



## **NORTHBRIDGE PLANNING BOARD MINUTES**

Tuesday, December 11, 2012



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

The following members of the public were in attendance: Mark Anderson (Heritage Design Group); Matt Mittelstadt (EA Fish Development); Kenneth Konicki; Joyce Augustus; Stanley Pieciewicz; Barbara Pieciewicz; and Carter Scott.

### **I. CITIZEN FORUM**

None

### **II. FORM A'S**

#### **LOT #3 REBECCA ROAD (CAMELOT) -REVIEW/DECISION**

Assessor Map 16 Parcel(s) 211, 212 & 213

Mark Anderson of Heritage Design Group presented on behalf of the applicant, J&F Marinella Development ANR plan entitled "Plan of Land" in the Town of Northbridge, Massachusetts –Rebecca Road dated November 11, 2012. Mr. Anderson advised the Board ANR application is for subject property known as Lot #3 –within the Camelot subdivision, where newly built house was constructed within the setbacks (front & side setbacks).

Mr. Anderson explained that the Zoning Board of Appeals granted relief (Variance) for the front setback and directed the applicant to correct the side setback via an ANR application. Mr. Anderson noted the intent of the plan is to convey parcel 3a (±44 square-feet) from Parcel A (a non-building lot) to Lot 3 and to convey parcel 4a (±73 square-feet) from Lot 4 to Parcel A. Mr. Anderson noted as part of the Variance consideration the owner/applicant agreed to designating Parcel A (A-R) as a non-building lot in exchange for the front setback relief.

Ms. Dolber and Mr. Simas questioned why the proposed conveyances (as shown on the ANR plan) differed from the plan originally submitted to the Zoning Board of Appeals. Mr. Anderson recited the one of the conditions of Variance decision [15-V-2012] "the side lot line setback be brought into compliance by moving the side lot line through an ANR plan to be submitted to the Planning Board for approval. The adjacent lot, shown as Parcel A, Assessor's Parcel 212 on the Camelot subdivision plan, cannot be further developed as a retreat lot and shall be noted as a non-buildable on the revised ANR plan" Mr. Anderson suggested the plan satisfies this condition and offered to provide the Board with a copy of the variance decision. Mr. Anderson also indicated that Parcel A (A-R) has been labeled "not a building lot" per the ZBA. Mr. Anderson admitted that he was not sure why the developer wanted to layout the lots differently.

*The Planning Board upon motion duly made (Dobler) and seconded (Palmer) voted (5-0) to GRANT ANR endorsement. Reference is made to Variance for Lot #3 granted by the Zoning Board of Appeals dated November 13, 2012 and recorded at the Worcester Registry of Deeds BK 49964 PG 233.*

### **III. CARPENTER ESTATES -DISCUSSION**

#### Low Impact Development (LID) Techniques

Mark Anderson of Heritage Design Group met once again with the Planning Board to review planned modification for Carpenter Estates subdivision (approved/not constructed) which is to incorporate Low Impact Development –LID techniques. Mr. Anderson was joined by Stanley Piecewicz (applicant), Barbara Piecewicz and Carter Scott, President of Transformation, Inc., a sustainable development and building company (Townsend, MA).

Mr. Anderson explained they would like to incorporate LID techniques within the subdivision, beginning after the wetland crossing through to the cul-de-sac (approximately 900-feet of roadway) eliminating catchbasins and curbing. Stormwater would be directed into vegetated-swales, filtered through vegetation and infiltrated into the ground. Mr. Anderson praised the Planning Board for promoting LID techniques in the town's Best Development Practices Guidebook and acknowledged this type of method of treating stormwater (rather than conventional pipe to pond) is something the State, DEP and EPA have embraced; is becoming the preferred process for treating stormwater.

Mr. Anderson indicated that he has met with Conservation Commission, noting the Commission is in support of the idea of LID. A new NOI (Notice of Intent) would need to be filed with the Conservation Commission for their review and approval. Mr. Anderson added he has had conversations with the Department of Public Works (Jim Shuris, DPW Director & Rob Van Meter, Highway Superintendent), noting they are in support of LID however have expressed concerns with long-term maintenance. Mr. Anderson suggested they would create a Homeowners Association (HOA) to address the maintenance concerns.

Mr. Palmer explained that he has visited two "LID" developments recently (one in Bellingham and one in Hopkinton, MA); he did not like them –looks cheap. Mr. Anderson noted the he was aware of both projects; Heritage Design Group designed the Bellingham project. Mr. Palmer asked if there was a HOA for the Bellingham project, suggesting it looked awful. Mr. Anderson explained that the maintenance would become the responsibility of the town; will require seasonal maintenance such as mowing (2 to 3 times a year) and periodic cleaning of the swales as needed; compared to traditional stormwater maintenance LID is more cost efficient and less intensive (no catchbasins to clean-out every year).

