

**PLANNING BOARD
TOWN OF PETERBOROUGH, New Hampshire**

Minutes of October 10, 2011

Members Present: Chairman Leandra MacDonald, Barbara Miller, Tom Weeks, Ivy Vann, Bill Groff and Rick Monahan

Also Present: Carol Ogilvie, Director Office of Community Development, Laura Norton, OCD Administrative Assistant.

The Peterborough Planning Board held its regularly scheduled meeting on October 10, 2011 in the Selectmen's Meeting Room of the Town House. The meeting was called to order at 7:00 p.m. Chair MacDonald introduced the members and staff. She also noted the first item on the agenda (Public Hearing on the Cultural Resources Draft Chapter of the Master Plan) had been deferred to the next meeting and moved on to the second item which was an application for an Open Space Residential Development at 40 Powersbridge Road.

Robert Todd introduced himself noting "we were here last month and that time this project was in the conceptual stage." He went to note "we have come some distance from that time and feel with few exceptions (in the form of waivers) we have a complete application; at least I hope we do."

Mr. Todd reviewed the request pointing out the boundaries north and south of the property as well as the parameters of the conservation easement. He showed the members the approximate location of the proposed house in the exclusion area of the easement. He pointed out the existing home, the garage and caretaker's living quarters, the pool/dressing area and a shed "where the exclusion line goes right through." He noted the shed would most likely be razed as it "is not serving any real function at the present time." He also noted the metes and bounds in the pool area needed to be defined.

Mr. Todd explained "the objective is to create a new building on the site, a home for use by a family member." Mr. Todd reiterated the Board's advice during the conceptual and thanked them for their input "but the client did not go for that idea" he said. He explained "they were concerned that one lot would have too much of the exclusion area and depreciate the functionality of the remaining lot and buildings." He added "so they decided to go with an open space application, so that is the way we will go forward on it."

Mr. Todd pointed out the area for the septic system and reported favorable perk testing had been completed.

The members reviewed the graphic on the overhead and briefly discussed the criteria for an open space residential development. Mr. Todd pointed out the amount of developable land "that would have been available to set aside if the conservation easement had not been initiated."

The members briefly reviewed the acreage, the amount of developable land, and a calculation of the steep slope and wetlands. Mr. Todd also noted a subdivision approval for the new lot from the State Department of Environmental Services was pending. He also noted he was aware of the legal documents necessary for the common 320 foot shared driveway.

Chair MacDonald asked who held the easement on the property with Mr. Todd replying “the Society for Protection of New Hampshire Forests.” The members briefly discussed the Fire Department requirements as well as the protective radiuses and setback lines of the property. This discussion segued into a more detailed discussion on the open space residential development setback of no building being closer than 75 feet to the parameter of the tract and the minimum of 20 feet from one building to another.

Mr. Weeks asked “what is the concern of Fire Department in regards to driveway?” Mr. Todd pointed out the gravel service road that must be upgraded. Mr. Weeks asked about the width of the road with Mr. Todd noting “it is 12 feet wide and must have a maximum grade of 10% with room to be able to turn a fire truck around.” He also noted the driveway must be able to bear a 55,000 pound load.

Len Pagano introduced himself and noted a 15 foot width/55,000 pound load requirement for this project from the fire Department. He went on to note “this will cost my client hundreds if not thousands of dollars. It is not fair.” He went on to ask who else adhered to this same standard and asked if the requirement could be waived. Mr. Weeks noted a waiver could be requested “but it requires a report from the Fire Department, the Office of Community Development and the DPW. Those are the entities that can approve it.” A brief discussion about driveway standards followed.

Ms. Vann suggested the Board accept the application as complete but continue the application until all waiver requests and homeowner documents were submitted. A motion was made/seconded (Vann/Monahon) to do just that with all in favor. Chair MacDonald suggested they continue the application to their Monday night Workshop on October 17th. “We do not want to delay you but you need to get the details ironed out” she said with Mr. Todd replying “I am OK with that.” Mr. Todd also noted a problem on the plan with the contour lines noting a conflict with the regulation and asked if he could submit the plan with the just the boundary line while keeping the plan with both the contours and boundary line in the file at OCD. Chair MacDonald summarized the items the Board would be considering at the Workshop including the homeowner’s documents, a report on the driveway from the Fire Department, a waiver for the 75 foot setback from the road, clarification of the mete and boundary lines by the pool and a change in the contour lines on the plan.

