



# TOWN OF NORTHBOROUGH PLANNING BOARD

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Approved 7/17/12

## Planning Board Meeting minutes 5-16-12

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

**Others Present:** Kathy Joubert, Town Planner; Fred Litchfield, Town Engineer; Brian Smith, Amy White, Karen Ares

Chairman Leif opened the meeting at 7 pm.

**Review of Site Plan Approval Application for 215,000 sq. ft. regional bakery facility on Bartlett Street, Map 67 Parcel 6 (located in rear of FedEx facility at 300 Bartlett Street) and Special Permit Common Driveway public hearing to be scheduled for June 5, 2012**

**Applicant:** Campanelli Companies, 10 Campanelli Drive, Braintree, MA 02184

**Engineer:** Kelly Engineering Group, Inc., 0 Campanelli Drive, Braintree, MA 02184

**Filing Date:** May 7, 2012

**Site Plan Approval Decision Due:** August 4, 2012

Ms. Joubert explained the site plan review has been withdrawn by the applicant indefinitely.

### **Old/New Business**

#### **Review of density of project at 269 West Main Street**

Mr. Leif stated he wants to use the 269-273 West Main Street project as a model to understand how different provisions of zoning allowed it to be built as designed in relation to Floor Area Ratio (FAR), etc. He stated if the board decides to change things, they have to know what impact it would have on this project. After reviewing this project, he would like to do the same with Tim Shay's project at 130 Main Street, compare the two and talk about changes.

Mr. Leif stated that, based on the square footage, the floor area ratio gave them the ability to increase up to a certain limit.

Ms. Joubert, Mr. Litchfield and the board members reviewed calculations for FAR regarding this project and determined Ms. Joubert would need to talk to Mr. Farnsworth to determine how this is calculated in relation to the commercial uses on the first floors and the residential uses on the second floors of the buildings. They would also need the same information for the 130 Main Street project from Mr. Farnsworth. In addition, the board requested the definition of a unit.

Regarding open space, Mr. Leif stated the Table of Density and Dimensional Regulations, (Section 7-06-030), indicates 20% of the property must be kept as open space. In relation to the West Main Street property, the plan shows 36,000 square feet of open space and 14,000 square feet is the minimum open space required.

Mr. Leif stated it doesn't look like the project meets the requirement. Staff explained the site plan does meet the open space requirement per the zoning bylaw.

The board stated they would like to see the site plan sheet with the open space area colored in.

Mr. Leif stated they need to determine if the open space requirements as written give them the result they're looking for, and questioned how they would balance that while encouraging commercial development and mixed use in the downtown area. They are getting mixed use and residential developments, but are not sure the way it looks is attractive and if it fits in the area.

Ms. Joubert noted that, prior to 2009, there wasn't any open space requirement in any business district and no maximum lot coverage requirement.

Ms. Harrison asked about the size and lot coverage of the 168 East Main Street development.

Ms. Joubert stated the site is 21,600 square feet and the building is 3906 square feet, which is over 18% lot coverage. The credit union building at 148 Main Street covers 6.6% of the lot; the CVS building on Main Street covers 31% of the lot, and the building at 290 West Main Street covers 15% of the lot.

Brian Smith, 97 Main Street, stated the maximum front setback requirement should be changed as he believes the buildings are too close to the street.

As an example where a building is set farther back than the present zoning requires, Ms. Joubert stated people like the look of the building at 318 Main Street, in which the Sea Dog restaurant is located. It is significantly landscaped in front with one row of parking in front of the building and the remainder of parking spaces are on the side and in the rear. She reminded the board the reason for the maximum front setback is a lot of people wanted buildings closer to the street.

Mr. Pember stated they wanted to encourage parking in the rear and the ability of people to walk from business to business.

Mr. Smith stated the town would have to have public parking for that. Business owners don't want people parking in their parking areas and walking to other stores.

Mr. Pember agreed, stating it might work in the Downtown Business area, but perhaps not in the Business East and West districts.

Mr. Leif stated a common parking area would facilitate that. Returning to the 269-273 West Main Street project, Mr. Leif stated he wants to talk about landscape buffers between abutting uses.

Ms. Joubert replied the area around King Street is in the Business West, including King Street, Time Square and both sides of Route 20 (West Main Street).

Mr. Leif stated basically this area is business abutting business and the 25-foot landscape buffer would not apply to this project. Regarding parking for this project, the applicant needed enough spaces to conform to both uses, and he has more than enough parking on the site.

Ms. Capobianco noted landscape beds in front of the buildings are shown on the plan.

Fred Litchfield, Town Engineer, stated he will highlight the open space areas on the plan for the board.

