



TOWN OF NORTHBOROUGH PLANNING BOARD

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Approved 2/3/15

Planning Board Meeting Minutes October 7, 2014

Members Present: Michelle Gillespie, Leslie Harrison, George Pember, Amy Poretsky

Others Present: Kathy Joubert, Town Planner; Fred Litchfield, Town Engineer; Katie Crockett; Matt Brassard; Christine Johnson; Scott Miller; Sue Brackett; Gino DeFeudis; Jesse Johnson

Chairman Leif opened the meeting at 7:10 pm.

7:15 pm Lincoln Street Elementary School Site Plan Approval

Applicant: Town of Northborough
Engineer: Brassard Design & Engineering, Inc.
Architect: Lamoureux Pagano Architects
Date Filed: September 16, 2014
Decision Due: 90 days from date of submission

Katie Crockett, Lamoureux Pagano Architects; and Matt Brassard, Brassard Design and Engineering, presented the plans for Site Plan Approval for the addition of a gymnasium and renovations to the Lincoln Street Elementary School at 76 Lincoln Street. The project also includes the replacement of the heating system and plumbing.

Referring to a PowerPoint slideshow, Ms. Crockett explained the project includes the addition of an 8,000 square-foot gymnasium off the rear of the existing building; the renovation of the 45,000 square-foot school building, including the replacement of the heating system and plumbing; and the redesign of parking and playground areas on the site. The school will accommodate 270 students, grades Kindergarten through fifth grade, and the plans also include a stub-out for additional classrooms if needed in the future. The plans as designed include working with the existing architecture. The main entrance canopy will be replaced and a canopy is planned for the entrance of the gym, which will have a separate access in the rear of the building for use after hours.

Ms. Crockett noted the project began in April and is expected to be completed in September 2017. Phasing of the project will have students in school during renovation. Students will use modular classrooms until Phase 1 is done, then will move back in and Phase 2 will begin. The existing gym will be redesigned into a media room and a tech lab.

Mr. Brassard stated the phased occupied construction will start in Spring 2015, and will be done in 2016. He noted 60% of the drawings are finished and they are underway to get 90% of the contract documents together. All the documents will be signed-off by the Town. The bid for the design will be going on soon.

Plans for the project show existing conditions, including 2 curb cuts that provide access to the circular drive and access to an existing sanitary sewerage pumping station; additional parking and a paved parking area; informal athletic fields and a Little League baseball field. Since the entire project is surrounded by wetlands, the goal was to ease away pavement close to the wetlands. The site circulation

will be different in that buses will have access to drop students off at the cafeteria and another driveway will be designated for parent pick-up. In addition, the emergency access drive will go around the school. As a result, all pavement will be moved away from the wetlands.

Mr. Brassard stated the existing baseball field, as well as the existing septic system, will be removed and that area will be used as a multi-purpose open field. A small field for the use of younger children is planned for the front of the site. Mr. Brassard noted the building will connect to town sewer, the pump station will remain, and the septic system will be completely eliminated.

Mr. Brassard explained the project was before the Conservation Commission in September, as the site is surrounded by forested wetlands. A wetland buffer zone and a river-front area cut through the middle of it and currently, site traffic and parking are located within that area. Traffic and impervious cover are proposed to be moved away from resource areas, and retention areas will receive runoff from heavily paved areas of the site, which will be a substantial improvement to the riverfront area. The easterly side of the site is floodplain in which athletic fields are located. A naturalization zone will be created as a buffer for the wetland and riverfront areas. The outer tree line will remain the same and pavement will be moved further away from abutting parcels so there will be no need to buffer the site driveways from the neighborhood.

Mr. Brassard stated a new water service will be brought in for fire protection; electricity and data communications will be upgraded; and there is adequate gas on the site for the addition and the renovations.

