



BELLINGHAM PLANNING BOARD

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January 8, 2009 Meeting Minutes

- **Present at the meeting:**

Patricia Buckley (PMB), Chairman
Glenn C. Wojcik (GCW), Vice Chairman
Stephen Bartha (SB), Secretary
David Brown (DB) (absent)
Brian J. Sutherland (BJS)
John Sexton (JS), Associate Member

Other officials: Stacey J. Wetstein (SJW), Town Planner
Amy Cook (AC), Commission on Disabilities
Amy Sault (AS), Coordinator

PMB opens the meeting at 7:00pm.

New Business

Brookfield Estates Bond Acceptance and Lot Releases

Emile P. Gareau. SJW advised that he is all set for his lot release; she received the Form J and his pass book savings account. The Board agreed that although the DPW asked for \$78,800 that is ok to accept the \$78,700 which is \$100 off from the full bond.

BJS: Motion to accept the bond in the amount of \$78,700 for Brookfield Estates with the attached Form J.

SB: Second.

Vote: 4-0 Approved. (PMB, GCW, BJS and SB)

BJS: Motion to sign the Form G certificate of release for Brookfield Estates plan book 577 page 90-91 lots designated on the plans known as # 1-7.

SB: Second.

Vote: 4-0 Approved. (PMB, GCW, BJS and SB)

BJS: Motion amended to include the covenant dated January 24, 2008 recorded in the Norfolk Registry of Deeds book 25479 page 109.

SB: Second.

Vote: 4-0 Approved. (PMB, GCW, BJS and SB)

Old Business

BJS: Motion to sign the vouchers.

SB: Second.

Vote: 4-0 Approved. (PMB, GCW, BJS and SB)

BJS: Motion to accept the Planning Board minutes of December 11, 2008.

SB: Second.

Vote: 4-0 Approved. (PMB, GCW, BJS and SB)

BJS: Motion to accept the Master Plan Meeting minutes of December 11, 2008.

SB: Second.

Vote: 4-0 Approved. (PMB, GCW, BJS and SB)

SB: Motion to accept the meeting minutes of December 18, 2008.

GCW: Second.

Vote: 3-0 Approved. (PMB, GCW, and SB) BJS Abstained

The Shoppes at Bellingham, Continued Public Hearing, Development Plan Review, Water Resource District Special Permit, Major Business Complex Special Permit

Bob Frasier, W/S Development, Jeff Donahoe of Jeffrey Donahoe Associates the Real Estate and Economic Consultant for the Town and John Connery of Connery Associates. Mr. Donahoe advised he was retained in March of 2008 and has been revising the Fiscal Impact Draft.

The issues are whether the number of police officers estimated in the report is sufficient and whether the detectives should be included in the estimate. He has looked at incremental departmental overhead and salaries and benefits but also the cost of gasoline, etc. There are questions regarding whether the amount of fire department calls to restaurants were higher than average retail businesses.

Mr. Donahoe advised that the public raised an issue whether or not retail activities result in higher insurance rates for the entire community. He also looked at the costs of repaving the proposed roadway and whether the DPW's cost of doing this is sufficient.

Mr. Donahoe advised that there is the question of whether or not this will work. Looking at the feasibility and demographics, what is a reasonable contribution to the re-establishment of the North End Fire station? Due to the impact of restaurants on the Health Dept. there will be a need for additional inspections. There is also a question regarding how a delay in this project to 2013 would affect the fiscal impacts regarding the tax dollars of residents and nonresidents.

Mr. Donahoe spent some time with the detectives and to review the police cost. After review with the department, Mr. Donahoe is proposing five new officers for the morning

and afternoon shifts. PMB questioned the extra bars and restaurants that would be open and if the 11-7am shift should have more officers. Mr. Donahoe advised that while discussing with the police department they concurred that even with the current establishments opened that there is very little activity from 11pm-7am. However, they can allocate the five new officers however they feel is necessary. BJS questioned the communities that already have these large scale centers and if anyone has talked to them to see if they have needed additional coverage. Mr. Donahoe advised that he spoke with Captain Coriveau who had spoke with Wrentham and two other towns and found out that they were not affected by those shopping centers.

Mr. Donahoe advised that with the Issue of incremental overhead costs including police, fire he came to the conclusion that there would be a 6% increase and for the DPW it was 9.7% increase. This is a net total of about \$25,000 between police, fire and the DPW.

