

SEEKONK PLANNING BOARD
Regular Meeting

MINUTES
July 12, 2011

Present: Ch. Abelson, M. Bourque, S. Foulkes, R. Bennett, R. Horsman, L. Dunn
J. Hansen, Town Planner

Absent: T. Clancy (without cause)

7:02 pm Ch. Abelson called the meeting to order.

**Revised Preliminary Plan: Caleb Estates – 160 Olney St. – Applicant: DeCastro Builders
Engineer: Insite Engineering**

P. Carlson I am from Insite Engineering here to discuss revisions of plans for Caleb Estates. We got feed- back from the planning board, CEI and townspeople and what we have done now is to super elevate the road in the opposite direction to the south towards the houses creating a swale within the subdivision. In doing so we will have cross culverts for the driveways and because of the swale on the south side we will have an infiltration pond on the south side of the road. From there it will be piped to a detention pond on the east side of the old lot 4. Based on your regulations we have created a separate lot for the detention pond.

Wanted to discuss the subject of sidewalks; I am here to request a waiver for sidewalks in this subdivision. In lieu of them we would increase the width of the pavement to 28 feet. The reason we are asking is because of the design which requires us to have a stone diaphragm at the edge of pavement before it goes into a swale. If we had sidewalks not only would we have to have a hard curb but with a hard curb we wouldn't be able to have sheet flow we could extend the swales into the lots. We thought that design worked best for the subdivision.

R. Horsman The previous plan, did it have a swale at all?

P. Carlson Originally, the swale was on the north side of the property and there was a small detention pond in the back of the lots. We eliminated that and pulled all the houses back so the storm flow goes to the front of the lots and ultimately through the swale.

Ch. Abelson Will there be something on the plan about the grades for the fronts of both lots?

J. Hansen That is a typical condition I know CEI has asked for it on Madison Estates and we can do that here.

- P. Carlson The definitive will be coming back before you based on your comments today but we are ready to submit it this way if it is conducive to the needs of the town and the neighbors.
- R. Bennett Is the drainage channel just loam and grass because it is in people's front yards?
- P. Carlson Yes it is grass. There will be a 10 or 12 inch culvert that will go under their driveways.
- J. Hansen About making the road 28 feet, is it possible to make it 24 feet so you don't have to have the easements on these properties?
- P. Carlson As always, the less impervious you have the greater opportunity the water penetrates in, that would be better for all aspects so I would consider that as well. Right now we have as shown a 3 foot wide easement because of the pavement requirements.
- Ch. Abelson Have you talked to the Fire Chief about the hammerhead?
- P. Carlson When we submitted the preliminary it went to the Fire Chief and DPW, no concerns at that point. Understanding there are laws about buses backing out if there are school children they would have to be picked up at the end of the street.
- J. Hansen That is what the Transportation Director for the schools indicated that the kids would have to be picked up at the corner of Olney and this new road.
- Ch. Abelson I would like to get something in writing for the definitive plan from the Fire Chief.
- M. Bourque I had a talk with the Fire Chief a while ago and he did not have a problem with the style of the road.
- Roger Stolte 32 Agawam Court. I strongly disagree with the use of a hammerhead it is dangerous for the town because of garbage trucks, recycling trucks, busses any big trucks that go in and have to turn around there could be children in the street. I want to be on record saying that a hammerhead is a mistake in the design of this plan. Another aspect are the drains to the south I have a lot of experience with regards to maintaining swales and almost all that I have had to deal with fail.
- Ch. Abelson If you are an abutter you will be receiving notification of the public hearing when the definitive comes up you will have a chance to speak then.
- S. Foulkes In John's critique, under proposal, he talks about the pond not on home owner's land who is going to maintain it? DPW? (referring to infiltration pond on lot 3)

- P. Carlson When we discussed this and submitted this to John and Bernadette for comments, it will have a spilt rail fence around it. It was one of the concerns more for conservation than the abutters to delineate that item so it is not in the backs of people's property so they assume it is their property. From that infiltration pond it will be piped to the back which will be on its own separate lot.
- J. Hansen Which will be the responsibility of the homeowners association to maintain them.
- S. Foulkes Even though it is not on their land; will that be in the deed?
- J. Hansen Yes.
- R. Horsman That will not fall on the DPW and /or tax payers' money to handle any of this?
- J. Hansen It is in the drainage storm water bylaws that Home Owners Associations need to be set up on subdivisions and they need to be responsible for maintaining their own drainage systems.
- L. Dunn The ANR lot is it on Olney?
- P. Carlson The lot faces Olney Street but the driveway goes out on the new street.
- L. Dunn How many feet are you from wetland lines on lot 4?
- P. Carlson As per town regulations the house is 50 feet from the wetland and you can't touch 25 feet.
- L. Dunn It looks like you will have to be careful with your grades.
- J. Hansen That is why Ch. Abelson wants that condition about grades on the definitive plan.
- P. Carlson What will happen with any of these lots pending the subdivision approval. Any of the lots outside the buffer zone lots 1, 2 & 3 that come before John under our design for the septic design, John will compare our septic design to the subdivision and make sure that it meets close to what we show on this plan. Also lot 4 will have to go before the Conservation Commission because it does need work to be done within the 100 ft. and not only that but because there will be a notice of intent filed for that lot, there will be orders of conditions required. A spilt rail fence is required and an eas-built grading plan so there are a lot of checks and balances as to what we have to submit to planning and conservation.
- L. Dunn So these elevations 100, 101, 102, 104 really it's that high?
- P. Carlson It is relative to the grades out there. You are not looking at something that is 100 ft. high. You have assumed elevation at 100 out there. What we have out there today is 2 ft higher than the existing ground.

