

BELLINGHAM PLANNING BOARD
UPPER TOWN HALL
BELLINGHAM, MASSACHUSETTS

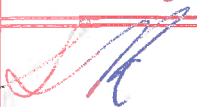
Regular Meeting of June 23, 1977

Members Present: John P. Murray, Chairman
Sergio Rotatori, Vice Chairman
Gerald R. Brisson
James E. Hart

Chairman Murray opened the meeting at 8:10 P.M.

Thomas Clark of South Main Street informed the Board he was going to plan a shopping center to be called the Shawmut Plaza containing 14 acres off North Main Street near the Shawmut Needham National Bank. He showed the Board plans that would have up to 20 stores with a single building of 10 stores initially planned with the rest at a later date. Consultant Philip B. Herr questioned Clark on why he was bringing the plans to the Board tonight. Clark stated it was just a matter of courtesy. Egress will be shared with the bank and drainage will go towards the back of the land and there will not be any egress onto Mill Street. Herr pointed out the Board's review and written advisory report is required on all applications for construction permits if 20 or more parking spaces will be required. The plan is referred to the Planning Board within 7 days of filing with the Building Inspector and no permit can be issued prior to receipt of the Board's report until 28 days have gone by from the date of referral. Brisson stated he wanted to see a drainage plan to make sure it doesn't end up on Mill Street. Herr pointed out there was a lot of parking close to No. Main Street. Clark was in agreement that he could take out some rows of parking and put in some plants instead. The buildings would be towards the rear of the lot. Engineer for Clark, Bob Cournoyer, joined the Board at that point and stated he would next draw up some plans for the Board of Health. Herr reminded them that there were regulations in the zoning regarding landscaping and screening.


Board met with Jay R. Schocket and Edward Brice, Jr. of Schochet Associates 21 Merchants Row, Boston, MA 02109 and Dominic Saraceno, 15 Surre Road, Newton, MA owner of the former multi-family parcel of land on South Main Street. Schocket told the Board he was contacted by Saraceno to see if he would be interested in the land for development. He stated he had looked over the land and was looking into the towns' requirements and then contacted Leo Dubois President of the Council for the Aging. He met with Dubois and Joyce Schreffler. Dubois had been in touch with Saraceno over use of the barn now on the property for a drop-in center for the elderly. Saraceno, stated Schocket, was the owner of the land and would be willing to sell the center to him. His current issue is that he cannot do anything with the land unless it is zoned properly. Dubois told the Board he was trying to locate a drop-in center somewhere in town. There were federal funds to renovate an existing building but it would have to be one that they could afford to maintain. Brice stated they came into the picture when they became interested in developing the land for a cluster type of development for the elderly. Brice stated they developed housing; they were manager developers. The units would be privately owned housing for the



elderly, the difference between what he was proposing and the ones the Town already have is that he would be paying full taxes. It was Schocket's understanding that there was a long waiting list for the elderly housing. Rotatori pointed out that they were not all residents of Bellingham; there were a lot from the surrounding towns. Brice stated that Wrentham Manor has a waiting list of 40 people. Murray questioned if they were all Bellingham people. Brice said he was not sure. According to the latest Bellingham census, Bellingham has approximately 1100 senior citizens. Maybe 60-70% would qualify for Housing for the Elderly. Rotatori questioned Brice on how many units they would be putting up. Brice stated about 40-50 units initially, then it would depend upon need. The Federal Government just advertised 700-800 units and the HUD office in Boston received 13,000 applications. The need is there. Rotatori stated the land is not the best piece of land in town. There were problems like drainage. Daraceno stated the land was originally zoned for 480 units. The plan they were talking about is less than 1/2 that density. Rotatori told them the land was zoned for 4 years for multi-family and no building took place. Saraceno stated he was the owner of the land now, but was not involved in the original plan. He would never agree to that density. He did not think that plan was in any way good for the piece of land. Schocket stated there was a need for elderly subsidized apartments. The Federal Government puts aside some money each year to subsidize rents. The elderly put up something like 25% and the government pays the additional rent. It is the same way that Depot Court and Wrentham Manor are run. The only difference is that we would pay taxes.

