



BELLINGHAM PLANNING BOARD

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Meeting Minutes March 22, 2012

MEETING LOCATION: ARCAND MEETING ROOM – MUNICIPAL CENTER

Present at the Meeting

Patricia M. Buckley (PMB), Chairman
Glenn C. Wojcik (GCW), Vice Chairman
Dave Brown (DB)
Peter M. Morelli (PMM)
Peter Pappas (PP), Secretary
Roger Oakley (RO), Associate Member

Other Officials:

Stacey J. Wetstein (SJW), Town Planner
Jean Keyes (JK), Planning Board Coordinator

PMB opened the meeting at 7:00 p.m.

Subdivision Rules and Regulations revisions, continued public hearing

7:00 p.m. Update on Master Plan Implementation Committee (MPIC):

Present was Dan Spencer of the MPIC. Mary Chaves of the MPIC is unable to attend due to illness. Mr. Spencer explained that the committee is still intact having lost only one member and gaining two new members. The MPIC has determined that they will function as an oversight committee. They will be contacting each department or committee responsible for action items in the Master Plan for periodic status updates and to try to move the action item forward whenever necessary. The MPIC is comprised of new and experienced members.

The committee initially began to focus on one action item – the Southern New England Trunkline Trail (SNETT). After conducting research into the improvement project and walking the trail, they realized that someone else was working on it as well. This resulted in duplicated efforts. As a result, the MPIC has decided to be an oversight committee.

Mr. Spencer then listed the accomplishments of the MPIC to date:

1. Shuttle Bus was implemented in both north and south Bellingham.
2. Community facilities: There was a proposed feasibility study for joint campus for the Police and DPW. This has not yet been accomplished; however, there was a DPW feasibility study completed and the result was to not relocate to Center Street but to renovate the existing DPW facility on Blackstone Street. The Police Station feasibility study was passed at the last town meeting.
3. Creative financing: Refinancing of the Town's bonds which resulted in a long-term savings of approximately \$400,000 for the town. A proposed meals tax is being put on the town warrant for the next town meeting. If accepted, it will generate more revenue for the town. A second proposal for the town warrant is a process of how to spend the additional revenue that will result from this meals tax.

4. Utilities: Water is an ongoing issue. \$16K was allocated to DPW to initiate long term water plan. Phase I of the long term water plan is going to be on the warrant for the upcoming town meeting that will ask for an additional \$65K to put the long term plan in place for the next 20 years.

Going forward the committee has decided to be dedicated to oversight and to work with sub-committees in town to see what progress is being made on the MPIC. Mr. Spencer provided a handout to the Board that detailed the responsible entities. The MPIC will dedicate a person on MPIC to work to chart the progress of the responsible entities tasked with implementing each item. Glenn Wojcik (GCW) will be the oversight person at MPIC for the Planning Board. The Planning Board has lead responsibilities on certain items and should report back to MPIC with updates and accomplishments. GCW was pleasantly surprised that the Board is currently doing a lot of their action items as part of the Board's everyday work. Mr. Spencer then stated that the MPIC is on pace to implement much more than 25% of MPIC action items for 2013.

PMB asked about when the MPIC will come back to the Board again and Mr. Spencer said that it will probably be in six months. GCW will exchange emails on a regular basis as well to keep the MPIC updated. The next MPIC meeting is 4/19/2012 and they will be hosting the Deputy Director of the 495 Partnership who will be speaking about the impact of EPA mandate. PMB and Mr. Spencer agreed that it was a good idea for Board to attend.

SJW provided an update on the SNETT trail status. SJW explained the expanded role that she and JK have taken and further explained that they have contacted the following parties:

- Franklin Bellingham Rail Trail Committee (FBRTC) and vice chairman, Dave Labonte. Mr. Labonte has applied for a DCR grant with the YMCA in Franklin to improve the trail in Franklin.
- Town resident Kathy Wicks and Bay State Trail Riders. Kathy Wicks has applied for a DCR grant that, if approved, will provide funds to improve the trail in Bellingham (Center to Lake Street).
- Charles Tracey of the National Park Service (NPS). Information was obtained about applying for a DCR technical assistance grant.
- Town Administrator Denis Fraine gave his approval for SJW and JK to be the facilitators for the improvement of the SNETT in Bellingham.
- Neal Standley of the Conservation Commission and Bill Roberts of the Parks Commission. They are both willing to assist SJW and JK in their efforts.
- Ron Clough, Department of Conservation and Recreation (DCR), Forest and Park Supervisor. Mr. Cough explained that DCR owns the trail. He will be taking steps to install gates and signs where needed in Bellingham.
- Next steps are to contact Blackstone and Franklin so this can be a multi community effort that will improve the Town's standing when applying for grants from the DCR and NPS. SJW and JK hope to write a Master Plan for the SNETT that encompasses the three towns; but, they need to work with each town to achieve a consensus on the trail surface and overall master plan.
- SJW also explained that the SNETT in Bellingham and Franklin was placed on the Massachusetts state priority list for the preservation of state recreation lands as a result of the 495/MetroWest Compact Plan. The plan was prepared to form the framework for public decision-making in land use regulation and infrastructure investment within the region over the next twenty years. This standing may improve chances of obtaining DCR and NPS grants.