Mr. Palmer expressed concerns with snow and salt and how that may impact the grass swales overtime. Mr. Anderson explained that the vegetated-swales would be planted with salt tolerant plantings, grasses, etc. and should require only routine maintenance.

Mr. Simas encouraged his fellow Planning Board members to support and promote LID and asked Mr. Anderson what other LID techniques would be incorporated in the Carpenter Estates subdivision (in reference to options and LID practices listed in the town's Best Development Practices Guidebook); Mr. Anderson indicated that they may include rain gardens, dry wells and some common driveways, however suggested may be difficult to be realized once the individual lots are sold/developed. Mr.

Bechtholdt recommended a covenant for the neighborhood be created which establishes requirement for LID techniques within the individual lots.

Mr. Simas suggested the more elements of LID (within the entirety of the subdivision development) the more likely the Board would be willing to support it; need to propose more than just eliminating curbing, drain pipes, etc. need to commit to the full Low Impact Development concept. Mr. Simas noted that he was not a proponent of common driveways, as the Board has learned recently they can be problematic.

Ms. Gaudette asked how many house lots would front this portion of the roadway (up to 12) and approximately how many linear feet of roadway (800–900 feet). Mr. Simas asked if any review or evaluations of the topography and soil conditions were conducted; Mr. Anderson responded yes testing has been done, suggesting the soils are favorable; some areas 8–10 feet deep and others 4-feet (depth of refusal). Ms. Gaudette commented that it was her recollection that the site may not be ideal for LID; various elevation changes and rock outcroppings (ledge). Mr. Anderson noted they plan to incorporate a detention basin in the LID stormwater design. Ms. Gaudette confirmed with Mr. Anderson that sidewalks would remain as part of the LID subdivision for Carpenter Estates.

Mr. Simas inquired how the lots would be developed, if the lots would be a clear cut or should we expect to see houses set back from the roadway with natural vegetation (woods) in front. Mr. Anderson suggested lots would be wooded in front with homes set back from the roadway. Mr. Simas favored such design, however explained that his house is set back from the road and is concerned that property owners (like him) may be disengaged to what happens at the street and have no incentives to maintain the grass-swailes along their roadway frontage.

Mr. Griggs supports the idea of incorporating LID techniques, suggesting as we move forward the town will likely have more and more LIDs come its way; this smaller development (Carpenter Estates) may be a good learning experience rather than a much bigger project. Mr. Anderson agreed Bellingham went through a learning curve; part of that was understanding the function of the LIDs and how they perform; Bellingham subdivision regulations required a specific depths and/or slope along the roadway, however when constructed this proved to be incompatible with the functionality of the grass-swailes. Mr. Anderson hinted the appearance Mr. Palmer described earlier may have been the result of correcting this concern in the field; adding Carpenter Estates subdivision would be a good opportunity for Northbridge to introduce LID subdivisions; mentioning the recently completed Linwood Mill redevelopment employed LID techniques on an individual site development scale with great success.

Ms. Gaudette expressed concerns, thought the site may be a tough one; not the best location, may be other areas in town more suitable. I hope it would work really well, although she was not sure.

Mr. Carter explained to the Planning Board that he has worked on various LID projects and continues to partner with DEP and other state agency hosting seminars on LID and zero-energy homes. Mr. Carter mentioned developments in Tyngsboro (2005); Townsend (2006) & Princeton, Devens and Harvard all employ LID techniques. Mr. Carter explained how LIDs are designed to mimic nature; get the water back into the groundwater as soon as possible. Mr. Carter provided the Planning Board with

a brief overview of how LIDs function, the maintenance of and how LIDs are becoming more and more the preferred option for addressing stormwater; the key is education and gaining an understanding on how LIDs really work.

Mr. Simas understands DPW's fears (maintenance concerns), however noted we tend to add a lot of overhead and complexity by not getting educated and taking responsibility (less work); requiring a HOA is a way to defer that responsibility; seems shortsighted on the town's part -not in favor or requiring a homeowners association to address long-term maintenance. Ms. Dobler agreed, need to get DPW on board; this project may be a good first step to become educated about LID subdivisions.

Mr. Anderson reviewed with the Board the purpose of tonight's discussion which was to gain a general consensus of the Planning Board in order to further the idea of modifying the Carpenter Estates subdivision (incorporating LID techniques). Mr. Anderson noted that he understands they may still need to talk with DPW but has a good feeling after tonight.

