

Deerfield Planning Board
February 4, 2008

Minutes

Meeting called to order in Deerfield Senior Center Office at 7:04 pm

Members Present: Peter LaBarbera/Chair, John Baronas, James Pasciesnik, Lynn Rose,
Roger Sadowski, John Waite
Others Present: Dennis Obie, P.E./Weston & Sampson Engineers;
Mark Wightman and representative from Coler & Colantonio;
Bement School: Shelley Jackson/Director, Ken Cuddeback, Harry Dodson,
Margo Jones;
Police Chief Michael Wozniakewicz
Members Absent: Elizabeth Schmitt

WIGHTMAN PRESENTATION

Mr. Wightman came before the Board for an informal discussion of his conceptual designs for a multiple housing development on a 48 acre parcel on Route 116.

Before he began his presentation, Mr. Wightman challenged the participation of two Board members in the consideration of his proposal: Mr. Sadoski and Mr. LaBarbera.

Mr. Wightman stated for the record that he believes that Mr. Sadowski should recuse himself from the discussion if Mr. Sadoski feels that he has a conflict of interest. Mr. Sadoski stated the he does not feel that he has a conflict of interest and reported that he received a letter from the Ethics Commission which conveys the opinion of the Commission that his participation in discussions of Mr. Wightman's proposals to the Board would not constitute an ethics violation. Mr. LaBarbera instructed Mr. Sadoski to provide the Town with a copy of the letter. Mr. Sadoski did not recuse himself.

Mr. Wightman then asked Mr. LaBarbera if he had privately stated to Mr. Wightman and others that he would not vote to approve any subdivision on Mr. Wightman's property which did not include moderate income housing. Mr. LaBarbera said that he has in the past generally stated that the Town of Deerfield needs moderate income housing more than it needs higher priced housing, but that general statement of preference was not made with any specific reference to Wightman's future subdivision proposal. Mr. Pasciesnik stated that all discussions about planning issues ought to occur at Planning Board meetings in front of the camera and advised Mr. Wightman to resolve his concerns with Mr. Sadoski and Mr. LaBarbera before his next appearance before the Planning Board.

Mr. Wightman proceeded with his presentation. He presented 3 designs: Standard Subdivision which would allow 12 house lots, including 1 ANR, Flex Subdivision which would allow 9 house lots plus ANR, and Conservation Cluster Subdivision which would allow 8 house lots plus ANR.

The Board raised several concerns. Mr. Pasciesnik stated that the property is located at a dangerous section of highway and whether MassHighway will install a new curb cut and relocate the present curb cut to provide access to the property. He asked why Mr. Wightman did not pursue the matter of curb cuts first and Mr Wightman explained that he prefers to get preliminary approval of his design from the Planning Board before approaching MassHighway.

Mr. Wightman reported that he has documentation that he has addressed issues related to buffers, wetland boundaries, and habitat protection for the wood turtle with the appropriate local and State agencies. Mr. LaBarbera and Mr. Sadoski raised questions about how an identified overland flow will be dealt with. Mr. LaBarbera raised questions about the length and grade of a proposed 800' road into a cul de sac and a 500' driveway. Mr. LaBarbera questioned whether it would be possible for Mr. Wightman to create the vehicle access he is proposing without having to do a considerable amount of Cut & Fill, which must be minimized in a Flex Subdivision. He stated that the Planning Board might request that proposed Cut & Fill be quantified. Mr. Wightman stated that he would provide such quantification.

Mr. Sadoski, Ms. Rose, and Mr. Pasciesnik questioned whether the 30.6 acres Mr. Wightman proposes to offer to the town for conservation restriction would qualify under the Flex Subdivision or Conservation Cluster Subdivision regulations, since the acreage is unbuildable and does not represent an opportunity to remove land from potential development.

Mr. Wightman said that he would like to go forward with a Conservation Cluster Subdivision, which requires the inclusion of moderate income housing, but he is having difficulty making the designs work. Mr. LaBarbera stated that waivers could address some of those difficulties. Mr. Wightman requested another opportunity to discuss his conceptual plans with the Planning Board. Mr. LaBarbera advised him to prepare a final design for formal presentation to the Planning Board.

BEMENT PRESENTATION

Representatives from Bement School came before the Board to request a site plan revision for a parcel of land located $\frac{1}{4}$ - $\frac{1}{2}$ mile from the Upper School Building on which Bement seeks to construct a two-dormitory complex to serve current enrollments.

Town Counsel previously advised the Board that the parcel was designated as a parking lot in 2001 and that it was built as a "condition" to an agreement between Deerfield and Bement related to construction of Bement's Upper School Building. Chief Wozniakewicz reported that construction of the parking lot was intended as a means of addressing the traffic problems, but the problems have not been alleviated. He reported that Bement has no on-premises drop off/pick up area for students. The area used is the public road and tree belt which poses a safety risk for students and sometimes obstructs the public way. Chief Wozniakewicz reported that in 2001 he recommended that Bement increase their event signage and work with Historic Deerfield to resolve the daily traffic and circulation problem, but he is still waiting for his recommendations to be implemented. He stated that he wishes to see the traffic problems addressed before Bement proceeds with further development.

Mr. Cuddeback and Ms. Jones reported that they had understood that the parking lot was built as a temporary facility to be used while the Upper School Building was under construction and then to be grassed over and used for overflow parking as needed. Nevertheless, they agreed with the Board and Chief Wozniakewicz that the traffic problem needs to be addressed and reported efforts they have made to address them. Mr. Cuddeback reported that he monitors compliance with new requirements that all vehicles travel in one direction and on the same side of the street, all parking is to be off the street, and double parking and parking in front of the houses is prohibited.

Mr. Obie asked if traffic conditions have been analyzed and was informed that a traffic study was completed by FRCOG in 2001. Mr. Cuddeback reported that FRCOG recommended a loop road and negotiations were initiated with Historic Deerfield to use land behind the Allen House for a loop road. That project did not go forward because of changes at Historic Deerfield. A potential negotiated land

swap between Bement and Historic Deerfield which was previously brought to the Board and which could have provided some resolution to the parking problem is now off the table. Ms. Jackson reported that discussions with Deerfield Academy, Historic Deerfield, and PVMA are ongoing and that good communications exist between them, but there is no quick or easy solution to the problem.

Mr. LaBarbera reported that the Select Board has requested a joint meeting with the Planning Board to discuss any proposed changes to the Bement campus.

There was general agreement among Board members that the parking lot has not been used for parking over the years that it will difficult to resolve the traffic problems due to limited land resources and competing needs for land among neighbors; and that the Board would be willing to consider a site plan revision for the parcel if Bement makes a good faith effort to address its traffic problems to the satisfaction of the Select Board and Chief Wozniakewicz.

Moved by John Waite: The Planning Board would consider a proposed development of the North End parking lot if an effort is made by Bement to improve the traffic situation and the Board would do so in consultation with the Select Board and the Police Department. Seconded by John Baronas.
Approved Unanimously

GENERAL PLANNING BOARD MEETING

Discussion of administrative tasks (Scope of Work from FRCOG, minutes, etc), but videotaping ended abruptly prior to completion of discussion of first matter.

Next meeting: April 1, 2008 7 p.m.

Meeting adjourned: ??