Mr. Donahoe met with the fire dept. and their opinion was that the amount of fire calls would not go up due to the increase of restaurants and kitchens. The fire dept. provided them with information including 2000 runs per year and bout 200 of them is associated with existing retail centers. The discussion with the fire dept. Mr. Donahoe had estimated about another 200 calls per year and with 2 vehicles per run. Deputy Chief Garon believes that that could be understated but could not quantify this. Mr. Donahoe asked if he had a data base of calls so he could map it but there were privacy concerns because a name and a medical issue are stated. PMB is surprised it was privileged information with the amount and specific calls they are coming in. PMB also stated that the information is in the newspaper as public information and that she believes that the mapping would be useful. Mr. Donahoe stated he would investigate whether the information was public

The next issue is whether the insurance costs will go up for the whole town. Mr. Donahoe was told that there was no information on this after checking. Bellingham currently ranks lower than Wrentham in insurance premiums. Mr. Donahoe did a longer term trend analysis and is suggesting building a reserve fund of about \$26,000 - \$36,000 per year.

The next question was out of pocket detailed feasibility study by Claritas listed some of the data sources he has used regularly and they produce a retail gap analysis which is the difference between consumer demand and consumer expenditures in a given market. He looked at a 10, 15 and 20 mile radius of this site and it shows a retail opportunity within 10 miles of about a billion dollars a year. A typical retail store might have sales of about \$250 - \$400 per square foot. The Shoppes 500,000 square foot retail center at \$400 a square foot might do \$200 million a year in business. That is only 20% of what the data indicates we are missing in this market place within a 10 mile radius. When you get out to 15 miles there is a surplus of retail activity. Then within a 20 mile radius there is a about a 300 million dollar opportunity. However, that is all categories of retail including automotive sales.

Mr. Donahoe looked at the food service category because of the amount of restaurants being proposed and there is about a \$187 million retail gap in this category within a 10 mile radius. Within a 20 mile radius has a \$335 million gap for all food service. Mr.

Donahoe state that we know there is some demand, there is a retail gap and WS wants to serve this gap.

Mr. Donahoe also looked at the same 10, 15 and 20 mile radius for the median income which ranges from about \$73,000 to about over \$100,000 year, this equals about a 3% increase per year. Mr. Donahoe state that there is a significant economic base here and it is projected to grow. GCW asked if Mr. Donahoe included the current retail shops in the area. Mr. Donahoe explained that the current retail activity included all retail activity in the area.

The north end fire station is not manned regularly and is usually only for special events. Mr. Donahoe advised that this station does not have sufficient space including a kitchen, crew and work space. The Fire Dept. claims that this part of town is not as well served as other parts of towns. Mr. Donahoe advised that this is not the only project going on in the town and he recommended that they set up a mitigation fund for this \$1.4 - 2.5 million for the North End Fire Station excluding the cost of land. The current fire equipment is adequate but a new EMS vehicle would be needed. He stated that this amount does not include the staffing costs of this station and it would be feasible for an additional 20 fire fighters for this station. Mr. Donahoe also stated that the addition requested should not all come from this one project. The town should consider whether this is going to be an impact on the town and figure out an amount per square foot per retail and office space of mitigation. He questioned whether or not the building could be put to some other use? The amount he suggests asking for in mitigation is about \$500,000 which is a good start to what needs to be accomplished in that part of Town.

Mr. Connery advised that the fire dept on the north side is an issue and they looked at in terms as what would there operational potential impact. He believes that this project will create a large fiscal benefit for the Town.

Mr. Donahoe advised that the restaurants are inspected 4 times per year via contractors so there is no net demand on the Town's Health Dept. In addressing the impact of the delay of this project to 2013 he looked a long term growth in the Town's expenditures which averages around 3.7% per year. The fixed cost has been growing about 11.4% per year and so the overall service cost to this project if it were delayed from now until 2013 would grow to about \$570,000 to about \$700,000. Mr. Donahoe held the estimated \$89 million value of the property and increased it 2.5% per year so at 2013 the project value will be about \$95 million. The other factor that drives revenue for the Town is the tax rate. The commercial tax rate is the highest it has ever been. The current rate is \$15.31. Under the current site of assumptions is 2008 this project would generate about \$1.36 million in revenue in 2013 it would be generating about \$1.46 million in revenue. So the expenses have gone up a little over \$100,000 and the tax revenue has gone up a little bit less than that. Overall it is not a dramatic difference.

