



TOWN OF NORTHBOROUGH PLANNING BOARD

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Approved 1-19-10

Planning Board
Meeting Minutes
November 3, 2009

Members Present: Leslie Harrison, Rick Leif, George Pember, Daniel Lewis

Others Present: Kathy Joubert, Town Planner; Bill Farnsworth, Inspector of Buildings/Zoning Enforcement Officer; Judi Barrett, Community Opportunities Group

Chairman Rick Leif opened the meeting at 7:00 pm.

ANRs

An ANR plan for 292 Crawford Street was signed by the board.

Review of Draft Planning Board Rules and Regulations

Judi Barrett, Community Opportunities Group, explained revisions she had made to the first draft of the Rules and Regulations, including the addition of definitions not normally used in the zoning bylaw, basic procedural information about hearings, and how a constructive approval works. She stated she also tightened up the submission requirements for site plan approval, added a section on concurrent submissions, a section for procedures for inspection fees for peer review, and Master Form section on applications.

Mr. Farnsworth noted there should be a clarification of which inspections are being referred to, those of the Building Department or of the Board of Health.

Ms. Joubert stated she and Mr. Farnsworth have been working on revising the application packet for ZBA filings.

Ms. Barrett suggested she could work with staff on application forms.

Mr. Leif stated he would be fine with whatever staff thought was best. He added he wants to make sure that all items removed from the bylaw are in the regulations.

Mr. Farnsworth noted a lot of text in the regulations are word-for-word out of the zoning bylaw. He asked if it needs to be restated or should there be a reference to the bylaw.

Ms. Barrett stated it's easier for an applicant if reference to the bylaw is in the regulations because they wouldn't have to have the bylaw to get the information.

Ms. Joubert noted that was the direction Ms. Barrett to from the board at the last meeting.

Ms. Harrison agreed, stating there was going to be a cross-reference.

Mr. Leif stated they all need to proof the document.

Ms. Barrett stated the numbering won't be final until all the changes are made.

Mr. Leif asked if submission of a disk in Section 5, page 17, needs to be included.

Ms. Joubert explained the Subdivision Rules and Regulations have been requiring this for years.

Ms. Joubert stated she wants to add a section on the Development Guide Book. Staff has been holding review meetings for years and this would be the place to put it in writing and encourage applicants to do it.

Ms. Barrett stated she added a section on standards so someone asking for waivers would understand the burden on them to demonstrate why their requested relief is legitimate. This also identifies acceptable sources for them. Some sources are professionally known in the industry. Inspection fees are at the end of the document, which may need to be doctored-up and the Severability section is at the very end.

Ms. Joubert noted she needs to add a common driveway section.

Ms. Barrett stated there should be a way of saying it requires site plan review.

Ms. Barrett stated site plan review is for a big project, but then little things like common driveway plans still need reviewing, but not on the same scale.

A discussion was held as to whether or not common driveways should be included in the regulations. Mr. Farnsworth thought they should be included under Section 3, special permits. Ms. Barrett stated it depends on whether or not a common driveway is considered a use. Ms. Joubert and Mr. Farnsworth stated they believe it is a use. Ms. Barrett stated they're not in the use regulations so they should be under the special permit section or in their own section. Ms. Joubert and Ms. Barrett noted the new items on pages 10 and 11, #16 and #20, which were included in order to make submission requirements clear.

Ms. Barrett stated there will be a Design Review section which will include examples of buildings for design guidelines. Ms. Joubert noted that as part of a contract extension, Ms. Barrett will be working with the Design Review Committee. The section will include text and photographs and will be completely separate from the zoning bylaw and authorized under the zoning bylaw. Ms. Barrett noted several towns already have it.

Mr. Farnsworth noted changes and/or questions he had on pages 2, 3, 4, 5 and 9.

After a brief discussion on which professional should which types of plans, it was decided Ms. Barrett would add the phrase “as appropriate” to 9C.

