

Approved Minutes
BROOKFIELD PLANNING COMMISSION
THURSDAY, September 4, 2014 7:30 PM
MEETING ROOM #133 – TOWN HALL, 100 POCONO ROAD

1. **Convene Meeting:** Chairman J. Van Hise convened the meeting at 7:30 and established a quorum of member: Chairman J. Van Hise; Secretary D. Frankel; Alternates I. Agard* and G. Blass.* Also Present: Town Director of Public Works, R. Tedesco; Director of Community Development, K. Daniel, and Recording Secretary J. Llewellyn.

Absent: A. Kerley, Vice Chairman, G. Hunton and L. Taylor, Regular Members.

*I. Agard and G. Blass were appointed voting members.

2. **Review Minutes of Previous Meetings: 08/21/14:** A motion was made by D. Frankel to accept the Minutes of 8/21/14 with modifications*. The motion was seconded by G. Blass and carried unanimously.

**Amendments: Item 4a: 893 Federal Road, Still Water Circle (Newbury Village): p. 2, line 5 under discussion summary: Change the numeral "9" to the numeral "5" so the sentence reads "...and still had approval remaining for nine units, but is seeking approval for 5 additional units, for a total of 14 in three separate structures."*

The Commission also asked for clarification in line 6 of the same discussion that 891 be further delineated as 891 Federal Road so the sentence will read: "They have annexed the property at 891 Federal Road for the additional space."

3. **Old Business:**

a. **854 Federal Road, 105 Laurel Hill Road, 105A Laurel Hill Road #201400747:**
Lot Line Revision (dec date: 10/24/14) No one present. While the Commission did not have any major objections to this application for combining three lots into two at the initial proposal last meeting, they opted to send it to the Town Attorney for his opinion. Town Attorney Beecher responded to the Land Use Office that he does not "see any issues with the title documents or the conclusion that all of the property involved is under the same ownership." He concludes that he does not "see any impediments to approving the lot line revision to re-fashion 3 lots into 2 lots." As a result of this opinion, combined with the fact that the Commission believed that the concept "looked good," a motion was made by I. Agard to approve the lot line revision of application #201400747, 854 Federal Road and 105 Laurel Hill Road converting three lots into two lots. D. Frankel seconded the motion. A clarification was added, noting that this also includes the property at 105A Laurel Hill Road. The amendment had the motion recalled, and it carried unanimously. (*Mylar was signed*).

A motion to amend the agenda to go to item #5: Minutes of Other Boards and Commissions, was made by D. Frankel, seconded by I. Agard, and carried unanimously.

5. **Minutes of Other Boards & Commissions:**

- **08/25/14 Inland Wetlands:** Still working on Still River Greenway; approved application to improve pond on former Ferry Property; continued 36 N. Mountain Road Affordable Subdivision application public hearing

6. **Correspondence:**

a. **Letter from D. Sawicki of the CT DOT to D. Bertram of BRT Barnbeck LLC dated 08/20/14 Re: Town of Brookfield Barnbeck Place:** Per the Chairman, this is

informational only. The expiration date of the application before DOT was extended to February, 2015.

A motion was made by D. Frankel, seconded by I. Agard, to take a brief recess at 7:43 p.m. Motion carried unanimously.

The meeting reconvened at 7:58 p.m.

BROOKFIELD HOUSING STUDY: T. Poole and D. Wynne of 4Ward Planning.

Chairman Van Hise told the audience that this presentation's purpose was to help the Commission in its forthcoming revision of the Town's Plan of Conservation and Development. Ms. Wynn offered a visual presentation which summarized the consultant's findings in a Housing and Market Analysis for the Four Corners area including demographic information and projections, as well as labor and industry trends, combined with real estate needs. A review of Commission regulations as well as on-site visits, and other interviews were incorporated into the findings along with a socio-economic analysis which took into consideration the Primary Market Area (within a 15-minute drive of Brookfield); the Town of Brookfield itself; and the Tri-County Region.

Studies and statistics showed that population growth is flat in all sectors, though Brookfield's is slightly above, albeit only .5%. Non-family households are growing faster than family households in our area, which mirrors the national trend. This drives the type of housing that will be in demand. A "non-family household" can be one person, or two or more non-related people (non-familial). Mr. Poole addressed the current housing units in Brookfield (designed for families) vs. the projected demand of the "millenials." At the same time, there are needs for the growing segment of the population aged 55+, who may opt to downsize and not be able to find adequate housing stock nearby.

