



TOWN OF NORTHBOROUGH PLANNING BOARD

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Approved 3-7-12

Planning Board Meeting Minutes January 17, 2012

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

Others Present: Kathy Joubert, Town Planner; Bill Farnsworth, Inspector of Buildings/Zoning Enforcement Officer; Brett Matthews

Proposed Zoning Amendment

Ms. Joubert and Mr. Farnsworth explained to the members they want to clarify the definition of Minimum Lot Width in the zoning bylaw because historically it has been difficult for applicants and others to interpret correctly. She stated she, Mr. Farnsworth and Fred Litchfield, Town Engineer, met earlier in the day to revise the definition, as follows:

7-02-040 Definitions – Minimum Lot Width

Current definition: *The required minimum lot frontage shall extend from the front lot line to the rear building line of the main building on the lot.*

Proposed revised definition: *The required minimum lot frontage shall extend from the front lot line to the rear building line **of the main building** and shall be equal to or greater than the required minimum lot frontage dimension per 7-06-020 Table 2. If the lot has reduced frontage per 7-06-030B(2), the minimum lot width per 7-06-020 Table 2 shall apply from the front building line to the rear building line **of the main building**. If the lot has reduced frontage per 7-06-030B(3), the minimum lot width at the **main building** line shall not be less than 100 feet.*

Ms. Joubert distributed a plan of a structure on a lot with a red dotted line indicating the lot width at the corner of the structure. Mr. Farnsworth used the plan to explain how the definition of minimum lot width should be applied. He explained the interpretation of the definition is a common problem with subdivision lots and pork-chop lots.

Ms. Joubert noted the revision is not a change to how the minimum lot width is calculated and applied, it is just a clarification of the definition.

The board members were in support of the revision to the definition, which will require amending the zoning bylaw at 2012 Town Meeting.

Mr. Leif noted it should read like a definition to keep in the same format as the other definitions.

Continued Discussion RE: Preliminary WCF Request for Proposal

Ms. Joubert provided information on two questions the board members had at the last meeting regarding the WCF request for proposal.

First question: The board had asked what companies are currently in town. Ms. Joubert explained Mr. Farnsworth put together a list earlier today. The list indicates which companies are on the towers to the best of Ms. Joubert's and Mr. Farnsworth's knowledge. However some of the companies lease to other companies and Mr. Farnsworth does not know to whom they are leasing. For example, AT&T leases out.

Verizon doesn't have a tower of their own, but they may be on a tower, and possibly under a different corporate name. Also, one company could have swapped with Verizon.

Ms. Joubert stated the information they have is from the Building Department's records and it is what it is, which is not necessarily 100% of the picture.

Mr. Leif stated it gives them an idea of where there is co-location.

Ms. Joubert stated the towers are full, with the maximum amount of co-locators.

Mr. Farnsworth stated that, with each of the towers, there may be more carriers who are leasing. There may be two antennas up and one is being leased.

Second question: The board had asked if they could split their RFP into two parts, with items #1-7 as one part and items #8 – 12 , which focus on mapping, as the second part.

Ms. Joubert stated she asked the Assistant Town Administrator, Kim Hood, for information on this and Ms. Hood had said the board could do that. It would be worded to request separate bids on each part and it is the only way the board can do it in order to have the ability to say they don't want to do both. Ms. Joubert noted Ms. Hood has the boiler-plate language regarding qualification and how to review and judge respondents in such a way that the board would not be tied to taking the lowest bidder.

Ms. Joubert stated Ms. Hood questioned the board's reasoning for the mapping. She explained Ms. Hood asked why the board would want to spend money on mapping when the applicant should be doing the mapping. In addition, Ms. Hood said she feels the mapping will be out of date as soon as it's done because it won't take into consideration what's been done while the map is made and the towers other towns are putting up with coverage that extends into Northborough. Ms. Joubert stated right now Marlborough is putting up a tower and Northborough's police tower will be going up. The ranges change, and they don't know what coverage might extend from Shrewsbury, Berlin or Westborough. Ms. Hood's suggestion was not to include the mapping at all.

Mr. Leif stated he would still vote to include the mapping because it would allow them a look at the current environment. He noted the board could bring the bidders in to discuss this with them and find out if it would be worth it or not.

Mr. Pember stated he has trouble with the mapping concept. He asked, for example, how the mapping would determine the area of MetroPCS if they have three sites they are leasing.

Mr. Leif stated the mapping will determine their service.

Mr. Pember stated Mr. Farnsworth said he doesn't know who is on the towers. He asked if the consultant will determine this.

Ms. Joubert stated they don't have a total fix on who is in town, but one item will be to discuss with service providers who is on the tower. She noted companies may or may not want to participate. It is not public information until they come before the board requesting to locate in town. Prior to that, a carrier could tell the board it's not required that they disclose this.