Ms. Gaudette indicated that it sounds like there is consensus from the Planning Board; all members agreed. Mr. Bechtholdt explained although he cannot speak for the Board he feels the more Low Impact Development techniques employed within the entirety of the site (roadway and individual house lots) it seems the more likely the Board would be willing to accept an LID subdivision. Mr. Bechtholdt advised Mr. Anderson to continue its dialogue with the Department of Public Works and schedule another meeting with DPW on LID maintenance.

#### **IV. FARNUM CIRCLE -DISCUSSION**

Modification -MGL Ch 41 SEC 81W

Mr. Bechtholdt advised the Planning Board that he provided letters to the developer (Michael Lambert) as well as the property owners inviting them to attend tonight's meeting; copies of which are included in the Planning Board packets. Mr. Bechtholdt explained Mr. Lambert acknowledged receipt of such mailing (Planning office received certified mail –return receipt card signed by Mr. Lambert) however apparently was not able to attend; the purpose of tonight's meeting is to review JH Engineering Group, LLC report dated November 06, 2012 and discuss possible waivers to allow for the completion of the remaining work and ready the roadway for street acceptance. Mr. Bechtholdt suggested the Board review the report and consider modifying the subdivision accordingly pursuant to MGL Ch 41 Sec 81W.

Mr. Bechtholdt suggested this may be the best approach to complete this project, either by the developer or if necessary by a third-party. Mr. Bechtholdt explained to the Board if they are willing to waive certain requirements of the subdivision the Planning Board may need to upon their own action/motion modify the subdivision (public hearing) after which the Board would then contact the developer and advise him of the remaining outstanding issues and request work be completed within the statutory time frame (45-days); failure to do so may result in the town (Planning Board) calling in the bond and then soliciting the services of a third party to complete the remaining punchlist items.

Mr. Bechtholdt recited for the Planning Board items identified in JH Engineering Group's report; binder course, top course, vertical granite curbing, street trees & landscaping, loam & seeding and street

layout plan. Mr. Bechtholdt suggested the Board go through the items even though the developer (M. Lambert) was not able to make the meeting.

Mr. Palmer asked about the utility pole and if the property owners in attendance (Joyce Augustus and Kenneth Konicki) were able to determine if the pole serviced their home as well as the other property. Ms. Augustus indicated that although they have tried to do so they have not been able to determine where their service is coming from (overhead or underground). Mr. Bechtholdt indicated there is an electrical junction box/cabinet installed at the cul-de-sac for the underground service, noting it seems to be powered (as one can hear it). Mr. Bechtholdt will check with the Building Department to see if the Electrical Inspector can help determine service, if not Mr. Bechtholdt will review same with Jeff Howland the Planning Board's consulting engineering.

Ms. Augustus is concerned the pole located directly in front of her home will be allowed to remain. Ms. Augustus reminded the Planning Board that underground service is a requirement of the subdivision approval. Mr. Bechtholdt confirmed same and noted that the requirement for underground service would be included in a final punchlist to the developer, noting it was not necessarily part of tonight's discussion however would be included after the Board determines waivers for roadway construction (such as vertical granite curbing, street trees, etc).

Mr. Bechtholdt asked Ms. Augustus if she researched any of the deeds to see if perhaps an easement exists that would allow for this utility pole to be installed on their property. Mr. Bechtholdt provided Ms. Augustus with copies of Quit Claim Deeds and easements documents he compiled for the subject property [Deed –BK 42353/PG 168; BK 33819/PG 381; 38225/PG 34; 42353/PG 168; Easement Deed BK 37971/PG 363 & 21370/PG 145].

## **OLD/NEW BUSINESS**

### Approval of Meeting Minutes –November 13, 2012 & November 27, 2012

Upon motion duly made (Palmer) and seconded (Dobler) the Planning Board voted (5-0) to ACCEPT the meeting minutes of November 13, 2012. Upon motion duly made (Palmer) and seconded (Dobler) the Planning Board voted (4-0-1[Griggs abstained]) to ACCEPT the meeting minutes of November 27, 2012.