Murray questioned what would prevent them from saying they were going to build housing for the elderly, get the land zoned and then build something else. Schocket stated they would work out some sort of a contract. They have to sign an agreement with the government on a 30 or 40 year contract. They have done this in South Boston and one about to be opened in Whitinsville. His company owns and manages 1100 to 1200 units. It is their feeling that this area has a need for elderly multi-family. They would like to help this need, the Council for the Aged need a drop-in center, we would be willing to help on this. They are here tonight because they need some advise. Saraceno stated when he bought the land it was paid for as multi-family zoned land. They did not go forward with the original plan because it was not good for the town. He himself was an industrial developer. He had called Schocket because he was a housing developer. Saraceno told the Board he was disturbed that he was never advised of any change in his land. He found out by accident when a real estate broker called and was interested in building houses there. That was when he learned it was no longer multi-family. He felt he should have been advised about the rezoning. The time was not right for multi-family and the plan was not right. He felt the current proposal was an excellent and sensible use for his land.

Schocket asked the Board for their general view of the matter. They were talking about a plan half the density of the original plan; they were talking about an elderly unit managed by private company, built by them paying taxes to the town. The demand is here now for this type of building. Hart told them the same kind of a picture was told to the Board when Oak Woods was proposed. People in town were supposed to have first preference. That didn't happen, the town is sensitive in that area. Brice told the Board in Portland, ME they set up a tenant screening committee and they worked to help select the tenants. ~~They were only interested in going~~



where they were wanted, and only where they can work with the local people. Schocket gave the following list of people to contact for references
Tom Vallean, Executive Director of the Portland Redevelopment area
Mike Feen, Board of Selectmen in Whitinsville, MA.
Richard Carey, Mayor in Portland ME
Jim Flaherty, Counselman in South Boston
Walter Sullivan, City Councilman in Cambridge, MA.

Schocket told the Board as far as he was concerned it would have to be decided that there is a demand and a need for this housing and he would have to have a group of people who wanted to deal with him. He would stand behind his past reputation. If the Board was not satisfied with anything just tell him and he would go. He could not say what further action Saraceno would take on his land.

Murray told them he was concerned with the tax situation. Would the taxes pay for the services. Schocket stated in most town the tax rate is more than half going for schools. Elderly people don't need schools. The kinds of services that the elderly need are mostly taken care of by the Council of Aging with federal revenue sharing.

Rotatori told Schocket he would not make any decision until he had a chance to talk with Ray Ladouceur to see what kind of a need there was for Bellingham people.


Leo Dubois said he only knew there were a lot of seniors who are sorry now that they didn't apply for housing at Wrentham Manor when it was first proposed. He knew there was a long waiting list there now. He didn't know how many of them were from town.

Hart stated this was going to be a private development. They would have no guarantee that they would not be getting people from neighboring towns.

Brice questioned why they wanted to prevent people from moving into Bellingham. Rotatori told him when Oak Woods first came up he was told Bellingham residents had first choice. This did not happen, we had no say in who went in there. There were Bellingham people who needed this housing and people outside the town got in first.

Herr told the Board they would have to look at #1 do you think you need this housing #2 are you confident with the people who are proposing it and #3 are you confident of the site proposed. He questioned Dubois on why they had chosen this site. Dubois said he had not chosen it yet. He was looking in all parts of town for a suitable site for their center. They had looked at different sites and most have been eliminated because of cost and maintenance. If they could come to some sort of an agreement with these people he was not even sure if he could get federal funding. This site may end up nowhere. Herr asked if there was something special at that site. Brice stated he had contacted Dubois because it would create a sense of community if 40 or so units for the elderly were to be built there. An elderly drop-in center would be an attractive idea. They would like to go along with it.