- L. Dunn I figured that.
- J. Hansen In summary the board has already reviewed and approved Caleb Estates preliminary plan in order for them to go forward to definitive plan they are looking for direction on the idea of the sidewalks and reduction of the road so you need to give that direction you need to grant the waivers if you so choose then that can start the process for a design from Paul which will start the process of the definitive plan.
- L. Dunn So what you would like to build is a 24 ft wide road that is pitched away from the development to the north with no sidewalks. In the cross section the drainage swale is 1
- P. Carlson The swale is 8 feet wide. We are talking about 32 feet between the drainage structure and the pavement, and beyond that we still have grading on the north side as well.
- R. Horsman The extra 4 feet adds to the front yard?
- P. Carlson Yes.
- J. Hansen Yes it is cleaner not to have easements on peoples properties for the swale.
- L. Dunn Traditionally/recently we don't give waivers for sidewalks. Perhaps in this situation we might want to consider it.
- Ch Abelson The sidewalks would end up being on peoples property.
- P. Carlson The town is technically responsible for sidewalks and roadways.
- Ch. Abelson Any thoughts on a motion?
- R. Horsman The original swale was behind the neighbors on Agawam Court.
- P. Carlson There was a small swale in a shallow detention pond that was located on the south side. That gets eliminated because the houses get moved further back and storm water goes in front.
- R. Horsman I am not a big fan of front yard swales. If it's in the back yard and they mess it up it is their own problem.
- P. Carlson That was the original intent of the bylaw reason being because of people claiming it as their own and technically it is suppose to be under the Home Owners Association. People could put up sheds or swing sets etc. Also I think in the front it is less likely people would do that.

- J. Hansen The bylaw states that the swales have to be on Home Owners Association land. You can't take this example and apply it to all future subdivisions.
- P. Carlson I don't think it will be that bad looking, it will blend in.
- J. Hansen I definitely do not want to see a swale in the rear of the lots. We put the regulations in so the home owners would not think it was their land and put structures up. I recommend it be along the road whether it is on the north or south side I don't have an opinion. I understand neighbors might have a problem if it is on the north side but that is why P. Carlson is a registered professional engineer if he puts his stamp on it he's responsible for it if it floods those properties they know where to find him.
- M. Bourque So you are okay with no cape cod berm?
- J. Hansen If there were other options I'm sure Paul would have come up with them.
- M. Bourque When they put the road down the water will be diverted down the street do you think there will be enough catch basins to handle the flow after 2 inches of rain or 2 feet of snow?
- P. Carlson You have catch basins that fill with leaves, everything comes into play. There are swales in the front of the road you will get that with catch basins. There is a continuous pitch in the road.
- M. Bourque Do we have an opinion from DPW?
- J. Hansen They had no problem with this.

R. Horsman made a motion to approve the Amended Preliminary Subdivision Plan – Caleb Street Estates, with a sidewalk on the one side of the street. Seconded by R. Bennett and so voted unanimously by: Ch. Abelson, M. Bourque, R. Bennett, R. Horsman, L. Dunn, S. Foulkes.

VOTE: (6-0) Approved

Discussion: Housing Production Plan Strategies – Adaptive Reuse

- J. Hansen In the plan one of the strategies was to look at some of the towns facilities to re-use as affordable housing. After researching properties the school administration building is the only property that is vacant at present to explore this possibility of adaptive reuse. At this point I'm looking for an endorsement from the board to

have the feasibility study done. We can request CPA funds I think that we would be successful in that request considering you can draw from affordable housing and historic and CPA money. Since there is not a housing committee established I would ask that you would support filing an application with CPC authorizing me to fill that application out and hopefully we will get the money at fall town meeting and then hire a consultant to put together a feasibility study.

R. Bennett So you are talking about taking the existing building and converting it into housing?

J. Hansen That is what a feasibility study would tell us.

R. Horsman Do we need to pay for a feasibility study? Wouldn't a request for a simple request for proposal work?

J. Hansen We would need to determine if it is feasible to even put housing in there, how many units can be sustained, adding to the building etc. When you talk about affordable housing you have to have a good subsidy and if it is not in the form of cash it will have to be in the form of density to entice a developer. In my opinion it is good to have the study and have that information so then we can have a detailed RFP go out to developers.