Pine Hollows Estates, off of Countryside Road (between Bellwood and Brooks Estates) Special Permit for Multi Family Development and Development Plan Review, Continued Public Hearing; Special Permit Decision Deadline: 4/27/12; Development Plan Decision Deadline: 4/27/12

Alan Nash, the applicant, was present and stated that he had decided to withdraw his applications without prejudice. PMB explained that Mr. Nash can come back and re-file within the next two years. However, PMB reinforced the Board's desire to see a second form of egress from the proposed subdivision as what was presented currently was not adequate. PMB stressed that the second egress is a definite inclusion. Since the Mr. Nash is withdrawing, there will be no public discussion.

GCW: Motion to accept Mr. Nash's request to withdraw his Pine Hollow Estates project without prejudice.

PP: Second.

Vote: Approved 5-0. (PMB, GCW, PMM, DB, PP).

General Business:

Old Business

GCW: Motion to sign the March 8, 2012 Meeting Minutes.

PMM: Second.

Vote: Approved 5-0. (PMB, GCW, PMM, DB, PP).

GCW: Motion to sign the vouchers and payroll.

DB: Second.

Discussion: SJW explained the vouchers and payroll.

Vote: Approved 5-0. (PMB, GCW, PMM, DB, PP).

Planners Report:

SNETT: SJW and JK have received all pertinent town department approvals to be the facilitators to move forward the SNETT trail improvement process. The next step is to reach out the Blackstone and Franklin as they are direct abutters. SJW will be happy to contact other towns if needed in the future, but for now only the two abutting towns will be contacted.

Finance Committee: The Board is scheduled to meet with the Finance Committee on April 9, 2012 for the two articles they have submitted. SJW will be attending but requested other attendees and PP and PMB agreed to attend. Article 14 is the Planning office's request for funding outside of the budget for a new copier as the one in the office is eight years old. The price is \$3,900.00 for the new copier and service contract may be cheaper but will be through the same company.

Subdivision Filing Fee Comparison: SJW feels that the Planning Board is on par with surrounding communities and does not believe that fees need to be increased. SJW requested that the Board review the fees and contact her if they have comments or suggestions.

7:30 p.m. Highridge Estates II Definitive Subdivision Modification and Major Residential Special Permit off of Highridge Road, Continued Public Hearing; Decision Deadlines: 5/3/12 and 5/3/12.

Tim Jones the Applicant was present. PMB stated that she understands that he will be requesting a continuance. Mr. Jones agreed but stated that he was in attendance to provide the Board with a quick update of the following items:

1. Mr. Jones has met with the zoning board and will be filing a request for relief from the subdivision zoning bylaw to build a subdivision of 10 lots or less. This will give him his own subdivision. PMB will be willing to write a letter to zoning in favor granting relief for a subdivision of 10 lots or less. PMB wanted it to be clear that this does not guarantee that the Planning Board will pass Mr. Jones' plan when presented to them. She further explained that this is not specific to his project but that in general the Board supports granting relief to other applicants who may want to build a subdivision of 10 lots or less.
2. A water flow test was completed on Tuesday, March 20, 2012. Mr. Jones will be filing the report tomorrow with the DPW and Fire Department. He wanted to show the Board that this was completed and witnessed by the town.
3. Mr. Jones will be filing his zoning board request next week. He has talked to Town Administrator Denis Fraine and Town Counsel Jay Talerma about agreements concerning the \$147,000 and taxes that are due from him. When the agreements are done, he will file with the zoning board. SJW thought that the town was not going to enter a development agreement but Mr. Jones explained further that the tax agreement has to be done.

PMB explained about the continuance and the public is welcome to go to zoning board hearings.

Abutter Greg Bennett of 43 Highridge Rd. questioned that Mr. Jones came back to this meeting unprepared when he was told previously by the Board not to come back to a meeting unprepared. PMB explained that he is asking for a continuance now, but has provided a brief update of his progress to date. After Mr. Jones goes to the zoning board he will come back to the Planning Board. Then, Mr. Jones has to be prepared to provide all that the Planning Board has asked.