Herr stated the Board has to look at the past history of the site. That particular site is going to make it harder to get to the stores and necessary services. Would it be someplace that was attractive for the elderly. Saraceno state the site itself was a beautiful place, it is on the main road. The only thing he found wrong with it was the initial plan. Herr stated the Planning Board has supported a lot of rezoning over the years and has been sorely disappointed in the results. What is said



before the zoning and what happens after are of a different quality. You are proposing to develop the land at half the original density, you propose to manage it in an extraordinary way, what the Board is going to have to do is find a way to assure that this all comes about. How can you lend more than the usual amount of assurance that everything is going to be as you say it is now. Schocket stated he resented being tied to what has happened to the town in the past by other people. Herr said he was just trying to tell them that they have to give the town some assurances that you are going to do what you say you are going to do. Saraceno said when you seek permission to build in Newton if there are any grey areas you have to post a bond. The town can put in any provisions that are necessary. Herr told the Board when Sylvania Park was first agreed to in Newton an agreement was drawn up in advance of the rezoning with the city regarding purchase of the land and there was a severe limitation on just what they could do with the property. That might be a possibility. It would have to be well documented. Schocket stated he would be willing to do this. Herr stated the Board of Appeals can impose regulations after rezoning at the time of the application. What this Board has to do is before the rezoning. The Board Chairman would have to be able to go before the town meeting with something that would be fiscally good for the town and be for the residents. The town has not been exactly enthusiastic over multi-family. Schocket stated he was not going to go ahead unless the Boards says go ahead, you have a shot at it. Murray told him if everyone involved decided to go along there probably wouldn't be any problems at the town meeting, especially if the Council of the Aging people approved. Schocket stated he couldn't say it would be for only 50 units. The town would have to decide you wanted some quantity of housing. Murray stated he felt they had to establish a need first. He would talk to Ray Ladouceur himself. Joyce Schreffler said there were 7800 seniors in Bellingham and she felt there was a dire need for housing for the elderly. Murray told Schocket it would take about two months time to determine if there was a need. Schocket told the Board he would be in touch.

After Schocket had left Leo Dubois told the Board that they indeed had spoken to them but in no way have they made any commitments. Even assuming that they build the housing and they give them the old barn, he didn't know if they could afford it. They knew nothing for certain, and were just in the looking stage. Hart stated it was being done with federal funding. Once it is rezoned this land could be used for anything they wanted to do with it. Herr stated you would have to put in some stipulations prior to zoning. He questioned why they would be putting some 200 odd units for the elderly down there, when there was nothing down there. The drop-in center should be centrally located, somewhere down the center of town. Hart told Dubois he thought Ray Ladouceur was looking into a third housing for the elderly. There might be a possibility of putting in a center in there. He felt the Board should talk to Ladouceur first.

Richard Abretti, 426 Hartford Avenue told the Board he owns the industrial land off Farm Street and would like to have it rezoned to either agricultural or residential. Since the rezoning to industrial there have been a lot of houses built on Farm Street. Murray pointed out the area around it is all agricultural. Herr asked what he intended doing with the



garage that was on the land. Abretti said he still wanted to leave that as industrial. Herr pointed out the zoning proposed would be for a less intense use. He could still use it for what he was doing with it now if it were rezoned. Abretti agreeded the whole 13 $\frac{1}{2}$ acres should be rezoned to agricultural. Board agreeded to hold a public hearing for the rezoning on July 21st at 8:30 P.M.

Gerald Brisson excused himself from the voting board. A plan of land for Lot A of 13.67 acres and Lot B for 27,590 sq. ft. was presented for the Shawmut Needham Bank, Needham. Land is situated on North Main Street and Mill Street. On a Hart-Rotatori motion the Board voted unanimously to approve the above plan, Brisson abstaining.

Herr gave the Board an amendment on Flood Hazard Zoning that had been checked as far as language with the Federal Insurance Agency. As of this date everything is OK. This article would make the town eligible for federal flood insurance. On a Rotatori-Hart motion the board voted unanimously to hold a public hearing along with the Pearson rezoning at 8:30 P.M. on July 21st in the upper town hall.

Board voted unanimously to sign release of Lot 1163 located in Wethersfield II also known as Sheila Drive on a Hart-Rotatori motion.

Meeting adjourned at 11:25 P.M. on a Hart-Rotatori motion.

APPROVED AS READ:

Respectfully submitted,

Sergio Rotatori, Clerk