



Town of Gorham
PLANNING BOARD WORKSHOP NOTES
January 7, 2008

A workshop meeting of the Gorham Planning Board was held on Monday, January 7, 2008, at 6:00 p.m. in the Municipal Center Council Chambers, 75 South Street, Gorham, Maine.

In attendance were Susan Robie, Douglas Boyce, Thomas Fickett, Thomas Hughes, Michael Parker, Mark Stelmack and Edward Zelmanow. Also present were Town Planner Deborah Fossum, Assistant Planner Thomas Poirier, and Clerk of the Board, Barbara Skinner.

1. Review and Approval of the December 10, 2007 Workshop Meeting Notes.

Lyndon Keck, architect for the Site Selection Committee on Two Proposed Sites for a new Gorham Elementary School, confirmed that the State of Maine Department of Education will participate financially at either of the sites under consideration. There were no further issues or questions about the December 10 workshop meeting notes.

2. Chairman's Report.

Ms. Robie reported that there have been no meetings of the Town Council's Ordinance Committee. The Planning Board's report on projects has been submitted. On the Brickyard project, she stated that, as agreed, the material has been sent out for the Shaw Brothers asphalt plant and quarry on the Monday following the Planning Board meeting on December 10, 2007, which would have been on December 17. She noted that a revised submission has not been received as of this date, although the Planner believes that it will be imminent.

3. Workshop Meeting on Two Proposed Sites for a new Gorham Elementary School to replace the White Rock Elementary School as well as eliminate overcrowding at other elementary schools in Gorham requested by the Gorham School Department.

Continuing discussion on questions put to the Board by the Site Selection Committee and its representatives, December 10, 2007, on the two sites being evaluated for the new Gorham Elementary School. The two sites are the Chick Parcel (behind Narragansett School), Zoned OR/UR, Map 26/L4 and 4.001; and the rear portion of property owned by Walter Stevens on Route 237; Zoned R/SR, Map 71/L1 and M53/Lot 38.

Lyndon Keck, PDT Architects, said that they did not plan to make a presentation but rather wished to hear what the Board and planning staff had to say.

Ms. Fossum presented staff's responses to the questions that Mr. Keck had raised at the December 10, 2007 workshop, basically dealing with the Walter Stevens property off Route 237. She noted that the presentation made on December 10 included a conceptual plan for a subdivision, but the School Department has stressed that the owners do not have any plans for a subdivision at this time, and one may never be developed. In looking at the land, a concept plan was devised to show how a subdivision might look if one were ever to be developed by the Stevens family.

Ms. Fossum then read the first question submitted by the applicants:

1. Is there anything problematic with the Ordinance which would affect the planning of an elementary school on this site or add unusual costs that the School Department should consider in its budgets for the project.

Ms. Fossum noted that at its last workshop, the Board indicated to the developer that they would expect to see a second exit from the site, more than just the entrance and exit on to Route 237. She said that staff strongly recommends the same, that a second egress from the site or a looped road be built, and noted that the Fire Chief specifically spoke in terms of a secondary emergency access being requested, based on past and present experience at the Narragansett and Village Schools, which have single entrance points. She said that the Fire Chief recommends taking a hard look to determine if water pressure and volume would be adequate to sprinkle the school and to provide a minimum of 3 hydrants. She said that the Public Works Director notes that neither Parker Hill Road in the Highland Subdivision nor Tow Path Road are in any shape to handle school traffic in their present condition and would require some level of improvement. She also pointed out that generally there are parking problems experienced at schools, so staff would underscore the need to look very carefully at parking requirements.

Referring to the second question, what street standards should be used for Site Development, Ms. Fossum said that the Public Works Director agrees that the appropriate street standard would be the urban sub-collector standard and does not believe it necessary to build to a commercial/industrial standard.

Ms. Fossum replied to Question 3, saying that the legs of a hammerhead can be used to measure lot frontage.

