

STURBRIDGE PLANNING BOARD
MINUTES OF
TUESDAY, February 8, 2005

Present Sandra Gibson-Quigley, Chair
Thomas Creamer
James Cunniff
Jennifer Morrison
Milton Raphaelson
David Yaskulka

Absent: Thomas Kenney

Also present: Lawrence Adams, Town Planner

S. Gibson-Quigley called the meeting to order at 7:00 PM and read the agenda. The minutes of January 25, 2005 were reviewed.

Motion: to accept the draft minutes of January 25, 2005, as presented, by J. Cunniff
2nd: T. Creamer
Discussion: None
Vote: All in favor

ANR'S

The Board agreed to review the submittal from Michael Loin, of Bertin Engineering following his presentation for Sturbridge Farms which would be heard later in the meeting.

PILOT TRAVEL CENTERS, LLC – STURBRIDGE ISLE – REQUEST FOR WAIVER OF SITE PLAN REVIEW; Brad Alsup, Project Manager

Brad Alsup, project manager for Pilot Travel Centers LLC, of Knoxville, Tennessee, and owner/operator of approximately 270 travel center nationwide presented the request. He stated the following –

- Pilot Travel was in the process of purchasing the current Sturbridge Isle site which he intended to operate as is with two exceptions -1) improve the traffic flow of the site and 2) construct an addition to the building that houses the diesel fuel sales for retail sales for the truckers – an expansion of the current products (snacks, drinks, items for the road, some truck parts);
- No changes were proposed to the use of the current buildings;
- They would lease out the large main building – no prospective tenants at this time, portions are currently leased to several different entities;
- Changes to the current diesel fueling building – expand the number of showers in the upstairs facility (showers in the main building would be abandoned);

S. Gibson-Quigley asked L. Adams for the original Site Plan Review and any conditions that went along with the special permit for the original project design. She noted the present owner was required to come before the Board every three years for a review. L. Adams commented that the Board was scheduled to conduct a public hearing this year for that Site Plan Review and that the only issue at the last review was about damaged trees which were to be replaced (per the Tree Warden). B. Alsup was not aware of these conditions.

The Board had the following questions/concerns -

- Would there be a net impact to the water and sewer as a result of the increased number of showers proposed – B. Aslup stated there were six showers proposed (one handicapped accessible) a decrease from the current number.
- It was asked that the new location of the scale site be more accurately identified for the Board.
- Would the addition to the diesel fuel building constitute a need for review by the Design Review Committee (DRC) – L. Adams felt the addition was not much different than the present use. His was concerned with the national advertising components of the new ownership which could create more activity at the site. He supported the second proposed access to the main building, the relocation of the scales and the “bumpout” to the fueling building under a waiver, but felt the buildout, marketing and new tenancy should trigger Site Plan Review and that Pilot Travel needed to go before DRC for approval of their signage.
- Since there were restaurants in the upper and lower level of the main building would the change be significant if different types of restaurants were to lease space – L. Adams offered that this site was a truck stop approved under a special permit and if the component of the motoring public should increase significantly, the Board must determine through a public hearing process if the changes exceed the uses allowed by the previously approved special permit.
- Since the applicant was a national chain, the Board needed to protect the character of the Town by requesting that the chain’s design fit the colonial setting. – B. Aslup stated that the design of the "bumpout" would match the existing structure and the signage would conform to the Town’s regulations.

M. Raphaelson felt that the Board should determine if the current uses at the site were in line with the original special permit before approving the requested waiver. S. Gibson-Quigley felt this was not necessary since Sturbridge Isle had been reviewed every three years by the Board under a condition within the original special permit and that the request was part of an accepted use under the original Site Plan. L. Adams recommended the Board support the proposed limited reconstruction, the new construction (1,200 square foot addition), a scheduled three year review at the Board’s first opportunity and suggested that Pilot Travel Centers LLC to attend that review.

