



# TOWN OF NORTHBOROUGH PLANNING BOARD

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Approved 1/17/12

Planning Board  
Meeting Minutes  
December 6, 2011

**Members Present:** Rick Leif, Michelle Gillespie, Leslie Harrison, Theresa Capobianco, George Pember

**Others Present:** Kathy Joubert, Town Planner; James Tetreault, Mike Durkin

**Discussion with James Tetreault, PE, Thompson-Liston Associates, Inc., RE: 26 Johnson Ave preliminary subdivision plan**

Referring to suggestions made by the Planning Board and staff at the meeting on November 8<sup>th</sup>, Mr. Tetreault explained he asked the Fire Chief, David Durgin, if he would accept the hammerhead turnaround in lieu of the standard cul-de-sac. He stated the Fire Chief replied the hammerhead is acceptable. Mr. Tetreault reminded the members that if they went forward with subdivision plans for the site, the Fire Chief would receive those plans to review.

Mr. Tetreault discussed the second issue from the last meeting, which was the look of the hammerhead turnaround in comparison to a circular turnaround (cul-de-sac). He distributed and reviewed site plans showing the two options. In response to a question from a board member, Mr. Tetreault stated the cost difference between the hammerhead turnaround and the cul-de-sac is approximately \$20,000 due to the need for extra earthwork with the cul-de-sac, including extra drainage requirements. He stated he can't exactly quantify the labor component. Some material may have to be taken from elsewhere on the site for grading for the cul-de-sac, whereas the hammerhead turnaround is not going to require grading. Also, the Town would not have to maintain the hammerhead turnaround. Mr. Tetreault noted the cul-de-sac on the site plan is shown in the reduced size the board requested at the last meeting.

Fred Litchfield, Town Engineer, stated the cul-de-sac on the site plan is not actually bigger than shown at the November meeting, it is set back further on the lot. He pointed out the Town didn't want it outside of the physical right of way, which is identified by bold magenta lines on the plan.

Mr. Tetreault noted the blue indicates the area of the lot that would have to be paved with a conventional cul-de-sac.

Mr. Leif confirmed that with the hammerhead turnaround plan, there would be a portion of Town-owned property that would have to be maintained.

Ms. Joubert noted the Town would encourage the owners to take care of it.

Mr. Tetreault noted they could design something that would not have to be maintained.

Ms. Harrison suggested something in the middle with landscaping.

Staff reported the DPW has requested no plantings in a cul-de-sac due to plowing and maintenance issues.

Mr. Leif stated the new plan shows less unpaved, town-owned property. Usually with a cul-de-sac, it's built out to the limit. There is only the possibility of 3 houses using it – the existing house, the house that needs the driveway for access to Johnson Avenue, and a proposed new house.

Ms. Harrison said she would like to see the figures for the cost of the hammerhead turnaround and the cul-de-sac.

Mr. Leif questioned where snow would get stored on the site.

Mr. Tetreault stated it would get pushed off the back of the turnaround. He stated with landscaping, the nicer it is, the harder it is to maintain.

Ms. Capobianco stated she doesn't see the need for the pavement with a circular turnaround. The two houses using the existing driveway have been doing so without any problems.

Mr. Pember agreed, stating there will be less to be paved and plowed and he doesn't see the need for the cul-de-sac.

Ms. Gillespie stated the site is awfully tight and she thinks it needs a cul-de-sac because it will look better.

Mr. Tetreault stated the existing driveway is 18 feet wide and the proposed driveway will be 26 feet wide.

Ms. Gillespie and Ms. Harrison were concerned about setting a precedent with the hammerhead turnaround. They both stated they prefer the look of the cul-de-sac.

Mr. Tetreault noted the lot is in a groundwater overlay district, which would make the reduced pavement with the hammerhead turnaround even more desirable.

Ms. Joubert stated the board doesn't necessarily set precedents because the members hear projects on a case-by-case basis. In the past the Planning Board has extended cul-de-sacs to over 500 feet because it made sense, but because it's done once, the board isn't bound to make all their future decisions based on that decision. If the board doesn't think a hammerhead

turnaround makes sense in this case, it wouldn't prevent them from allowing one for someone else in the future.

Ms. Harrison stated she is concerned and would like to know why other hammerheads were granted. She stated she knows it's a financial situation.