The hearing closed at 7:30 p.m.

Conceptual Presentation on the Granite Block:

Stan Fry introduced himself and noted the conceptual also included the old Anderson Block (the building Steele’s Stationery is located in) adding “our hope is to inform you of what we would like to do and get input on the needs for taking the next step.”

Mr. Fry introduced Rob Finley and Cy Gregg as two other principals in the project. He also introduced Architect Jamie Pennington and his assistant Lisa Bissonette as well as hotel consultant Pelagia Vincent. He referred to a graphic of the Granite Block on the screen and noted “at first the thought was to rehab the building and put a small hotel there.” He went to say “there is a lot of impetus for doing that” citing the Depot Square shops and offices just down the street. “There is a lot going on and a lot of in town traffic and we’d like to get them to stay.” He also noted a small hotel would attract business people as well as creating a place for community events, receptions and business meetings. “The problem is parking” he said. He noted the purchase of a building just kiddy-corner and across the street would alleviate some of that problem “especially on weekends.”

Mr. Fry reiterated the initial thought to renovate the building “but that is not going to take place, we will have to reconstruct it.” He briefly mentioned the design reviews they have considered over the past year noting “we struggled with some issues and decided we would reuse the granite, reassemble it.”

Mr. Fry noted consultation with Hutter Construction as well as CBT Architects (an architectural firm from Boston that has done other hotels). He also noted “we also struggled with keeping the Boston look off the building” and keeping it looking like two buildings while the interior will be open.

When Chair MacDonald asked about height restrictions Mr. Fry was quick to reply “we are very sensitive about the steeple on the Town House and not causing (blocking) issues there.” Chair MacDonald then asked about the alley between Steele’s and the Carr Building with Mr. Pennington replying “it is public.” It was noted that Wall Street (they believed) was private “but not under the ownership of this group.” Chair MacDonald relied “this will be a sensitive construction process.”

Mr. Fry went onto explain some of the layout of the hotel. He noted “the community space and open function space is an important part of what we are doing with the hotel” adding “we currently have 39 guest rooms but that is subject to change.” Citing the graphic Mr. Fry pointed out the top floor as a lounge area with greenscape around it. Chair MacDonald asked about retail on the street level with Mr. Fry replying “just the Little’s (Steele’s) adding “we could use more space than what we have.” Mr. Fry also pointed out the location of the restaurant.

A brief discussion about the parking problems followed with Mr. Fry concluding “they are pretty significant.” He went on to note the “big issue of financing a project like this.” He noted “we thought one thing when we started, clearly we have struggled but we are hoping to solve the problems, we are working on it.”

Mr. Weeks noted the hotel would need 42 to 58 parking places “based on the number of rooms you want.” He also questioned accessible parking for the hotel. Ms. Vann asked if the parking requirements for the hotel were 24 hours/day with Mr. Weeks replying “it requires 1.2 spaces per room with no differentiation.” A brief discussion followed.

Mr. Pennington then did a walk through of the plans “on a detail level” for the Board. He reviewed the first floor at the level of Grove and Main Streets noting “this dictates the design of

the building” noting the accessibility guidelines. He went on to note “this is the starting point of how to redevelop the block.” Mr. Pennington told the members that Steele’s will retain the same footprint, a restaurant is slated for the corner of Main and Grove, and the hotel entrance will be off Grove Street by the Lawyer’s Offices. “That is a challenge” he said. He went on to note “even at this conceptual stage there has been a lot of work involved here.” He then moved through the levels of the structure.

He noted the building “is approximately 95 by 91 feet” adding “and virtually it will have an all new foundation.” He mentioned they had attended EDA and Greater Downtown TIF meetings to discuss the project “and know their goals for the downtown as well.”

A brief discussion about the public alley way and access to the back of the building as well as the sewer and drainage issues followed. The members also discussed the parking study done earlier in the year by Hoyle Tanner Associates. Mr. Fernald pointed out the difference in elevation from Wall Street to the lot “is about 3 feet” he said. Mr. Monahon noted that the HTA study “had addressed some of that “but there was still no net gain in parking, no *ah-ha* moments after it.” Ms. Vann noted “there has to be a rational way to manage it” with Mr. Pennington interjecting “well definitely a more aesthetic way.”