Mr. Leif asked if the ZBA had the ability to grant the developer an increase of up to 1.0 in floor area ratio (FAR).

Ms. Joubert said they did have that ability, but the developer did not request it.

Mr. Leif stated they might want to revisit floor area ratios.

Mr. Leif stated he would like to take a look at the Westbrook Road project in the Downtown Business district.

Ms. Joubert stated the project is residential with only 1 egress off Westbrook Road.

Mr. Pember stated a survey of town members, and information from a consultant, indicated the town should have multiple locations for multifamily, not just duplexes. He questioned if there was any inquest to the housing authority as to the need for multifamily and mixed use development. He stated he thought it was to have alternative places to live. Avalon doesn't necessarily meet the need of alternate housing in town.

Ms. Joubert stated people on the board thought it was to provide opportunity for different kinds of housing stock in town, not just duplexes, how many units and where they would be located. They thought to have them in residential zones would be too much of a change in character, so they then focused on business zones and giving more options for housing.

Mr. Smith stated people don't want to live on Route 20. It is counterproductive to have apartments along Route 20.

Mr. Smith asked if the board would be doing another housing study.

Mr. Leif stated they are and it's going to be distributed over the next week or so. It was delayed in order to get 2010 census data.

Ms. Gillespie asked how that information was obtained.

Ms. Joubert stated it was done through town-wide and public meetings, interviews with the Housing Authority, etc. It is the first analysis anyone has done with the 2010 zoning. Ms. Joubert stated they reached out to anyone involved in housing, churches, housing authority, realtors and businesses over the year.

Ms. Joubert asked if the intent of the board is to bring back some sort of multifamily and mixed use to the Business East district.

Mr. Leif stated he has to understand what the current zoning allows first. The first two major projects designed with current zoning didn't turn out like the board thought they would. The uses are good, but the density is perhaps an issue with both.

Ms. Joubert suggested they look at it town-wide, and not just look at one district. There are three districts where multifamily is allowed by special permit. In the downtown district no mixed use is allowed, only multifamily and cottage.

Ms. Joubert stated the Design Review Committee is almost done with drafting design guidelines. They are working on a final draft now, which the committee will review at their next meeting in June. Once the final version is done, the committee will present a brief explanation to the planning board. The guidelines will include “do’s and don’ts “ photos.

Ms. Gillespie stated the guidelines include a minimum of 2-3 required meetings for developers, which would include submission of a sketch at the first meeting, architectural drawings at the second meeting and a fine-tuned plan at the third meeting.

Mr. Leif suggested setting up a process in the office for the historical commission to become more involved with the review of development.

Mr. Leif suggested inviting the historical commission to the planning board meeting at which the DRC guidelines will be reviewed.

Ms. Gillespie noted the DRC could be altered at a future town meeting include a person from the historical commission.

### **Bond for Stirrup Brook Estates II**

Mr. Litchfield explained the bond amount of \$69,500 is based on the anticipated installation of base pavement and utilities. The pavement must be installed before building permits are issued and houses can be sold.

Mr. Pember motioned to approve the bond amount of \$69,500 for Stirrup Brook Estates II, Ms. Capobianco seconded the motion and the vote was unanimous to approve.

### **Church Street Village and Laurence Place Updates**

Ms. Joubert explained developers of the Church Street Village and Laurence Place developments will be attending the next ZBA meeting on May 22<sup>nd</sup>. The discussions will be informal and no voting will take place. She explained as follows:

- **Church Street Village:** The project is almost done, with one affordable unit and one market-value unit left to sell. Due to the economy, the developer has made changes to the landscape and lighting plan and will ask the ZBA to determine whether or not the change is insubstantial.
- **Laurence Place:** The developer will be providing an update and will talk to the board about allowing some, or the rest, of the remaining units to have 3 bedrooms as opposed to 2 bedrooms. It will be up to him to officially file for a special permit if he wants to go forward with the change after talking with the board.

Regarding Laurence Place, Mr. Leif stated he sent an email message explaining Laurence Place was originally a Senior Residential Community (SRC) that went nowhere and the bank eventually asked the ZBA to remove the SRC restriction. The Planning Board reviewed it and felt it would be better to have the development completed, but wanted the units remaining to be built to be 2-bedroom units to reduce impacts on the schools. Mr. Leif stated he thinks the

developer is trying to get what he originally wanted. If it gets as far as them filing for a change, the Planning Board will need to send a letter to the ZBA.

Ms. Joubert noted there is a restriction in the deeds that the units have to be 2-bedroom, but the online advertising describes them as 3-bedroom units.

The meeting adjourned at 9:00 pm.

Respectfully submitted,

Debbie Grampietro  
Board Secretary