr. Bechtholdt asked Mr. Brossi if he did any market analysis, noting a number of would-be developers have looked at this property in the past only to walk away for one reason or another. Mr. Brossi noted that he has done similar projects in Grafton within the last year, stating the market is strong for rentals in the area. Mr. Brossi indicated that he would invest approximately \$1mil into the project; noting it's ambitious but we feel very confident it's going to be successful.

Mr. Bechtholdt asked if any traffic studies or traffic counts were done for the proposed project; Mr. Gamache indicated that no studies have been done. Mr. Bechtholdt suggested that they may be able to provide some traffic model/industry models for the proposed use, noting that the Zoning Board may request such information as part of its special permit considerations.

Mr. Bechtholdt advised the Planning Board, as part of the application submittal the Applicant/Engineer has requested that the Board not require a Development Impact Assessment as provided for in Section 173-49.1 E 2 (p) of the Northbridge Zoning Bylaws.

Mr. Simas asked if the Applicant and/or the Engineer looked at potential financial burden on the school system; Mr. Gamache indicated they have not. After some additional review of the proposed site layout; circulation, parking and natural lighting within the proposed units Ms. Gaudette sought comments from the public. Seeing none Ms. Gaudette suggested the Board may look to close its public hearing. Mr. Bechtholdt suggested because the application still needs to be reviewed by Conservation and the Zoning Board the Planning Board may want to withhold closing the hearing at this time and await input from Conservation and Zoning Board before concluding its review. Board members agreed however suggested that the Town Planner prepare draft decision to be reviewed at the next meeting.

*Upon motion duly made (Palmer) and seconded (Griggs) the Planning Board voted (5-0) to continue the site plan review to Tuesday, July 10, 2012 at 7:05PM at which time the Board shall review additional correspondence received and draft conditions of approval.*

## **OLD/NEW BUSINESS**

### Approval of Meeting Minutes- May 22, 2012

Upon motion duly made (Griggs) and seconded (Dolber) the Planning Board voted (4-0-1[Simas abstained]) to approve the meeting minutes of May 22, 2012.

### Blackstone Valley Prioritization Project –Regional Forum (June 26<sup>th</sup> –Blackstone Valley Tech 5:30 PM)

Mr. Bechtholdt encouraged members to attend this public workshop and noted announcement is posted on the town's website. Mr. Bechtholdt also noted he asked the Town Manager to mention workshop at Board of Selectmen meetings.

### June 26, 2012 –Vote to Cancel Planning Board Meeting

Upon motion duly made (Palmer) and seconded (Dolber) the Planning Board voted (5-0) to cancel its meeting scheduled for Tuesday, June 26, 2012.

### 2012 Fall Annual Town Meeting –October 23, 2012

Mr. Bechtholdt indicated that it was his understanding that the Board of Selectmen at its next scheduled meeting will consider closing the warrant for the FATM at 12:00PM Friday August 24, 2012.

### Subdivision Status Reports –Update/Review

Mr. Bechtholdt explained to the Planning Board that notice went out to each developer of subdivisions/residential development under construction; to date only received response from Norwood Bank and Pulte Homes of New England concerning Shining Rock Golf Community and EA Fish

Development regarding Linwood Mill Loft. Mr. Bechtholdt informed the Board that he did receive a call back from John Barges concerning Hillside Garden Estates who promised to provide the requested information. Mr. Bechtholdt will again update the Board on the status of projects at its next scheduled meeting (July 10, 2012).

#### Camelot Subdivision –Update/Status

Mr. Bechtholdt advised the Board that he along with Mark Kuras and Jeff Howland (JH Engineering Group) met with Joe Marinella (& George Murray) on June 4<sup>th</sup> to review the sewer pump station (shop drawings) and status of the sewer line connection through to Rumonoski Drive. Mr. Bechtholdt explained both Mr. Kuras and Mr. Howland had questions concerning the dry/wet well and pump specifications. Mr. Marinella assured them that he would address the concerns.