Mr. Brassard reviewed the stormwater management plan and water service system, stating the kitchen portion of the building will have a separate sanitary line to a pump house. Treatment chambers will be located to collect stormwater on the northern end of the site. All existing roof drains will be maintained. A section of the existing line will collect all existing runoff. A new connection into the existing line will be for the buses. One portion of the access drive runoff will be picked up by a stream. Runoff from pavement on the southern side of the site will seep out through a grass filter area and bioretention basins planted with shrubs and grasses. Because they are not adding a lot of pavement, the bottom of the basins are designed as treatment systems and the side effect of this design is a reduction in recharge. The proposed stormwater management plan meets all requirements of the Department of Environmental Protection.

Mr. Brassard stated the very first phase will include the establishment of utility improvements for the modular classrooms. The playground will remain in place, but the swings will be taken down and stockpiled. Structures will be moved during the final phase. In summer 2016, the final landscaping will be finished and the school will be completely functional.

Ms. Harrison asked if the materials used in the retention cells need to be replaced. Mr. Brassard stated it's just a mulch that needs to be replenished every 2 years or so. Ms. Harrison asked how replenishment would be enforced. Mr. Brassard stated the Town would have to police it. The stormwater and maintenance plans will be attached to the deed.

Fred Litchfield, Town Engineer, stated the proposed stormwater system is a significant improvement in water quality, along with the removal of impervious cover and the replacement of it with vegetation. The Town has a sewer pump station there so there will be no septic system. He noted the stormwater maintenance plan has been reviewed by the conservation agent.

In response to a question from Mr. Pember regarding the comparison of existing parking to proposed parking spaces, Ms. Crockett explained they will have the same number of spaces post-construction as there are now on the site. Mr. Pember questioned whether or not there would be enough spaces since the building has been designed to accommodate more teachers. Ms. Crockett explained the school now

has 300 students. Upon completion, the school will have 270 students, so there will be the same number of spaces for a lesser number of students. There are extra parking areas if there is an event at the school.

Ms. Harrison stated during an event there now, parking gets tight. She noted the driveway looks narrower than the existing driveway. Mr. Brassard responded the existing driveway will be right underneath the proposed driveway. They are both just about the same width.

Ms. Gillespie was concerned about signage. She asked if there are any no-parking signs proposed. Ms. Crockett stated they haven't got that far. Mr. Brassard stating he thinks signage would be appropriate. Because of the location of the school, an objective is to get what they need but not to pave where they don't need to pave. A fair number of vehicles could be located in the bus drop-off loop. Once people get used to it, it should be fine.

Ms. Gillespie wondered if they considered an electric sign board in the front of the lot. Christine Johnson, Superintendent of Schools, stated the sign is relatively new. Ms. Harrison stated it is not realistic to tell people they can't park at the Middle School, especially in the winter. She stated she is skeptical that a sign would work. Ms. Crockett stated this is something they will take into consideration with the administration. They are not in a position to add paved space for assembly use due to the wetlands on the site. Mr. Brassard noted he can also evaluate what kind of parking can be accommodated in the bus drop-off area and look at angled parking there. The bus drop-off area is new and it could hold a lot of cars. It was noted there are 91 total parking spaces proposed. Ms. Harrison stated she would not want to see another parking area on the site.

Ms. Gillespie wondered if the sidewalk repair at the entrance of the school that will make it continuous down Lincoln Street. Mr. Brassard stated the sidewalk to the front entrance and wraps around. There is nothing around the back.

Ms. Gillespie asked if there is a specific species of trees planned for the site. Ms. Crockett stated they are working to preserve the existing pine in front of the school and some beautiful trees by the main entry that will be maintained. She also asked if the ball fields will remain in the back. Ms. Joubert stated there is no determination on the ball fields. Ms. Joubert stated Community Preservation Act money does not include Lincoln Street. The field in the back of the site is multi-use.

Ms. Johnson stated they are waiting to see how the budget turns out for the project, and if there is money left, they would like to use it for baseball or basketball. But if there is no money left, they would look for CPA money.

