



TOWN OF NORTHBOROUGH PLANNING BOARD

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Approved 3/21/17

Planning Board Meeting Minutes February 7, 2017

Members in attendance: Michelle Gillespie; Amy Poretsky; Leslie Harrison; George Pember

Members excused: Theresa Capobianco, Chair

Others in attendance: Kathy Joubert, Town Planner; Fred Litchfield, Town Engineer Elaine Rowe, Board Secretary; Mike Durkin; Mike Sullivan, Connorstone Engineering
Michelle Gillespie, Acting Chair, called the meeting to order at 7:05PM.

Public Hearing RE: Special Permit Common Driveway for 245 & 249 Green Street

Applicant:	Ernie Collette
Engineer:	Connorstone Engineering
Date Filed:	December 13, 2016
Decision Due:	90 days from close of hearing

Mike Sullivan from Connorstone Engineering discussed plans for a common driveway on the parcel. He noted that owner, Ernie Collette, lives next door and is seeking to construct a 4-bedroom dwelling on the lot. He explained that the parcel has severe topography, a substantial wetland that runs across the entire frontage and high groundwater so the applicant has opted for a common driveway in order to avoid filling of any wetlands.

Mr. Sullivan indicated that the existing driveway will be extended, and veer off approximately 100 feet off of the roadway. He also noted that sight distance will be in excess of 200 feet in both directions. Mr. Litchfield asked about the turning radius, and noted that the Fire Chief has asked for modification to allow emergency vehicles to turn around.

Mr. Sullivan mentioned that the project has been before the Conservation Commission, who has closed their hearing, as well as the Board of Health, who has approved the septic system.

Mr. Litchfield voiced his opinion that a 12-foot wide driveway is appropriate due to the wetland constraints. He also explained that he intends to go to Town Meeting with a recommendation that a reference be added to the zoning bylaw that will refer applicants for common driveways to the subdivision rules and regulations so that one set of design standards is kept and maintained by the staff and Board. Having the design standards in both documents has caused confusion in the past.

Mr. Litchfield commented that the sight distance is required to be a minimum of 200 feet and, while the plans do indicate that it will be, there is no specification as to what the actual number is. Mr. Sullivan agreed to add this detail to the plans. Mr. Litchfield confirmed that the plans do show the turnaround as was discussed. He also indicated that the rate of pre-development and post-development runoff is included, but given that the driveway is not expanding he would agree with Mr. Sullivan that it is insignificant and construction of a drainage system is not warranted. Mr. Litchfield stated that the final condition that he would seek, as he does with all projects, is the requirement that the applicant provide an as-built plan upon completion of the project.

In response to a question from Ms. Gillespie about fire apparatus access, Mr. Sullivan confirmed that a smaller fire engine and an ambulance will be able to turn around in the driveway. Ms. Joubert noted that a review letter from the Fire Chief indicating his approval of the project is in the file.

Ms. Poretsky asked about the berms shown on the driveway plan. Mr. Sullivan noted that the Conservation Commission had requested berms be placed on the downgradient side of the driveway during construction which will act to divert any runoff during construction to a riprap swale. He also noted that the driveway is to be constructed and stabilized before anything else is done.

George Pember made a motion to close the hearing. Leslie Harrison seconded; motion carries by unanimous vote.

George Pember made a motion to grant a special permit with the conditions as noted in the Town Engineer's comment letters dated 1/16/17 & 2/7/17 and the additional condition that No Certificate of Occupancy shall be issued until the Town Engineer certifies to the Inspector of Buildings/Zoning Enforcement Officer that the common driveway has been completed in accordance with the plan and Special Permit Common Driveway decision.

Amy Poretsky seconded; motion carries by unanimous vote.

Bonds & Lot Releases

Sterling Court – Mr. Litchfield noted that the developer for Sterling Court has requested a bond reduction. He explained that the work is progressing well and the last house is built but he does not believe that they are all sold. He indicated that the base pavement and sidewalks have been installed and are in good shape, and the basins are stabilized and working well. He stated that all that remains to be done is the topcoat for the sidewalks and driveway, which he expects can be completed in time for the roadway to be on the warrant for the 2018 Town Meeting for acceptance. Based on the status of

the work, Mr. Litchfield suggested that the board continue to hold \$55,000 of the \$84,500 bond.

Leslie Harrison made a motion to reduce the bond for Sterling Court to \$55,000. George Pember seconded; motion carries by unanimous vote.

Clark Woods Update – Mr. Litchfield explained that the developer for this project, Craig Callahan, is fairly new and has been learning the process along the way. He noted that Mr. Callahan has, to date, done everything that he has been asked to do. Mr. Litchfield stated that he had recommended that Mr. Callahan build as much as he could in advance of posting a bond. No bond will be posted as of yet.

Subdivision Rules & Regulations – Ms. Joubert indicated that there is no update to provide at this time.

Master Plan – Ms. Gillespie explained that Ms. Capobianco has recommended that, since the board has not come to an agreement about which two board members would be the appointees to the Master Planning Committee, she would support allowing three members of the Planning Board to serve on the Committee and would like to nominate Amy Poretsky, Michelle Gillespie, and George Pember to do so. Ms. Harrison recalled that the board had discussed doing so only if the entire composition of the committee was increased as well, Ms. Gillespie recommended that the committee be expanded to 16 members as was discussed at the December meeting.

Leslie Harrison made a motion to approve the composition of the Master Planning Committee to include a total of 16 members, three of which are to be members of the Planning Board as discussed. George Pember seconded; motion carries by unanimous vote.