Motion: to approve the Waiver of Site Plan Review submitted by Pilot Travel Center LLC, for Sturbridge Isle, by J. Morrison
2nd: T. Creamer
Discussion: None
Vote: In favor – T. Creamer, J. Morrison, S. Gibson-Quigley, J. Cunniff and D. Yaskulka
 Opposed – M. Raphaelson

S. Gibson-Quigley requested that the Town Planner schedule a review for Sturbridge Isle and invite Pilot Travel for the of the original Site Plan Review and the existing conditions.

STURBRIDGE FARMS MULTIPLE DWELLING PROJECT – REVIEW AND RECOMMENDATIONS TO ZONING BOARD OF APPEALS; Michael Loin, Bertin Engineering

S. Gibson-Quigley noted that as part of the special permit process the Planning Board was required to provide a report to the Zoning Board of Appeals (ZBA). If the project was approved by the ZBA, it would come back to the Board under Site Plan Review. The Board reviewed the purposes of the special permit under the Zoning Bylaws, Chapter Twenty-one – Multiple Dwelling Projects and Chapter Twenty-five – Site Plan Review. L. Adams circulated revised plans to the Board. S. Gibson-Quigley recognized Michael Loin, of Bertin Engineering Associates and Michael Lussier, the project developer. M. Loin describe the project as follows –

- Gave a brief history of the project – the original 68 unit project (subdivision) evolved into a conservation design under a multiple dwelling project with Town water (looped system) and sewer;

- The community was proposed as age restricted active adult, ages 55 years or older, with a home owners association. Since the project was proposed as age restricted, there would be less impact to the municipal services;
 - Of the twenty-three plus acres, twelve acres of the project would be deeded to the Town as open space, a buffer zone totaling four and one half acres surrounding the units provided a conservation restrictive easement and the Conservation Commission (ConCom) had approved the Order of Conditions for the site;
 - The entrance would be located off Route 131. The curb cut review had been approved by MassHighway. The length of the cul-de-sac was approximately 1,480 feet, the roadway width would be twenty-two feet which expanded at the entrance, the entrance was a 2 percent slope for 150 feet (S. Gibson-Quigley stated a clearer detail would be needed for Site Plan Review);
 - Driveway would have security type street lighting;
 - A ten foot wide gated gravel drive would provide a second means of egress (formerly a six foot path). Keyed access would be provided to the Town and the association;
 - The two parking spaces located at the end of the cul-de-sac would be used as a trail head for the trail systems, some guest parking had been provided;
 - The location and function of drainage, snow storage and detention basins; and
- The units would be approximately 2,200 to 2,500 square feet, priced at \$400,000.00 and up, “high end” single story living with a living area, dining area and master bedroom, two stall garage, guest room, study area and one and a half baths.

Question/comments from the Board –

- What was the size of the parking spaces (ten by twenty feet) and clarification on the conservation easement and the buffer zone;
- There was a request for plans showing the elevation and sloping which would be a tiered boulder wall with greenery behind the units. – M. Loin noted that DRC had requested detailed plans of the section for its review and for review by the Tree Warden.
- It was asked if M. Loin was aware the project would be required to come before Site Plan Review – M. Loin agreed and was aware of the requirement.
- After reviewing the submittal, it was noted that information was missing and dissatisfaction was expressed at the last minute submittal of revisions since the Board’s report was to be based on plans that the ZBA would be reviewing during the special permit process – M. Loin stated that the intent of the revision was to meet Town department comments.
- Why were plans for the trails to the conservation land not part of the project – M. Loin stated that planning needed to go into the trail, there were other committees that may want to participate in the design and a study may be recommended.
- Would lighting calculations be submitted – A copy of the lighting was included on the detail pages of the plan, calculations could be provided if the Board so desired.
- Who would maintain the water and sewer systems and resolve problems – M. Loin stated it would be in the condominium documents and the responsibility of the association to educate its residents that the association’s manager would address problems.
- Clarification was asked relative to the limited impact to municipal services, namely the school system given that this was proposed as a 55 years of age or older community – M. Loin stated that there should be no impact to the schools.
- The size of the units was questioned for an over 55 age restricted community.
- What was the quality of the open space – D. Yaskulka felt this was a good opportunity to permanently preserve a portion of the Quinebaug River Corridor which was a highly strategic area. S. Gibson-Quigley felt the open space was not buildable, but there was an advantage to it being privately owned with respect to what could be done to it.
- What was the distance from the tiered wall to the units – M. Loin stated it would be approximately 20 to 22 feet.