Chair MacDonald asked about access to the hotel not only for guests and visitors but also for receipt of deliveries and services. The brief discussion that followed included potential traffic patterns, access for services on a level below the first floor and internalization of storage and refuse containers.

Mr. Pennington reviewed the upper floor noting “these are less and less defined, we are looking for input.” He reviewed the access for the upper floor guest rooms and function areas. He pointed out the 5th floor penthouse with more guest rooms, a restaurant and outdoor lounge area. A discussion about the need for a height variance followed. Mr. Pennington concluded by reiterating the respect for the view of the Town House looking up Main Street. “We are very cognizant of that” he said.

Chair MacDonald thanked Mr. Pennington and asked about signage for the hotel. The discussion that followed included overhangs “existing but different” as well as “perhaps nonconforming.” Chair MacDonald noted “there is a lot of devil in the details you will have to work out.” The members also talked about potentially what would need a variance (height requirements) and what may be covered by site plan review (setbacks) with Mr. Monahon noting “we may need some legal support to decide what we can decide.”

On a side note Ms. Vann noted the windows on the Anderson Block “look like Boston windows to me. I know the Board has no say over the windows, it is just a comment.”

The members went on to discuss the construction schedule. They considered parking and traffic issues with Mr. Pennington noting they had met with the Police Chief to discuss traffic circulation through town as well as “off campus” parking for construction workers. He added “we have had a Hutter Construction representative at the meetings; we are quite sensitive to it.”

When asked about the length of time the cranes may be on site Mr. Pennington replied “it should be a short amount of time. We plan to have the material in place and use multiple cranes. The steel will go up fairly quickly.” Mr. Pennington also noted the use of warning signs that would update the construction schedule for the public.

Richard Fernald introduced himself and spoke briefly about accessing services from Wall Street. “What is *services* comprised of?” he asked. He also noted “we get in and out of work via Wall Street” and asked “has Jim Walsh been approached?” adding “he told me he has not heard from anyone for at least a year.” Mr. Fernald went on to note “We have owned the building for 45 years and have had no problems with parking. We have 12 spaces back there and it looks like you want to cut us down to 6.” Mr. Fernald concluded by noting his concern for “getting in and out” of their parking area. Chair MacDonald noted a definite need for construction sequencing stating “just from a safety point of view there will be a lot of things coming in and going out.”

Mr. Fry reiterated the parking study by HTA “did not really resolve anything” adding “unless we can solve these problems the project may be in jeopardy.” Mr. Monahan replied “you are right, there was no net gain in parking but it did provide organizational improvements.”

The members went on to briefly discuss parking in the downtown, the potential for parking space across the street at 45 Main Street, the minimum parking requirements per hotel room (1.2 spaces per room, the use of municipal spaces and overnight parking regulations. Mr. Fry concluded by noting “the reality is that there is not enough parking and we are asking the town to help us deal with that issue.” Ms. Miller noted the project would revitalize and improve the town. “It is a great project” she said.

The conceptual ended at 8:30 p.m.

Interested Planning Board candidates:

Four interested parties were in attendance. Each individual gave a brief biography and list of credentials to the Board. The candidates were Audrey Cass, Richard Clarke, Matt Waitkins and Joel Harrington.

Chair MacDonald gave a brief review of the role and responsibilities of being a member. “This is a very collegial board” she said “that tries to figure out how to make things work rather than putting road blocks in front of people.” She noted the conceptual that had just been presented was a good example of how the process should work. “They put everything on the table and we talk about it giving and taking input without commitment from either side.” She reviewed the meeting commitment of a monthly meeting and Workshop “as well as special meetings and the occasional site visit.” She also reviewed the Planning Board’s role and involvement with other town boards (CIP, TIFs, MPSC) as well as things such as the work plan for regulation review and special training opportunities for the Office of Energy and Planning and the LGC’s Municipal Law Lectures.

The available positions were clarified (two regular and four alternate seats) with Chair MacDonald noting “the first right of refusal for a full time seat should go to Mr. Groff.” Chair

MacDonald also strongly suggested the candidates consider an alternate position if they have no prior experience with a Planning Board.

Ms. Miller concluded by noting “obviously you care enough to give up time to volunteer, thank you very much. I hope we can find a place for each of you.” Ms. Vann agreed noting “gosh what a great crew.”

The meeting adjourned at 8:55 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Laura Norton,
Administrative Assistant