PP further clarified that the reason that Mr. Jones is not prepared tonight is because he has clarified his direction with the subdivision and has chosen to go to the zoning board first. PMB disagrees as he is as prepared as he can be. RO reiterated that PP is trying to clarify for the public that the reason Mr. Jones is not prepared for the Board is that Mr. Jones chose to go to zoning first. PP agreed. PMB requested that if Mr. Jones that is looking for a continuance or extension in the future, he should inform the Board in advance so it can be posted to the agenda. SJW clarified that all written information can get be provided to the Board anytime, but at minimum, the Friday before meeting.

PMM: Motion to continue the Highridge Estates II Definitive Subdivision Modification and Major Residential Special Permit off of Highridge Road, Continued Public Hearing until June 14, 2012.

DB: Second.

Vote: Approved 5-0. (PMB, GCW, PMM, DB, PP).

PMM: Motion to extend the Decision Deadlines for the Highridge Estates II Definitive Subdivision Modification and Major Residential Special Permit off of Highridge Road and Continued Public Hearing to September 30, 2012 for both.

DB: Second.

Vote: Approved 5-0. (PMB, GCW, PMM, DB, PP).

Christine Heshion, attorney for several abutters of Highridge II asked the Board what the vote was. PMB explained that motions were made to continue the public hearing and extend the decision deadlines and provided her with all dates.

New Business (and 81-P's)

Lot Releases: SJW explained that a resident of an older subdivision needs a lot release that for a home in Oak Knoll Estates that was completed in 1989 but, at that time the lot release was not officially completed. SJW further explained that there is nothing outstanding in the file, the town accepted the road, and the bond was returned to the developer. In 2002, there was a release for Lot 2 but not for any other lots. The current request is for a different lot. SJW would like to release lots 1, 3, 4, 6, and 7 since none of them have been released. The address is near Pickering Rd.

PP: Motion to release all lots in the Oak Knoll Estates subdivision for Lots 1, 3, 4, 6, 7.

GCW: Second.

Vote: Approved 5-0. (PMB, GCW, PMM, DB, PP).

SJW reminded the Board that they never had discussion about writing a letter to the zoning board about supporting the variance for a subdivision with less than ten lots. SJW explained that the Board had agreed, when they had previously discussed a requirement for a major residential subdivision that developers may want to create a smaller subdivision of ten lots or less, but no change was made at that time. In the future, the Board may want to discuss this change and possibly place it on the town warrant and change it at town meeting. Until then, the Board could support a developer's request from zoning to build a smaller subdivision until changes are made in the requirement for a major residential subdivision. GCW wanted to evaluate on a project-by-project basis. RO states that Tim Jones is trying to get approval from zoning for something different from what he has submitted to us. SJW stated that Mr. Jones does have to submit a modification to the original application because he has changed two lots and she will notify Mr. Jones of this information. If Mr. Jones obtains zoning board relief to build less than ten lots, then he must submit a modification to the Board of Highridge II. PMB asked if the Board would like to send a letter at this time in support of the zoning board granting relief of the requirement for a major residential subdivision. The Board did not want to write a letter at this time.

MINUTES OF THE PLANNING BOARD MEETING

March 22, 2012

DB: Motion to adjourn.

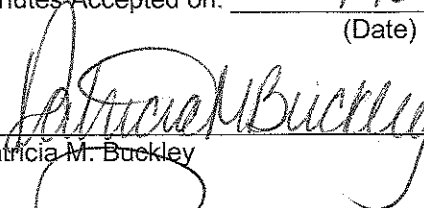
GCW: Second.

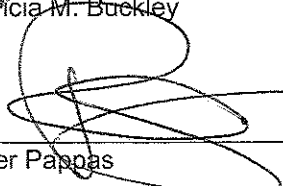
Vote: Approved 5-0. (PMB, GCW, PMM, DB, PP).

Minutes Accepted on: _____

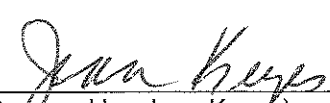
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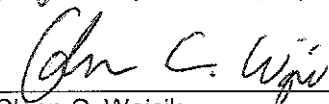
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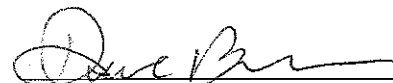

Patricia M. Buckley


Peter Pappas

Peter M. Morelli


(Prepared by: Jean Keyes)


Glenn C. Wojcik


Dave Brown