### Open Space & Recreation Plan Update –Creation of Ad-hoc-committee

Ms. Gaudette thanked Mr. Bechtholdt for providing her with copies of the Action Items included in the 2002 Open Space and Recreation Plan; Ms. Gaudette is to include same in her letters to members of the Open Space Committee to see if they are interested in serving on an Ad-Hoc Committee to update the town's Open Space & Recreation Plan. The Planning Board agreed to solicit the Board of Selectmen to establish an Ad-hoc Committee for the update to the town's Open Space & Recreation Plan. Mr. Bechtholdt shall coordinate with the Town Manager a meeting date with the Board of Selectmen; Ms. Gaudette will instruct Open Space Committee members to submit a Talent Bank form to the Town Manager if they are interested in serving on this committee.

### Linwood Mill Lofts –Certificate of Occupancy

Matt Mittelstadt of EA Fish Development reviewed the status of the site plan approval and special permit issued with the Planning Board, specifically Condition of Approval #5 [Historic element -Special

Permit] and Condition of Approval #13 [Mumford Riverwalk –Special Permit]. Mr. Mittelstadt explained to the Board that he has been working closing with Ken Warchol, Chairman of the Northbridge Historic Commission; historic elements have been displayed prominently within the interior and exterior of the mill complex. The Board determined Condition 5 of the special permit was satisfied. Ms. Gaudette reviewed with Mr. Mittelstadt the idea of making a physical connection from the Linwood Mill to the Mumford Riverwalk which runs parallel to Linwood Avenue. Ms. Gaudette suggested there may be enough remove along the shoulder of the roadway (Linwood Avenue) to lay macadam (asphalt) or a suitable alternative. Mr. Mittelstadt expressed some initial concerns with potential permitting with the Conservation Commission, however agreed to look into it. Although the owner/applicant has yet to satisfy Condition 13 the Board is confident EA Fish will continue to work with them in addressing this condition of approval. The Planning Board directed the Town Planner to provide the Inspector of Buildings with a letter consenting to the issuance of occupancy for the Linwood Mill Loft project. By way of update Mr. Mittelstadt informed the Board that the Northbridge Housing Authority and EA Fish Development (as well as DHCD) have agreed to a Memorandum of Understanding concerning the affordable units.

#### Camelot Subdivision –Update/Status Report

Mr. Bechtholdt advised the Planning Board that he spoke with Joe Marinella (J&F Marinella Dev) about the location of the community mailbox: Mr. Marinella indicated that he was still awaiting input from the Whitinsville Post Master. Mr. Bechtholdt mentioned a portion of the roadway was paved since the last meeting and according to Mr. Marinella the Aurora pump was on schedule for a deliver date of December 21, 2012; JH Engineering Group continues to monitor the subdivision construction.

#### Hillside Garden Estates –Update

Mr. Bechtholdt informed the Planning Board that he was contact by John Barges last week who informed him that he was (re)installing the granite curbing along Deane Way; Mr. Bechtholdt and the Board were cautiously optimistic of this and hoped the subdivision would continue to progress.

#### Mail –Review

The Planning Board noted receipt of the following: ANR checklist for Rebecca Road (Lot #3 -Camelot); Northbridge's Best Development Practices Guidebook -Section 3 Stormwater Management; Community Planning & Development letter dated November 29, 2012 to Michael Lambert regarding Farnum Circle; Community Planning & Development letter dated November 29, 2012 to Tricia Lambert regarding Farnum Circle; Community Planning & Development letter dated November 29, 2012 to Joyce Augustus & Kenneth Konicki regarding Farnum Circle; report dated November 6, 2012 from JH Engineering regarding Farnum Circle Engineer's Construction Estimate; report dated July 01, 2011 from Malley Engineering regarding Farnum Circle Construction Status; (draft) meeting minutes (11/13/2012); (draft) meeting minutes (11/27/2012); (copy of) Certificate of Approval dated June 24, 2009 (Special Permit – Historic Mill Adaptive Reuse Overlay District) for Linwood Mill Lofts; Community Planning & Development memorandum dated November 29, 2012 to Town Counsel concerning Sandtrap Court (Street Acceptance/Deed); Community Planning & Development letter dated November 29, 2012 to J & F Marinella regarding -Camelot Subdivision; email communication received November 29, 2012 from Robert Van Meter (Highway Superintendent) concerning Camelot –paving; and 2013 Planning Board meeting calendar.

Other

Mr. Simas mentioned that he was surprised with the result of the Special Town Meeting where a two-thirds majority vote was not reached for the Douglas Road DPW article; noting the Town Manager, Board of Selectmen and Finance Committee all supported the project. Mr. Palmer apologized for he was not able to attend.

Adjournment

Having no additional business the Board adjourned its meeting of December 11, 2012 at 9:00 PM.

Respectfully submitted,

Approved by Planning Board –

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R. Gary Bechtholdt II  
Town Planner

Cc: Town Clerk