William Hoffman, DeLuca-Hoffman, acting on behalf of the applicant, asked for clarification on the issue of a single access into the site, saying that with the Stevens site, there would be a single access off Route 237 with a good circulation system on site. That would not put traffic through a residential area, such as it is at the Village School, but rather would be more like the situation at the Middle School, where all circulation distribution occurs on site. He said that there would be a second emergency access to Parker Hill Road, but it would be for that purpose only and would be gated. He indicated that there are concerns about control of access on to school property. Mr. Hoffman noted that if the Chick property is used, Route 202 would serve as a second access to distribute traffic between it and Route 25.

Mr. Hoffman said that involving water on the Stevens parcel, there would be a looped system. He said pressures are lower than desirable, and Portland Water District plans within 5 years to raise pressures in that area with a booster system, and if the school were to be occupied before that improvement, a booster pump would be put into the school.

Mr. Hoffman asked if splitting the Stevens parcel into two lots can be done before the access road is constructed. Mr. Hoffman said he was talking about a sale prior to construction of the road but after approval; Ms. Fossum said she saw no problem with that.

Ms. Robie mentioned that two-way access could possibly be provided to the site by the use of a median strip or esplanade or similar device 400 feet in length, such as that mentioned in the Street Standards section in the ordinance dealing with "median strips, esplanades, planters and other similar devices less than 400 hundred (400) feet in *width*," saying that she believes this is a typo being corrected to indicate *length*. Ms. Fossum said that for clarity, the provision should be read in context with the paragraph which follows. Mr. Hoffman asked if the Board would consider a main roadway 1400 feet long from Route 237 into the school and an emergency access to Parker Hill Road as being sufficient to address public safety concerns. Ms. Fossum said that the travel ways need to be wide enough to permit the passage of emergency vehicles past vehicles that might be parked there for special events. Mr. Hoffman said that to address the width issues, it is proposed that the bus loop would be curved on the outside but on the inside the drive would be built at least 26 feet if not 30 feet wide with a gravel shoulder at least 10 feet wide for parked cars. Mr. Hoffman said they expect to gain 60 to 80 parking spaces over the planned 110 spaces with this technique.

In response to a question from Mr. Parker, Mr. Hoffman said the emergency roadway would be plowed in the winter, the gate would be tripped by authorized school vehicles and emergency vehicles through the use of a

magnetic strip but not private vehicles. He said the emergency road would be built to the same subcollector standard as the entry road.

Mr. Zelmanow talked about the difficulties of exiting the Narragansett School with its single egress road after special school events. Mr. Hoffman said that people living in adjacent residential subdivisions would not welcome school traffic and discussed the proposed internal circulation at the Stevens site which would minimize the problems Mr. Zelmanow spoke about. Mr. Hoffman said that the emergency gate could be opened for traffic after special event nights.

Mr. Hoffman confirmed to Mr. Fickett that the sewer line is capable of handling the capacity required by the school. He told Mr. Hughes that there would not be a traffic light on Route 237 at the school entrance because normal school operations occur off-peak for normal commuter traffic as an elementary school opens later in the morning.

Mr. Keck said the proposed road back to the Stevens school site is about ¼ of a mile, at an estimated cost of \$600,000, and if it is the Board's intention to ask for two roads, the price would be doubled, which could presumably make this site not viable. He emphasized that what they are proposing is a single road with a gated emergency access, and for budgeting purposes, they would need to know very quickly if it is the Board's intention to insist on a looped road. He noted that on-site traffic management is half of the solution to making traffic flow properly, and the on-site traffic management at both the Village and Narragansett Schools is horrendous. He indicated that a 400-foot esplanade would be problematic for them.

Ms. Robie said that because the proposed road does not exceed the maximum allowed 1500 feet, the Board has no right to ask for a looped road under the ordinance unless it is an issue of safety. She said that the Board needs to be polled to see if the proposed emergency access eliminates the safety concern. Mr. Parker confirmed with Bob Burns, Public Works Director, that Parker Hill Road is in adequate condition for emergency traffic, and confirmed with Mr. Hoffman that the access road will be paved to the boundary, and therefore he is comfortable with the proposed road and emergency access configuration. Mr. Hughes, Mr. Fickett, Ms. Robie and Mr. Stelmack all concurred. Mr. Zelmanow said he is comfortable with the emergency exit so long as it is used for non-emergency uses as needed. Ms. Robie asked for granite curbing along the road.