Ms. Crockett stated there are large athletic fields in the back of the site for multipurpose and baseball fields would be an alternative if the funds were allowed. Some of the playground pieces will be relocated back there, as well. In the front, there is a large, flat green area for recess, physical education and the Town's use. Swings will be put up in front, circulated around the pine trees.

Ms. Joubert noted all of the Fire Chief's comments in his review letter will be addressed at the building permit stage. He is in agreement with that. He made a couple of general comments about trees and concerns with them becoming overgrown and causing an issue with the fire trucks. The bylaw requires trees as part of the site plan review. The Department of Public Works (DPW) and the School Department will be responsible for keeping the trees trimmed.

In response to a question from Mr. Pember regarding phasing of construction, Mr. Brassard stated students will stay in modular classrooms for a whole year. The students moving mid-year are in third through fifth grade. Their space will be renovated in the first part of the year. Significant work will be done in the summer in the building and on the site. Core facilities that need to be operational during the year will be done in the summer. There is no central air conditioning proposed, but there is an air

handling system that dehumidifies the area, and which has found to be tremendously successful during warm, moist weather. They will also be adding insulation in the exterior walls and changing the windows.

Superintendent Charles Gobron stated questions that have been raised have given him pause for thought. There is time before starting the project to look at traffic and an opportunity once the building is finished, to have that in mind. It is always great to have these discussions and a wonder way to learn about the project first-hand.

Ms. Harrison asked about state funding for the building. Patricia Kress, Chairman, Northborough School Committee, stated the state will fund 50% of the building and they believe enrollment will be declining. Ms. Crockett stated they maintained the parking spaces right now and have the ability to add 3 classrooms to the school if the population is larger than 270 students. Ms. Kress stated they would have jeopardized the funding if they didn't go with 270 students.

James Lee, 49 Lincoln Street, abutter to the project, stated he has seen changes to the wetlands on his property as well as on the school property. He is concerned about drainage and worries that erosion controls required by the Conservation Commission will send runoff into his yard and house. He explained his property goes right along Cold Harbor Brook, directly upstream from the school.

Mr. Brassard explained the entire lower access drive and large paved areas drain directly into the stream. Once the lower area is fully established and vegetated, there will be no areas that will experience concentrated stormwater flow. The proposed drainage system will basically spread the flow out. Any overflow of basins would be clean. There is no improvement to the stream included in the Notice of Intent filed with the Conservation Commission. The way the stream and wetland system operates is as a recharge area that occurs from groundwater movement. The underlying soils are sands and gravels which have very low silt potential.

Mr. Lee stated being a neighbor to the school, occasionally trash gets on the sidewalks. He wondered how good a neighbor the school will be during the construction. He stated he is concerned about traffic flow with additional construction traffic added to the regular traffic. He asked if there is a plan for mitigation of traffic.

Mr. Brassard responded there is no traffic management plan at this time. It may be done by the selected contractor. There is almost no construction on Lincoln Street. Contractors would arrive before school starts and equipment would stay at the site during the day. There would be additional vehicles for materials deliveries and other construction transportation vehicles, but for this sized project, traffic is usually not consistent. Ms. Crockett stated there will be times when there are a lot of workers on the site and there will be parking off-site for workers who will be shuttled to the site to help with the Lincoln Street site. Mr. Lee asked if there will be parking on both sides of the street, and Ms. Crockett responded that will not be allowed. Mr. Lee also asked if the school will be used for polling and if the driveway shown on the plan will be the same with 2-way traffic.

Ms. Gillespie responded the dotted line on the plan is the old driveway. Mr. Brassard stated that driveway will only be for vehicle use, not bus use. The lower driveway will be for vehicles only. The capacity is now split. The existing driveway is used for cars and buses together.

Ms. Joubert stated the standard width for a subdivision road is 24 to 26 feet and the width as shown on the plan is completely adequate.