Public comment included the fact that some households have "boomerang" children: older children returning or remaining home due to personal or financial reasons. It was also noted that retirement age is not longer in the 60's for most people who instead opt to work until their 70's.

Trends in marriage, separation/divorce, fertility rates (vs. replacement through mortality), and immigration factors were also discussed.

Median household income is considerably higher in Brookfield than the Tri-County and Primary Market areas. Over 50% of Brookfield households exceed the median income (over \$100K), and 79% of people in Brookfield own their own home. Brookfield's current housing (larger single-family homes) "undermines economic development" if the workers cannot afford to work here, Mr. Todd contended.

The Federal Agency, Housing and Urban Development (HUD), maintains that spending more than 30% on housing expenses (rent/mortgage, insurance and heat) earns households the designation of being "cost burdened." By HUD's standard, more than one-third of households within Brookfield are cost burdened, with this designation more prevalent for rental properties.

Assuming weak population and household growth estimated for Brookfield, overall demand from workers commuting from outside the Town would result in a projected demand for nearly 1,200 units by 2028.

Statistics were reviewed comparing the income requirements for Affordable and Incentive Housing based upon the Area Median Income (\$113,900) or State Median Income (\$86,400), with the latter appearing more favorable to meet the needs of lower wage earners in the predominant service sectors commonly found in Brookfield.

The report concludes: "Housing options for young families or single-income households are insufficient despite current housing incentive regulations. A balanced and healthy community is diverse in age and income. Achieving this requires attention to housing affordability, as well as ensuring adequate jobs, retail and leisure activities are available. We estimate demand for 1,200

units over the next fifteen years, many of which are likely to be one and two bedroom units and about 60% as rentals.”

Several steps were recommended as action items for the Town. These include possible modifications to existing regulations, ratios of the types of uses, incentives for developers and businesses, for example.

M. Flynn pointed out that the presentation tended to lean toward advocating for Affordable vs. Incentive Housing, yet he asked if the Incentive Housing income threshold is higher, would that not result in higher discretionary spending. Mr. Todd countered, however, that studies show that the lower income earners spend nearly 100% (or more if there are government subsidies involved) of their income.

There was also a time for questions and answers from both the Commission and the public, with comments ranging from a call for a “job study” (like this housing study), as well as concerns of Incentive/Affordable housing on the existing home values.

The Commission thanked the presenters. K. Daniel noted that the full text of this report can be found on the Land Use Department page of the Town website, as well as on the Planning Commission page.

A motion was made by I. Agard, seconded by D. Frankel, to return to item 4 on the agenda. Motion carried unanimously.

4. New Business:

- a. 11 North Beech Tree Rd & 26 High Ridge Rd #201400793: Lot Line Revision**
 - 1. Schedule A: Legal Description – Volume 623; Page 93**
 - 2. Quit Claim Deed – Volume 211; Page 298**
 - 3. Assessors Field Cards for 11 North Beech Tree Road & 26 High Ridge Road**
 - 4. Property Survey depicting Lot Line Revision prepared for William & Barbara G. Vigue by PAH, Inc. dated 08/04/14**

Attorney P. Scalzo present on behalf of the property owners, W. and B. Vigue. Currently this property is a 7.0015 acre parcel, approximately three acres of which is “unusable”. They’d like to cut this portion off of the larger lot and to sell those three (approx.) acres to an adjacent property owner (Patel family on 26 High Ridge Road). Both lot sizes would remain conforming to the zone. There are a lot of wetlands on the property being transferred, and there is little if any development which can be done on the parcel. The Commission had no concerns on this proposal. **A motion was made by G. Blass to approve the lot line revision for 11 North Beech Tree Road, and 26 High Ridge Road, application #201400793. Motion seconded by I. Agard and carried unanimously. (Mylar was signed).**

7. Informal Discussion:

- a. Plan of Conservation and Development:** This was tabled until after tonight’s presentation. Subsequently, there was no further discussion.

8. Tabled Items: There were none at this meeting.

9. Adjourn: A motion was made by D. Frankel to adjourn the meeting at 9:30 p.m. I. Agard seconded the motion which carried unanimously.