Ms. Joubert noted she wanted to add information on which staff members and boards would get full-size plans and which would get reduced plans. Ms. Barrett stated that would be added to the instruction sheet. Ms. Joubert asked the board members if they wanted more information in the regulations. What is included now is general information that isn’t written down anywhere else and it won’t require a lot of pages, including board make-up, meeting schedules, public hearings, etc. Mr. Leif stated the general information would be appropriate at the beginning of the document.

Ms. Barrett noted the regulations have to come from the zoning bylaw. The Planning Board doesn’t have the inherent authority to adapt regulations as the Zoning Board of Appeals does.

The members agreed with the regulations and putting the general information in the beginning of the document.

Ms. Joubert stated the members should read the document in full and email comments to her by the end of the week, which she will forward to Ms. Barrett. She noted this should be wrapped up at the next meeting. Ms. Barrett noted a public hearing must be held when they have a final document.

There were no other comments from board members.

Ms. Joubert noted the ZBA would be given copies of the document after comments from the Planning Board were added.

Approval of Minutes

October 6, 2009 minutes: Mr. Pember moved to approve the minutes of October 6, 2009, Mr. Lewis seconded the motion and the vote was unanimous to approve.

October 26, 2009 minutes: Mr. Lewis moved to approve the minutes of October 26, 2009, Mr. Pember seconded the motion and the vote was unanimous to approve.

Laurence Place

The board reviewed and discussed a spreadsheet created by Mr. Leif entitled “Laurence Place Tax Analysis”. Mr. Leif noted the 4 options he believes the board has regarding the requested lift of the age restriction which is before the Zoning Board of Appeals:

Option 1 – nothing would be done and the property would stay as it is.
The town would receive over \$42,000 in revenue.

Option 2 – the project would remain a Senior Residential Community
The town would receive over \$185,000.

Option 3 – the project would be developed as proposed by the applicant (the bank)
The town would lose over \$84,000

Option 4 – the project would be developed as non-age restricted with 3 & 2 bedroom
condominium units
The town would lose \$1700

Ms. Joubert noted that the figure of \$450,000 per unit selling price should be \$375,000 in
Option 3. Also, the school-age children amount is too high at 1 child per unit. Standard to use is
.67 per unit with 3-bedroom units. She will get the correct numbers for Mr. Leif.

Mr. Leif noted the options show that not waiting for the market to come around could cost a lot
of money. Mr. Lewis stated the school figure will stay the same no matter what the units sell
for. Mr. Leif stated it will show that although the bank is anxious to develop the project into
some sort of use with which to make money, it's not advantageous to the town. He noted he
didn't include a residential subdivision in his analysis, but he believes it will end up less
financially attractive. Homes will generate more children than condo units will. The tax volume
would be higher, but the education costs would be driven up.

Mr. Lewis noted that on average, a house loses money for the town.

Ms. Joubert stated the only flaw is that the bank may not pay the taxes while the land remains
vacant and the project remains unfinished. The bank paid them now because of the law that a
permit cannot be granted if the taxes aren't paid up to date.

Mr. Farnsworth stated he thought the \$9,000 figure used per student was very high. Ms.
Joubert stated she thinks the figure is \$6,000. Mr. Leif stated the point is the tax payers will lose
the tax revenue.

Mr. Farnsworth stated the 2-children per household per year figure does not hold in a
household because not all people stay in a house as long as others.

Ms. Joubert stated she will get more information from Cheryl Levesque at the School
Superintendent's office.

Mr. Lewis stated that no matter what figures are used, it's still going to look better for the town
if the project is a Senior Residential Community.

Ms. Joubert and Ms. Barrett agreed the general opinion is mixed. Mr. Farnsworth noted all
senior residential communities are struggling.

Mr. Leif stated the potential population to buy those units will increase in the future. The
timing is bad right now. The town will be better off staying the course. The compelling reason

to remove the age restriction is because currently it's an eyesore. The town will remove an eyesore and then pay an ongoing bill for years and years.

Mr. Pember stated the town would have to get paid, unless they tax it as separate units.

Mr. Leif stated he will modify the spreadsheet and get it back to the board a week before their next meeting on November 17th.

The meeting adjourned at 8:45 pm.

Respectfully submitted,

Debbie Grampietro
Planning Board Secretary