Mr. Leif stated a question would be to ask if it is feasible to come up with an accurate account of who is in town. If they really cannot do it, he would agree with Mr. Pember and suggest leaving out the mapping. He suggested they split the RFP into two parts, and stated it would be helpful going forward to have an accurate map. He stated they will be approving new facilities and could update their own map.

Ms. Joubert stated they won't have the ability to amend the map, but information from the applicant would be compiled.

Mr. Leif stated they could request the applicant to give them a coverage map after they locate.

Ms. Joubert responded that requirement is not in the bylaw.

Mr. Pember and Ms. Joubert suggested they would need co-location information for everyone on the tower and then the information could be outdated.

Mr. Leif asked if it is reasonable for them to try to find out if coverage is available from another town.

Ms. Joubert explained towers cost millions of dollars to erect, and asked why they would put up a tower if there is already coverage from another tower. She stated companies would rather co-locate than build a tower because they are so expensive.

Mr. Leif suggested the RFP require the applicant to determine coverage.

Ms. Joubert stated Ms. Hood has to do the standard work on the RFP, and she will be available to do so in the beginning of February. The goal is to get it out in the spring and work on it in the fall, to have it ready for 2013 Town Meeting. Ms. Joubert stated she will put together a time-line.

In response to questions from Mr. Leif, Ms. Joubert stated the bidders generally have a month to respond to the request, and the RFP will allow the board to choose no respondent if they don't qualify.

ZBA Application Review: 130 Main Street, Horizontal Mixed-Use Development

Mr. Pember recused himself from this discussion because he is a direct abutter to the project. The other board members reviewed the Zoning Board of Appeals (ZBA) application for a proposed horizontal mixed-use development at 130 Main Street, submitted by developer Tim Shay. The application will be heard by the Zoning Board of Appeals at their January 24th meeting. Ms. Joubert stated the applicant has been before the Design Review Committee and will be coming back to that board on January 23rd. The proposed project includes mixed business/retail use and multi-family units. Ms. Joubert explained the property has frontage on Brigham Street and Main Street (Route 20). Currently there is a small white farm house and barn on the site which will be removed. Entrances to the development will be from Brigham Street and Main Street. The developer will have to apply to the Massachusetts Department of Transportation (MA DOT) for a curb-cut permit off of Route 20. Ms. Joubert reviewed the uses for each of the three proposed buildings. She noted the square-footage of the lot allowed the developer to propose 12 dwelling units in building #3, which is the maximum number of dwelling units allowed.

Ms. Joubert stated the applicant will be coming before the Planning Board because Brigham Street is a scenic road and the applicant will need a scenic road permit to break through the stone wall for that entrance to the property. Ms. Joubert explained she has spoken to neighbors who inquired about the project, that Brigham Street being a scenic road will not prevent the application from being approved, and has to do with replacement of the stones from the wall.

Ms. Gillespie gave a brief summary of what the Design Review Committee (DRC) has asked the applicant to change on the plans submitted. She explained that lighting will change, signage information was not presented by the applicant, plantings were suggested and some existing trees are staying. In addition, some columns on building 3 will be removed and the doors, which looked to industrial, will be changed to a more residential-looking style. Building #2, with all commercial uses, was fine, and the DRC requested the dormers be set back more on the roof of Building #1, which includes a combination of residential and commercial uses.

Mr. Leif stated he is glad to see the developer of this project using the new bylaws. He noted there have been two other similar mixed-use, commercial/residential projects proposed on West Main Street and East Main Street and a residential development on Westbrook Road which was also designed using the new bylaws. He stated there must be a market for these smaller dwelling units and it would be nice to keep track of how they're filling up.

Ms. Joubert noted the residential dwelling units in the two mixed-use developments (West Main Street and East Main Street) will be rentals. She stated people are already calling the Planning Department for information on the multi-use development on West Main Street by Kendall Homes. She explained a person living in the AvalonBay apartments called for information because she wants to go to a smaller apartment and because the area is now too busy because of Northborough Crossing.

Ms. Gillespie stated the Design Review Committee liked the project. She mentioned Mr. Shay's other project on East Main Street, stating it fits in well with the neighborhood. She also reminded the board of the apartment building downtown. Ms. Gillespie asked about sidewalks for the project and Ms. Joubert stated the developer has proposed a sidewalk along the Main Street side of the property.

The board members stated they were pleased with the mixed-use development and had no comments or conditions to suggest to the Zoning Board of Appeals. Ms. Joubert stated she will send a letter in support of the project to the ZBA from the Planning Board.

Approval of Minutes

The board approved the minutes of December 6, 2011.

Next Meeting Dates

The next Planning Board meetings will be held on February 7th and February 21st.

The meeting adjourned at 8:00 pm.

Respectfully submitted,
Debbie Grampietro
Board Secretary