Mr. Lee asked if there will be sidewalk repairs for the east side of Lincoln Street and noted the sidewalk on the other side of the street needs to be repaired. Mr. Brassard responded it is not possible to include the sidewalks as part of the project. Ms. Gillespie stated the funding is not there for it, but the comment is appreciated. She also noted she votes at the school and has no parking problem when she does.

Ms. Kress asked Mr. Litchfield if there is a problem if the fencing stays along the emergency access and the other side. Mr. Litchfield replied he has no problem with it, but he cannot overrule the Conservation Commission.

Ms. Joubert stated she will draft the Site Plan Approval letter, which requires the signature of the Planning Board chairman.

Ms. Harrison motioned to approve the Site Plan as presented, Mr. Pember seconded the motion and the vote was unanimously in favor of the motion.

7:30 pm Public Hearing Definitive Subdivision “Sterling Court Estates”, 29 East Main Street

Applicant: Scott Miller, Stirrup Brook, LLC

Engineer: David E. Ross Associates, Inc.

Date Filed: September 5, 2014

Decision Due: 135 days from date of submission

Vice Chairman Michelle Gillespie read the legal notice for this public hearing into the record. She also read a letter from the Applicant requesting the hearing be continued to October 21, 2014 at 7:45pm.

Ms. Gillespie motioned to continue the hearing to October 21, 2014, Ms. Harrison seconded the motion and the vote was unanimously in favor of the motion.

Approval of Minutes: Mr. Pember motioned to approve the minutes of September 17, 2014 as amended, Ms. Harrison seconded the motion and the vote was unanimously in favor of the motion.

Town Meeting Zoning Amendments: Ms. Harrison stated briefly that she would like to have their proposed solar and medical marijuana bylaws, presented at last year’s Town Meeting, reviewed and put on the warrant potentially for the upcoming Town Meeting. She would like to discuss this at a meeting in the near future.

Master Plan Funding: Ms. Joubert reported she has requested \$125,000 be available in the budget for an update to the Master Plan.

ZBA Applications: 370 Southwest Cutoff Special Permit with Site Plan Approval Ms. Joubert asked the board members if they would like the Applicant for this project to come to a meeting to present their site plan proposal. She noted the project has not changed and is the same plan they originally saw a few months ago. The board members agreed they would like to have the Applicant come in and present the site plan.

Financial Planning Committee Appointee: Ms. Joubert has requested Mr. Thomas Spataro, the Financial Planning Committee applicant (Planning Board’s appointee), to come to the October 21, 2014 meeting at 7pm in order for the board to vote to meet and interview him.

Open Space Definition: Ms. Poretsky asked if there is a definition of open space in the zoning bylaws. She asked if driveways were included in calculations for open space using 16 Hudson Street as an example. Ms. Joubert replied there is no open space requirement for individual residential lots. In the case of 16 Hudson Street, which is in a Groundwater Protection Overlay District, impervious cover on a residential lot is taken into consideration and is defined in the bylaw. She noted parking cannot be included in open space calculations, because it isn’t something that water can drain through. There may be a definition of open space in the subdivision rules and regulations.

East Main Street Building: Ms. Harrison asked if a task force can be put together to do something about the property at 16 East Main Street. Ms. Joubert noted the building on the site has been condemned.

39 West Main Street Committee: Ms. Joubert stated the Board of Selectmen have not appointed people to be on this committee, but is planning to do so in November.

61-65 West Main Street, Pierce Gas Station Site: The developer of this site, James Vogel, has requested an extension of the variance granted for his mixed-use development. He intends to go forward with the project and has been working with National Grid and MassDOT regarding road work in Route 20.

Sidewalks on West Main Street: Ms. Gillespie stated she was very happy to see the sidewalks being constructed on West Main Street in front of Maney's Plaza and the Post Office. Ms. Joubert noted MassDOT is responsible for putting them there.

The meeting adjourned at 8:30 pm.

Respectfully submitted,

Debbie Grampietro
Board Secretary