Ms. Fossum returned to the list of questions posed by the applicant, as follows:

Question #4, about street grading: The Public Works Director and the Town Engineer have indicated that the intersection of the main drive with Route 237 would have to be built to a grade appropriate for the intersection. Any questions should be directed to either the Public Works Director and/or the Town Engineer.

Question #5, dealing with street dead end length beyond 1500 feet: Ms. Fossum noted that the applicant is correct in its belief that there is no maximum dead end length for private streets, and side streets could be looped to avoid exceeding the maximum length. However, there is no provision in the ordinance for a variance or a waiver from that 1500-foot dead end length.

Question #6, asking if street lighting would be required: Ms. Fossum said a street light would be expected at the intersection of the new road and Route 237 for safety purposes, and it is doubtful that street lights would be required along the length of the road if the school site is appropriately lighted.

Finally, Question #7 asked if the gravel pit on the Stevens property is fully restored, is that area allowed to be included in the total net residential acreage allowed. Ms. Fossum said that it is, provided that after reclamation it does not fall into one of the other categories of land that must be deducted.

Mr. Boyce expressed concern for a safe roadway for events that occur after hours, and confirmed that there could be students walking to school. Mr. Boyce confirmed that there will be a sidewalk along the drive, and both he and Ms. Robie said they believe lights should be installed as well. Ms. Robie suggested a shorter light, of some 15 feet in height, such as those along Larrabee Road. She also recommended paths for walkers from the two abutting subdivisions.

Mr. Boyce asked if the applicant has any questions dealing with the Chick property. Mr. Hoffman spoke about alleviating traffic conditions by having an access to Route 202. He said there would be a separation of busses and cars at both locations, as well as widened shoulders at both locations for event parking.

Ms. Robie commented that if the developers, based on their knowledge of traffic information and site distances, think the entrance at the Stevens site would be better divided with an esplanade, they should propose whatever width and length they believe to be appropriate.

Ms. Robie announced that the remaining two items on the workshop agenda will be discussed at the conclusion of the regular Planning Board meeting.

The Board adjourned at 7:00 to proceed to its regularly scheduled meeting.

The Board reconvened at 8:40 p.m. to discuss the two items remaining on its workshop agenda.

Ms. Fossum noted the presence of the Public Works Director, Bob Burns, to discuss this item and the next one with the Board.

4. Proposed Amendments to Chapter II, Section II, Parking, Loading and Traffic, (a)(7) of the Land Use and Development Code allowing gravel parking lots in limited circumstances.

Continuing discussion on proposed amendments to the Town's parking standards, referred to Planning Board for Public Hearing by the Town Council on November 13, 2007.

Ms. Robie said that she anticipated that this item would be on the Board's February agenda for holding a public hearing and for the Board's recommendation to the Town Council.

After considerable discussion, the Board concurred with the following changes to the language of new subparagraph "c" under item 7, adding the use of gravel parking lots for commercial, industrial and industrial uses. Mr. Burns confirmed that the length of the paved apron should remain at 30 feet in length.

"c) For commercial, industrial and institutional uses (excluding retail or service businesses) that will generate ~~an estimated average of thirty five (35) vehicle trips or less per day~~ no more than thirty-six (36) vehicle trips per business day or for Rural Entrepreneurial Uses that meet the Performance Standards of Chapter II, Section VII, Subsection E.2. in the Suburban Residential District or of Chapter II, Section VIII, Subsection E.2. in the Rural District, parking areas shall be constructed with a suitably durable surface material (including gravel) that minimizes dust and is appropriate for the type of land use activity. Surfacing, grading and drainage shall be required to facilitative groundwater recharge by minimizing impermeable ~~pavement surface~~ and stormwater run-off. ~~Gravel parking lots~~ Any parking lots constructed in conformance with this provision shall have a paved apron 30 feet in length commencing at the existing edge of pavement on the adjacent public road."

It was agreed that concern about erosion prevention and control is covered in the beginning of Chapter II.

It was suggested that because it is not possible to stripe parking spaces on a gravel lot, curb stops can be used to delineate spaces.

5. Proposed Amendments to Chapter II, Section V, Minimum Standards for the Design and Construction of Streets and Ways, of the Land Use and Development Code addressing paving standards and other miscellaneous changes and clarifications to the street standards.