Consideration of Minutes

Minutes of the Meeting of November 15, 2016 – Leslie Harrison made a motion to approve the Minutes of the Meeting of November 15, 2016 as amended. George Pember seconded; motion carries by unanimous vote.

Minutes of the Meeting of December 6, 2016 – Ms. Joubert explained that Ms. Poretsky had submitted proposed edits, and copies of those revisions have been provided to the board.

Ms. Joubert also discussed Ms. Poretsky's concerns about reviewing projects before the ZBA, and indicated that the ZBA does not view the absence of comments from this board as their approval of the project.

George Pember made a motion to approve the Minutes of the Meeting of December 6, 2016 as amended. Leslie Harrison seconded; motion carries by unanimous vote.

Proposed Zoning Amendments for 2017 Town Meeting – Ms. Joubert provided details of the zoning amendments proposed for the 2017 Town Meeting and requested that members review them and provide comments before the next meeting when there will be a more lengthy discussion.

In response to a question from Ms. Harrison about the temporary moratorium for recreational marijuana establishments, Ms. Joubert noted that Town Counsel will amend the date to take into consideration the extension the State Legislature recently approved.

Two-family dwellings – Ms. Joubert noted that two-family projects will be added to the site plan review process.

Auto Repair Businesses – Ms. Joubert mentioned that Ms. Poretsky had done a great deal of work on this initiative and the board has discussed it in detail in the past. Based on the proposed changes, Mr. Pember suggested that the use still be allowed in the Business South district. Ms. Harrison agreed.

Dimensional Regulations for 2 family dwellings – Ms. Gillespie explained that Ms. Joubert had put together the numbers and details that were discussed at last meeting. Ms. Joubert commented that town staff did not propose a change to the rear setback but it was suggested that the board consider doing so. She noted that the Town of Shrewsbury increased their rear setback from 40 feet to 50 feet. Mr. Pember indicated that he is opposed to what is being proposed and will vote against it. He suggested that these changes indicate that the board is not in favor of allowing any more two family homes and he believes that they are a viable option that we need to allow. Ms. Harrison commented that she is struggling to understand what the net result of these changes will be.

Density for multi-family dwellings – Ms. Joubert explained that Town Counsel may opt to split this into two articles on the Town Warrant. She stated that the proposal is to change the maximum number of multifamily units from 8 to 6, and increase the lot calculations in the Business West and Business South districts from 20,000 square feet for the first two units and 3500 square feet for each additional unit to 7,000 square feet for each additional unit. Ms. Gillespie explained that the density of the proposed project on King Street was the reason that the board came around to this proposed action.

Ms. Poretsky asked for verification of the difference between single family attached and multifamily, and reiterated her opinion that the project proposed on King Street was technically single family attached. Ms. Joubert noted that Mr. Atchue has indicated that he does not have any issues with the two definitions. Ms. Poretsky suggested that single family attached would not be used by developers. After some discussion, Ms. Gillespie suggested that Ms. Poretsky put her thoughts in writing for the next meeting. Ms. Poretsky commented that she is simply looking for clarification.

Common Driveways – Ms. Joubert explained that the proposed change corrects the situation that was addressed during the public hearing earlier tonight because of common driveways regulations being in multiple places in the bylaw. She stated that the bylaw will be revised so that all common driveways applicants will be referred to the section in the subdivision rules and regulations.

Green Communities – Ms. Joubert indicated that she has reserved a place on the warrant pending receipt of warrant language from the state. She also stated that she has had our existing bylaw reviewed by Town Counsel to determine whether or not we need to take any action about renewable energy.

Ms. Poretsky asked about height restrictions for multi-family dwellings as was mentioned during a previous meeting. Ms. Joubert noted that, in the business districts where multi-family housing is allowed, there is already a maximum height stipulated in the bylaw. Ms. Gillespie suggested that the issue be further discussed at the board's next meeting.

Ms. Poretsky asked if the board wishes to consider decreasing the maximum number of multi-family units from 8 to 6 in the Downtown Neighborhood district as well as the Business West and Downtown Business districts. Ms. Harrison voiced her expectation that the change would be applied everywhere. Ms. Gillespie asked the board members to review the details and be prepared to discuss the issue at the next meeting. Mr. Pember suggested that it would be helpful to have a copy of the zoning map for reference.

ZBA Meeting, January 28, 2017 – Ms. Joubert noted that a hearing for a small expansion to the building and increased parking area at 111 Otis Street will be before the ZBA at their next meeting.

DRC update- Ms. Joubert explained that the property owner at 442 West Main Street had a small commercial building approved several years ago but permits have expired so he is back requesting approval to do the project as originally proposed. She noted that the applicant is currently working through the DRC process and will be filing with the ZBA

Ms. Harrison asked about the project at the site of the former Lowe's Market, and voiced her understanding that the permits have expired. Mr. Pember noted that work had begun before the expiration of the permits.

CPC Update – Ms. Joubert noted that the White Cliffs project is on hold due to groundwater contamination found on the site, but the Town Common project is moving forward.

Zoning Revisions - Mike Durkin suggested that the board review Chapter 40A and commented that it is contrary to what we are suggesting as zoning bylaw revisions. Ms. Gillespie asked Ms. Joubert to investigate and provide updates for the board. Ms. Joubert stated that, when the State makes changes to Chapter 40A, the town will need to change our zoning accordingly.

Meeting adjourned at 8:30PM.

Respectfully submitted,

Elaine Rowe, Board Secretary