R. Horsman I think in town we have too many studies. Rather than spending the money on the feasibility study if someone wanted to make some money off of transforming a piece of property open it up, come in and take a look and if they want to build it they can get their own subsidies or come to us and ask for help. I don't think we should be spending thousands of dollars to help someone else develop a piece of land that we own. If someone wants to develop it and put affordable housing there I am for that but I don't think we should pay for a study.

L. Dunn Maybe we should make a motion to see if the planning board thinks it's a good idea.

J. Hansen That's fine if you all think it's a good idea, but you will need to give some direction. If you are going to do an RFP, like Russ suggested for the development community to respond to, then that would be appropriate.

R. Horsman That is your free research you send it to the big development companies and say we have this parcel of land and this is what we would like to see and all proposals have to be up to town and state law. Then we would pick the one we like and submit it at town meeting, but in the process we won't spend any money.

M. Bourque The money is only for a feasibility study to see if it is feasible to do it. My personal opinion, I don't think any contractors will waste their time or money not knowing it. They aren't going to send someone here to study it.

- Ch. Abelson Would we need the BOS to write the RFP since it is town owned land?
- J. Hansen We would probably need to work with them.
- S. Foulkes Developers want to make a profit why would they want to make less of a profit with affordable housing?
- J. Hansen That explains why we can't depend on the free market to develop affordable housing that is why there is only 1.5 percent affordable housing.
- R. Horsman If it's not feasible then I don't want to pay for it.
- J. Hansen That's the whole point. 40Bs are needed in town to subsidize affordable housing and if we don't then we will eventually get an unfriendly 40B. Tall Pines is a perfect example of free market not being able to subsidize affordable housing so that is the point of CPA to make 40Bs work and to have towns encourage feasibility studies. Going a step further I have seen on the CPA website there are plenty of towns out there that go the extra step and give more money to a project to work with a private developer.
- R. Horsman I would rather see CPA spend money buying open space. At least at a minimum I would rather see us put this out to RFP first. If it comes back and no one wants it then we can revisit it.

R. Horsman made a motion that Town Planner drafts an RFP for the board to review that involves developers purchasing the school administration building, keeping the integrity of the original building with intent of being an affordable housing development. L. Dunn seconded and so voted by: Ch. Abelson, M. Bourque, R. Bennett, R. Horsman, L. Dunn, S. Foulkes.

VOTE: (4-2) motion passes

**Ch. Abelson, R. Horsman, L. Dunn S. Foulkes – (Aye)
M. Bourque, R. Bennett – (Nay)**

- L. Dunn SRPEDD update. I found out that instead of the state help being 30% cuts can go as high as 50% so fiscally the state will not be able to help that much. South Coast Rail continues the Army Corp of Engineers will allow it and it is going to be Stoughton and it goes through the Hockamock swamp. The other news from SRPEDD concerns the sign bylaw; I think that we would be well served if SRPEDD helped us write that bylaw. Any remarks?
- J. Hansen There are 40 hours of municipal assistance to the town, 20 to selectmen, 20 to the planning board. I think what you are asking should be in the form of a motion. Do we want to offer up our 20 hours to SRPEDD and it looks like the selectman

are doing the same with their 20 hours so combine them for 40 hours work load to work on the temporary sign bylaw. I think it is the way to go.

M. Bourque made a motion that the Planning Board use their 20 hours of SRPEDD time to go towards SRPEDD writing a new sign by law seconded by L. Dunn and so voted unanimously by: Ch. Abelson, M. Bourque, R. Bennett, R. Horsman, S. Foulkes, L. Dunn

(6-0) motion passes

J. Hansen SRPEDD is offering communities technical assistance through South Coast Rail so we have another chance in August for more help. I can run down a list of eligible things. I would like to try getting help in developing a bylaw for the affordable housing plan.

M. Bourque I would say you are the town planner whatever you think we need help with.

J. Hansen I would be for any help to advance affordable housing.

R. Horsman Bill Rice had an idea to put something together to help new businesses coming into town expedite their process in town hall. Is this something we could use SRPEDD for?

J. Hansen I don't see it on here.

Ch. Abelson That might be something we could do ourselves if it is not available through SRPEDD.

R. Horsman I think that is a good idea we can think about it and bring it up at a later date.

L. Dunn made a motion to ask SRPEDD for technical assistance to help write the Affordable Housing Bylaw. Seconded by R. Horsman and so voted unanimously by: Ch. Abelson, S. Foulkes, L. Dunn, R. Horsman, R. Bennett, M. Bourque

VOTE: (6-0) Motion passes

Approval of Minutes: 6/14/11

R. Bennett made a motion to approve the minute of 6/14/11 seconded by R. Horsman and so voted unanimously by: Ch. Abelson, S. Foulkes, L. Dunn, R. Horsman, R. Bennett, M. Bourque

VOTE: (6-0) Motion passes

Adjournment:

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R. Horsman made a motion to adjourn the meeting seconded by M. Bourque and so voted unanimously by: Ch. Abelson, S. Foulkes, L. Dunn, R. Horsman, R. Bennett, M. Bourque

VOTE: (6-0) Motion passes

The meeting adjourned at 9:10 PM

Respectfully Submitted by:

Florice Craig, Secretary