Ms. Joubert stated it's always financial for the applicant. With a cul-de-sac, and no sidewalks in that area now, there would be sidewalks installed that would go to nowhere. The board needs to consider the area and the project. The cul-de-sac, and all that goes with it, would be a little much in such an older neighborhood.

Mike Durkin, real estate agent for the property owner, stated the owner wanted to sell all of her five lots. Her husband died three years ago. Her house was assessed at \$400,000. There are three sewer lines coming from the house. It was custom-built by the previous owner who was a developer. The owner's husband was an engineer who drew out a plan in the 1970s before adoption of the Groundwater Protection Overlay District bylaw. Mr. Durkin stated he told the owner he didn't think she could subdivide and make other lots because there was no frontage on a public way. He suggested she sell the whole piece as is. Northboro Septic took a look at the house and said the septic would have to be done over to one system. Mr. Durkin stated an engineer also looked at the site and he said the lot is not worth much in the neighborhood. He stated the house is worth about \$150,000. Mr. Durkin stated she is trying to get her costs within reason so she can at least sell it. He suggested deeds could reflect the landscape easement will always be maintained.

Mr. Litchfield confirmed the Fire Chief was fine with the hammerhead turnaround as shown on the site plan.

Ms. Joubert noted ten departments will get the definitive subdivision plans when they are filed and afterwards staff will look at them together in a staff meeting.

Ms. Harrison and Ms. Gillespie stated the cul-de-sac is more elegant and marketable. Mr. Pember and Ms. Capobianco prefer less paved area and a smaller right of way. Mr. Leif stated he is also in favor of the hammerhead turnaround for the same reasons. He stated the board is generally in favor of the hammerhead turnaround.

#### **Discussion RE: Preliminary WCF Request for Proposal**

The board reviewed the draft preliminary Wireless Communications Facility (WCF) Request for Proposal. Mr. Leif stated it is very thorough, and he didn't see anything that needed to be changed. Ms. Harrison stated she was very impressed with the detail of the draft.

Ms. Joubert stated she was still not sure if the board wanted to include the mapping component, which is in the document starting with item #8 under Scope of Services.

Mr. Leif stated it would be a good idea for them to include a bid on mapping, but questioned whether or not they could decide they don't want to have the mapping done after the bids had been submitted.

Ms. Joubert will ask the Assistant Town Administrator about how to structure the RFP.

The members discussed the mapping items #8 - #12 under Scope of Services.

Regarding item #8, Mr. Pember asked what this would mean to new providers who come into town. Ms. Joubert stated they would have to provide information to the board. To do a gap coverage analysis, the location of existing WCFs and what area they cover would need to be determined.

The board also reviewed WCF coverage maps showing the existing towers identified in red and the existing roof-top installations in blue.

Ms. Capobianco asked who would know what companies are providing service on the facilities.

Ms. Joubert replied the building department will know because building permits are required for collocation.

Ms. Capobianco suggested the board might put out two separate requests, one for the Scope of Services items #1 – 7, and the other for items #8 – 12, if possible.

Mr. Leif questioned why they would want to split it up. He suggested it would be easier to decide what they want to do after the bids have been submitted. They could divide the two tasks and see how much they want to spend. He asked if the two parts of the contract could be awarded to different companies.

Ms. Capobianco stated they could receive a bid from someone extremely skilled in bylaws but who knows nothing about mapping.

Mr. Leif suggested that if they did the two parts separately, it might be advantageous to start with items #8 – 12, and then the board would have the opportunity to build into the bylaw certain things that may come out of the mapping.

### **Wind Turbine/Alternative Energy Bylaw**

Ms. Gillespie stated she would like the board to work on an alternative energy bylaw for next spring.

Mr. Leif stated it may end up being another job for a consultant.

Ms. Joubert suggested the board wait to see if the Wind Committee is expanded to an Energy Committee.

Ms. Joubert stated she included a study of the groundwater bylaw in the budget for next year knowing there will be a little money left in the Brigham Woods mitigation account to start the amendment of the bylaw. She explained the amendments to the bylaw will be a priority for the DPW next year and everyone will be involved with it.

**Approval of Minutes:** The minutes of the November 8, 2011 meeting we approved as amended.

**Next Meeting Dates:** The next Planning Board meeting will be held on January 17, 2012.

The meeting adjourned at 8:30 pm.

Respectfully submitted,  
Debbie Grampietro  
Board Secretary