- Concerned was expressed about the erosion control regarding the 1:1 slope behind the units.
- If the property’s legal frontage was not on Route 131 had there been a variance request – M. Loin stated the legal frontage was on Farquhar Road and a letter requesting a waiver from this zoning regulation had been submitted to the ZBA. When asked if there were any other variances necessary, M. Loin was not aware of any. S. Gibson-Quigley cautioned him that it was not the responsibility of the ZBA to determine zoning violations for a project. She felt that the Board could not properly review a project without all the information. J. Cunniff asked if all the other zoning regulations had been met. M. Loin stated they had. L. Adams noted that the revised plans still showed twenty-one units and the bylaws allowed for only twenty. M. Loin said this was an issue involving clustering and he would discuss this issue with the ZBA.
- The Board would want approval from the Tree Warden for landscaping and the environment study.
- Removal of trash – M. Loin stated this would be a one day a week schedule by an independent hauler.
- S. Gibson-Quigley referenced the Police Chief’s memo regarding concerns for the traffic impact at Route 131 – M. Loin commented that MassHighway reported that the impact did not warrant a turning lane and the traffic review indicated the impact would not be significant to Route 131.
- S. Gibson-Quigley referenced the DPW Director’s memo stating there were issues with the plans and that the project could not be constructed as designed – M. Loin would address these concerns with the ZBA.

L. Adams had the following comments –

- Was in support of a peer review to be conducted for the ZBA;
- Zoning requirements needed to be fine tuned and drafting errors corrected – the plan’s scale, bridge location, drainage line location, drainage swales a concern of ConCom; and
- This was a complicated site, but a good design.

S. Gibson-Quigley review the Board’s concerns with the project – the slope, the frontage issue of a variance and roadway width and the number units (21 units v. 20 units), engineering details and conservation issues. The Board would like the final plans at least one week in advance and felt that it and the ZBA should be looking at the same plans.

S. Gibson-Quigley recognized Charles Blanchard, an abutter, who commented on the improvements made to the project’s design and stated his satisfaction with the plan's design.

ANRs

Kelly – Wallace Road – Bertin Engineering – Approved 2

OF PARCELS CREATED 2

PLANNER’S UPDATE

Meeting Dates – February 15th no meeting due to a lack of quorum – public hearing would be rescheduled to

March 8th – Rezoning for Old Sturbridge Village and Nextel public hearings

March 29th – Laurel Wood and 171 Charlton Road public hearings

April 5th – tentative

April 12th – meeting date

April 25th – Annual Town Meeting

RRI Appeal Disposition – The Chairs of both ZBA and Planning met with James Malloy regarding the RRI appeal. The ZBA will take the issue up during an executive session and forward its decision to the Board.

Rezoning Old Sturbridge Village – L. Adams asked that the members visit the site in preparation for the upcoming public hearing. T. Creamer asked if this site had ever been looked at for affordable or elderly housing.

Nextel Tower – L. Adams noted that the site had been flagged showing the center of the monopole. J. Cunniff stated that the monopole has not been listed as an item to be dismantled and felt that it should be added.

Laurel Wood – L. Adams asked the Board to review these plans since there had been significant changes.

RRI – L. Adams had been approached with interest by RRI for the lease space at its new facility. It was made clear that the Board required formal Site Plan Review for such a change.

Annual Report Draft – L. Adams thanked the Board for its comments.

T. Creamer discussed the Master Plan of 1988 as a guide or tool for the Board. He found that the Dialog for the Future and the Master Plan had question and answers that were very similar.

Motion: to adjourn, by M. Raphaelson

2nd: T. Creamer

Discussion: None

Vote: All in Favor

Adjournment at 9:30 PM