

PLANNING BOARD MINUTES

October 11, 2006

ROLL CALL:

Phil LoChiatto, Chairman – Present
Nancy Prendergast, Secretary – Excused
Ross McLeod, Regular Member – Present
Neelima Gogumalla, Alternate – Present
Margaret Crisler, Selectmen Member – Present
Ruth-Ellen Post, Vice Chairman – Excused
Walter Kolodziej, Regular Member – Present
Pam Skinner, Regular Member – Present
Rick Okerman, Alternate – Present
Alan Carpenter, Selectmen Alternate - Excused

STAFF:

Al Turner, Director of Planning and Development – Present

INVITED BOARDS/COMMITTEES:

Board of Selectmen

Dennis Senibaldi – Present

Conservation Commission

Jim Finn, Chairman – Present

Wayne Morris, Alternate – Present

Historic District Commission

Carol Pynn, Chairman – Present

OTHERS:

Susan Mesiti – Owner, Real Estate Results
Peter Zohdi – Applicant; Herbert Associates
Jack Tremblay – Landscape Architect
David Sullivan – Town Administrator

Mr. LoChiatto opened the meeting at 7:30 pm. Mr. Okerman replaced Ms. Prendergast. Ms. Gogumalla replaced Ms. Post.

PUBLIC MATTERS:

Village Center District Site Plan – Public Discussion

1 & 3 North Lowell Road and 21 Indian Rock Road – lots 11-A-580, 590 & 570

Staff: Overview; traffic calming; access ways; historic buildings – vitality and accessible; roundabout for traffic calming; elimination of parking in front of buildings; cross walk; parking relocated to rear and return area to its former “village green” status – grade, retaining wall. Board: Intent of workshop? Planning Board’s evaluation of the access way.

Applicant: Evolution of proposed access; geometry of roundabout; sight distance on N. Lowell Road heading south – minimum 400’; reduce parking between Town Hall and Building Dept.; increased landscaping.

Discussion: Width of roundabout; box trucks and school busses (large ones) can successfully navigate the roundabout; truck apron; concern about the required turns; concern about the location of the pond and the architecture of the Fellows House; pond location to be determined later; First Presbyterian Church property negotiations did not go anywhere; Woodstock (VT) village center layout as applicable to this site – road grade, width, green space relocated to between the lanes; existing offset leg; two-way stop signs; concern that a roundabout adds to the asphalt and makes the road take things over; removal of existing blacktop; roundabout would create a visual breakup of the blacktop; computer animation for demonstration purposes; narrowing of existing wide areas – conventional road is 28’ with 35’ radius, but this will be 25’ with smaller radius; concern that pavement would not be reduced but simply relocated.

Landscape Planner: Mission to renovate the Town Hall area to prior glory; existing asphalt detracts from current landscape; roundabout slows traffic; platform in center of roundabout for community announcements; particular plantings that would set off an image of Town Hall as time goes by (e.g., lilacs); flagpole centered on Town Hall axis; crosswalk; 4'-5' high wall at front edge of Town Hall by N. Lowell Rd.; use stones from property as hardscape features; row of cherry trees; keep landscaping away from Town Hall to allow it to stand out better.

Discussion: Proposed pond relocation areas; overhead utilities – applicant working the issue Oct 13; large evergreen in front of Armstrong Building to stay; emphasis on incorporating existing trees; maple trees; reuse of stones; relevant features of Newburyport that would translate – incorporation of parking and pedestrian movement; elimination of maintenance use from Building Dept. in order to maximize green space in front; existing Town Center and connection to the VCD; existing parking behind Bartley House and potential conversion to green space.

Linda Ouellette: Traffic stacking and impact on roundabout. Discussion: Comparison to existing conditions.

Paul Donovan: Proposed parking and leaking automotive fluids; containment; left-hand turn out of his property; elevated deck for Route 111. Discussion: Drainage study; underground stormwater management standards; NH DES, KNA; post-development not to exceed pre-development conditions; existing hazards of crossing Route 111 out of his property; Town hearing process on road; increased throat width and/or distinct turn lane for south on N. Lowell Road to westerly travel on Route 111; truck traffic that diverts from I-93 due to higher weight limits on the State road; discussion needed with the State; slowing of truck traffic may encourage alternate truck routes.

Linda Ouellette: Commercial site traffic. Discussion: Type of commercial use; timing of use and traffic; Route 111 and I-93 reconstruction projects; Wall Street connector would reduce traffic through Town; timing of projects.

Katherine Donovan: Concern with Derry's rotary; stacking of traffic on Church Road back to Route 111. Discussion: Rotary versus roundabout design features; merging of traffic; back and forth discussion on numbers of cars traveling through a light at one time and timing of waiting for traffic to clear a roundabout so that traffic can merge; slip lanes and turn lanes – Shaw's, NHDOT.

Sandra Higgins: Process of road dedication and Town versus private land. Discussion: Confirmation of process.

Mary Behl: Area of VCD. Discussion: Master Plan chart.

End of public discussion.

Discussion: Board opinions; McLeod: increases traffic calming, enhances the historic buildings, enhances pedestrian safety on North Lowell Road, optimizes access to the VCD; Pynn: concerns about future historic property-related developments; Okerman in favor, agrees with McLeod's comments; Gogumalla in favor; Crisler: concerned about west-bound traffic on Church Road slowing down, like the plan, good landscaping, likes the Fellows House reuse, beautiful work around Town Hall, likes buried utilities, explore how Mr. Donovan can exit his driveway; Finn: roundabout is a good idea, liked Crisler's comments; Kolodziej: doesn't see why Fellows House matters, thinks that the Planning Dept. has a severe case of roundabout-itis, doesn't see that accidents are happening, doesn't like roundabouts, wants stop signs, doesn't like the present configuration; LoChiatto: access point is probably the right place, central feel, integration of roundabout, understands why it is proposed in that location.

OLD/NEW BUSINESS:

Discussion: Staff recommendation #4 was left out of last week's motion. Mrs. Crisler motioned to reconsider the Gauthier Subdivision approval motion dated October 4, 2006. Mr. McLeod seconded. Passed 4:0:2; Mr. Kolodziej and Mr. Okerman abstained.

Mrs. Crisler motioned to approve the application dated 8/31/06 with the following conditions: 1) All property bounds shall be set prior to recording of the plan; 2) All state and federal approvals should be in place and submitted prior to recording the plan; 3) No parking along Smith Road; 4) No cut zone in the open space; 5) All covenant documentation shall be reviewed by the Town Attorney prior to recording the Gauthier Subdivision plan. Mr. McLeod seconded. Passed 5:1. Mr. Kolodziej opposed.

Mrs. Crisler motioned to recommend to the Selectmen to accept the \$1000 per lot donation from the applicant for the rail trail which meets the recreation requirement. Ms. Post seconded. Should the money go to the general recreation fund? Joe Gauthier, owner: Wanted to help out the rail trail project. Passed 6-0-1. Mr. Kolodziej opposed.

Request by Mr. Kolodziej for a motion to reconsider the donation motion. Discussion: applicant's prerogative; nexus; recreational use of funds; Selectmen's control. Request withdrawn.

Mr. Kolodziej motioned to adjourn. Mr. Okerman seconded. Passed 6:0. Meeting adjourned at 10:02 pm.

These minutes are in draft form and have not yet been reviewed and approved
Respectfully submitted, Ross McLeod