Mr. Donahoe advised that Bellingham has the lowest percentage of residential tax base of all the neighboring towns. He stated that Bellingham is in a better fiscal position and a budgetary position as a result of this. BJS advised that the Board of Selectman recently voted to lower the commercial tax rate and increase the residential tax rate for next year.

The Board complemented Mr. Donahoe regarding his analysis and answers that he has provided the public and the Board thus far. SJW advised the Board that she has received a set of new site plans which Graves is looking at now and the whole drainage system has changed. Mr. Frasier is waiting to hear back from Graves regarding the drainage.

BJS advised that the DPW is not willing to look at anymore plans until they know what actions the State will take regarding the road and whether it will be a state or town road. Mr. Frasier advised that they have had meetings with the Mass Highway Commissioner and they have calls into the district to find out what the latest news is on the road situation. It is opening up a lot of issues in terms of the design and that the Commissioner wants that interchange done. Mr. Frasier advised that the DOT has federally funded money available to do major infrastructure on projects that promote economic development.

BJS questioned whether drainage, the project changes and the updated SDEIR would be the topic of discussion for the next time they are before the Board. Mr. Frasier advised that between now and the next meeting they will get copies of the updated drafts to the Board as soon as they are completed.

BJS: Motion to continue the public hearings of The Shoppes at Bellingham: Development Plan review, Water Resource District Special Permit and Major Business Complex Special Permit until April 23, 2009 at 7:15pm.

SB: Second.

Vote: 4-0 Approved. (PMB, GCW, BJS and SB)

High Ridge Estates

SJW advised that she received a call from the bank asking to speak with PMB directly. Jay Talerman, Town Council advised that the bank does not want to give the money to Tim Jones because they are at risk of running a deficit if Mr. Jones does not finish. Mr. Talerman advised that he will contact the bank shortly if the money is not released.

Planners Report

SJW questioned the Board to see if they have any recommendations for the town warrant for Town Meeting. SJW advised that there are two small typos that need to be corrected.

SJW advised that she and Mr. Talerman were talking about giving the Planning Board a little more leverage for Development Projects as far as bringing some into the realm of being a Special Permit. She is suggesting reducing our Major Business Special permits number down from 250,000 square feet or uses listed under industrial. SJW and Mr. Talerman were thinking of reducing that to a smaller number so that a "Best Buy Warehouse" would have to pull a special permit use. Mr. Talerman said they need to be careful not to cross the policy line but it is rare when you have any sizable commercial project come in without a special permit attached to it to give you some more power and leverage.

Mr. Talerma doesn't think that having a special permit dissuades a good developer from getting a permit and developing in the Town. The Board agrees that the special permit amendment should be a warrant for Town Meeting.

Mr. Talerma advised that the building inspector would like the Board to vote on the definition of a flashing sign and that any flashing sign is subject to review by the Planning Board.

SJW advised that MEPA received a notice of project change from LIG. They said that they do not feel that the approved mitigation amount was enough and that LIG should have to give more money towards mitigation, including the rebuilding of the Rte 140/ Maple Street intersection.

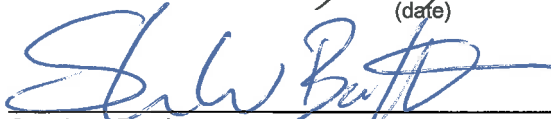
SJW advised that Stall Brook Business Park has resubmitted their plans as two separated lots and the applicant was looking to have the filing fees waived. The Board agrees that the fees will not be waived due to the amount of work put into the project before withdrawing the first time. SJW also advised that Stall Brook does not want to use Graves Engineering; they want to use another engineering firm. The board supported the use of Graves; however SJW agreed to get two additional bids for the applicant.

SB: Motion to adjourn.

SB: Second.

Vote: 4-0 Approved. (PMB, GCW, BJS and SB)

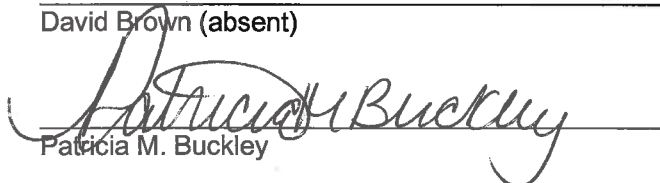
Minutes Accepted on: 1/22/2009
(date)


Stephen Bartha

(prepared by: Amy Sault)


Brian J. Sutherland

David Brown (absent)


Patricia M. Buckley


Glenn Wojcik