Discussion of proposed amendments to the Town's standards for paving and other miscellaneous changes to the requirements for the design and construction of streets and ways, referred to Planning Board for Public Hearing by the Town Council on December 4, 2007.

Mr. Burns said the changes were brought forward because of recurring problems with getting the appropriate amount of pavement placed on roads by various contractors. He said they are working with meeting with contractors to determine tonnages required and these changes are designed to implement a clear method to proceed when there are discrepancies or a thin core. He noted that other changes were also made, such as changing "Town Engineer" to "Public Works Director or Director's designee." The "designee" could also be a consulting engineer working on behalf of the Town.

Mr. Burns referred to Section 4, Dead End Streets and Streets Providing Sole Vehicular Access, subparagraph d), "Median strips, esplanades, planters and other similar devices less than four hundred (400) feet in ~~width~~ length shall not be considered adequate...", saying that he would like to discuss this further with the Town Planner to determine the history of the language.

Mr. Burns noted the corrective action when a core is found to be thin by a certain amount is found in the "Pavement Correction Table," which will be to allow up to a 3/4 inch deficiency on a base course, and the solution will be to double the thinness and add that to the surface course. He said they will work with the developer and its contractor to determine what is required. Mr. Burns said that the word "Base" should be added to the "Pavement Correction Table."

Mr. Burns said he would like to insert a new paragraph 4 under h), Bases and Pavements, Pavement, as follows:

"4. Core samples of the base pavement will be conducted at the direction of the Public Works Director or the Director's designee and the cost of the coring will be paid for by the applicant."

He said this language is designed to let a developer know that cores will be required after the base pavement is placed, as currently the Town cannot ask for cores until the developer comes in for public road acceptance.

Mr. Parker and Mr. Burns discussed various aspects of base and surface paving and the ways of determining paving thickness.

Ms. Robie summarized the following points that the Board's ordinance subcommittee would like Mr. Burns and the Ordinance Committee to consider:

1. Take the Planning Board out of the loop for street acceptances. Mr. Burns said he had no objection.
2. There is no requirement in the construction of a private way to not increase flow of water to adjoining land. Mr. Burns said that is a good idea, as the law reads that one cannot adversely impact one's neighbor's land with runoff. Ms. Robie said it was not added explicitly.

3. There are no standards for access roads to condominiums. It is suggested that they be added to the table, and the criteria is that the type of the road would be calculated on the number of vehicle trips and need to have an approved turnaround provision, but the Board is not requiring a 50-foot right of way. In addition, paved private ways are allowed if they meet the vehicle trips requirement, and there should be a provision added for parking for visitors. Currently curbing is permitted on one side only.

Mr. Hughes, Ms. Robie and Mr. Burns discussed some of the parking issues encountered at Park South due to the curbing and the width of the streets in the development.

4. Site distance based on someone turning left into a road where oncoming traffic is obscured by a dip in the road, even though site distance is adequate coming out of the road. Mr. Burns said there are standards for braking reaction times that can be added in addition to site distances at the intersection. It was suggested by Mr. Boyce to get appropriate language from a traffic engineer.
5. Mr. Boyce referred to safety concerns regarding curb cuts on heavily traveled roads involving vehicles backing out of driveways onto those roads. He suggested that a provision could be added to the code that in order to get a building permit for a house on certain roads, an onsite turnaround must be provided as part of the driveway construction.

Mr. Burns confirmed to Mr. Boyce that certain surfaces such as driveways, maneuvering areas and parking areas shall be covered with two inches of bituminous concrete laid in two courses of one inch each.

Mr. Burns confirmed to Ms. Robie that the paragraph outlining date limitations on paving has been deleted and in its place is a paragraph referring to DOT standards instead or as approved by the Public Works Director. Under 4, Streets Offered for Acceptance, Mr. Parker suggested deleting the words "a minimum of..." in b) and in c) the word "second" should be deleted. Mr. Burns said he would check with the Town Engineer about the timing of the report under discussion.

The workshop was adjourned at 9:58 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Barbara C. Skinner, Clerk of the Board
_____, 2008