#### Linwood Mill Lofts –Update/Status

Planning Board members reviewed photographs taken by the Town Planner of the Linwood Mill property; photos included parking areas, access aisles, landscaping, signage, and drainage retention areas. The Planning Board then reviewed letter dated June 07, 2012 from EA Fish Development concerning Linwood Mill updates and request for plan changes and letter from the Inspector of Buildings dated May 16, 2012. Accordingly, the Planning Board approved the additional parking spaces; approved the width of parking spaces; approved relocation of parking spaces; approved the pedestrian walkway (striping) along front entry; approved landscape substitute at north entrance; and approved the relocation of lift station control panel. Reference was made to Planning Board decision dated November 09, 2011 concerning modification of approved site plan. Reference was also made to letter dated May 14, 2012 from Heritage Design Group –Drainage Certification and Operation and Maintenance Control Plan. EA Fish Development shall provide the Planning Board with a letter from the Northbridge Fire Department concerning the elimination of the two fire hydrants and relocation of one hydrant within the site. The EA Fish Development shall also submit to the Planning Board and Building Department revised drawing (as-built) of the approved site plan. Mr. Bechtholdt informed the Board, in addition to site improvements the Applicant had agreed to work with the Board on installation of sidewalk/crosswalk along Linwood Avenue; linking the mill property to the Mumford Riverwalk. This offsite improvement has not been satisfied at this time.

#### CEDS 2012 Update

Mr. Bechtholdt provided the Planning Board with listing of priority projects for Northbridge to be included in this year's Comprehensive Economic Development Strategies (CEDS 2012) to be prepared by CMRPC, our regional planning agency. Mr. Bechtholdt also mentioned the Northbridge/Sutton Sewer Extension project was submitted for one of this year's project nominations.

#### Mail –Review

In addition to the mail listed (see attached) the Planning Board noted receipt of the following communications: Community Planning & Development memorandum dated May 14, 2012 concerning Ashton Place; Site Plan Review Checklist; Conservation Commission memorandum dated May 24, 2012 concerning Ashton Place; JH Engineering Group report dated May 23, 2012 concerning Ashton Place; (draft) meeting minutes for May 22, 2012; email communication from Vera Kolias. Principle Planner CMRPC concerning Blackstone Valley Prioritization Project –Regional Forum; Community Planning & Development memorandum (copy of) dated May 21, 2012 concerning subdivision/residential

development status reports; Street Acceptance Checklist; email communication from Normand Gamache, Guerriere & Halnon, Inc received June 05, 2012 concerning Hillside Garden Estates; letter dated May 31, 2012 from Whitinsville Water Company concerning Shining Rock Golf Community water service; Linwood Mill photos taken by Town Planner; listing of 2012 CEDS update for Northbridge - Comprehensive Economic Development Strategies; email communication from Cindy Key received May 27, 2012 concerning Shining Rock Golf Community (Sandtrap Court); email communication from Randy Swigor, Whitinsville Water Company received May 31, 2012 concerning Osterman Propane; JH Engineering Group report dated May 31, 2012 concerning Osterman Propane Maintenance Facility; Certificate of Disapproval (copy of) dated May 10, 2012 concerning One Plummers Corner; copy of Board of Selectmen agenda for June 04, 2012 (Closing of Warrant); email communication from Town Planner to Town Manager sent June 04, 2012 concerning closing of warrant; CMRPC Annual Meeting and Awards Dinner agenda for June 14, 2012; email communication from Chris Skelly, Director of Local Government Programs Massachusetts Historical Commission received May 29, 2012 concerning Oakhurst property (building codes); map of town illustrating location of various subdivision/residential developments in town; spreadsheet detailing residential developments in town (housing type, status, # of permits issued); spreadsheet detailing residential development/open space (2000-2010); listing of Overlay District provisions; (copy of) Deed for Castle Hill Estates open space; and 2012 Planning Board meeting dates.

#### Other

Mr. Bechtholdt mentioned that he recently attended the MAPD Conference (Mass Association of Planning Directors) in Springfield, MA and will provide the Board members with a copy of this year's case law updates presented by Barbara J. Saint Andre', Esq. and Ilana M. Quirk, Esq. Mr. Bechtholdt and Ms. Gaudette informed the Board that they met with a prospective buyer interested in converting the Oakhurst Retreat Center to a residence and wedding & functions facility, noting due to today's building codes it may be costly to renovate this historic building. Mr. Bechtholdt informed the Board that he met briefly with Shelley Buma, newly elected Northbridge Housing Authority member concerning the Linwood Mill Loft and the Housing Authorities role in tenant selection. Mr. Bechtholdt explained while providing Ms. Buma with the requested information it was realized certain meeting minutes of the Planning Board have not been accepted by the Board, and as such the draft meeting minutes of June 09, 2009 and June 23, 2009 will be provided to the Planning Board for approval at its next meeting. Mr. Bechtholdt would like the Planning Board to start thinking about, once again updating the Master Plan and assisting with updating the Open Space & Recreation Plan.

#### Adjournment

Having no additional business the Planning Board adjourned its meeting of Monday, June 12, 2012 at or about 8:40 PM.

Respectfully submitted,

Approved by Planning Board –

R. Gary Bechtholdt II  
Town Planner

Cc: Town Clerk