

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

Workshop Minutes of August 22, 2011

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

Staff Present: Carol Ogilvie, Director Office of Community Development; Laura Norton, OCD Administrative Assistant; Rodney Bartlett, DPW Director; Dario Carrara, Code Enforcement Officer; and Fash Farashahi, GIS Specialist.

Also Present: Craig Hicks.

The Peterborough Planning Board held a Workshop on August 22, 2011 in the Selectmen's Meeting Room of the Town House. The Workshop was called to order at 5:00 p.m. by Chair MacDonald who began with "let's get started, we have a workshop tonight and we want to look at zoning but first we are going to look at where it is possible to extend water and sewer and where it is not." Ms. Ogilvie added "we will be looking at the Family and General Residence Districts." Mr. Bartlett gave a brief overview of the new Waste Water Treatment Facility and reviewed the many iterations in its design. He noted the DES redesign for a new 20-year life in 2008 "so now we are out to 2028 for a design life." He reviewed the projections for growth rate (estimated at about 1% over the years), the facility completion date of December 2011 or January 2012 and full on-line operations by April 2012. A brief discussion about the location of and the future potential of the lagoons followed.

Mr. Bartlett also noted new regulations for drinking water "will make the South Well nearly impossible to bring back on line, we see that coming." He went on to explain cleaning solvents such as TCE and TCA "do not break down naturally" and create 1,4-dioxane (which has an acceptable range of 0.04 parts per billion). He noted that while the DES has not imposed regulations on the compound *yet*, the EPA has identified a 1/1000000 chance the material causes cancer "so they will," adding "when this comes to fruition the south Well will be done."

Mr. Farashahi projected a graphic that showed the current water and sewer lines with Mr. Bartlett noting "as you can see they pretty much follow Routes 101 and 202" pointing out the lines that run up Main and Union Streets; he added "remember Union Street was the old Route 101." Mr. Bartlett went on to point out the lime green line on the graphic as "the service elevation areas that can mathematically service a single family home." An explanation and discussion of the service elevation for downtown followed with Mr. Bartlett pointing out "you see by the lime green line there are many areas that could consider change, these areas will essentially fit" adding "outside the line would be limited and certainly expensive options."

Mr. Monahan in at 5:10 p.m.

Mr. Farashahi added the zoning districts overlay to the graphic and Mr. Bartlett reviewed the service elevation issues and areas where there is not enough pressure to pump the water through.

Chair MacDonald interjected “so it may be zoned that you can (extend town utilities) but you would not be able to.”

The members spent time reviewing the district map starting in the east in the Powersbridge Road/Rivermead area (including Sharon and Morison Road) and moving to the west, north and back to the downtown. They identified the end of service elevations, areas above the downtown service elevation and the current water tank locations. The members talked about examples of how and why utilities were expanded and reviewed the historic patterns of water and sewer in the downtown. The members also discussed decisions by the Planning Board to suggest and create zoning changes that would allow more density in the Family District by switching to public utilities.

Ms. Vann in at 5:25 p.m.

The members then discussed the proposed expansion of the Rivermead campus. Mr. Bartlett noted the new lines to service that complex “will go *around* the river or *over* the river or *under* the river at some point.” Ms. Vann suggested the group first look at where they would like to see greater density versus just where it might fit. She noted “south on (Route) 202 is a damn long way from downtown unless a new node with mixed use is created and you get a village.” Ms. Vann also briefly reiterated the idea of increased density in the downtown area. Chair MacDonald interjected “well not three-acre density; that is why we are looking at the whole map.” Ms. Vann replied “my point is that it not be exclusively residential, that there is mixed use” adding “it would be nice to have a corner store to be able to buy a quart of milk and some bread.” Chair MacDonald noted “the idea is to look for developable land.” The members reviewed the graphic again taking into account the intermixing of the blue, green and hatched areas for potential areas of utility extension and increased density. The members went from one area of town to the next discussing possibilities. One member noted “so much depends on what you are trying to get, you can spend a lot of money and not get very far.” Mr. Bartlett replied “you can always make it work mechanically.”

As the members moved to the west they briefly discussed a workforce housing conceptual presentation by Craig Hicks last July. One member asked about the status of that project with another replying “I think the nail was put in the coffin on that with the presentation done by the neighbors.” The members went on to discuss the Nubi River Neighborhood and its future potential as well as other specific lots identified by the members. They also briefly discussed the potential for pedestrian pathways and connectivity of neighborhoods.

The members went on to identify town owned land and a vast amount of land owned by the MacDowell Colony. In reference to the Catholic Church selling their land on High Street Mr. Hicks interjected “that was the last big piece of General Residence and now it is gone.”

The members moved to the north and discussed the Pine Ridge area. Mr. Bartlett pointed out public sewer in the upper section of the development with Mr. Weeks noting “Nichols Avenue is online and Pickard Road was part of Phase Four.” The group moved on to Southfield Village with Chair MacDonald noting “we might as well look at the Commerce Park while we are here.”

Mr. Hicks (who had requested a discussion with the Board about the district) replied “that is why I am sitting here.”

After a brief discussion about the transition to the new Waste Water Treatment Plant and the eventual draining of the lagoons, removal of the dikes and re-grading of the site, Chair MacDonald suggested they conclude their conversation and move on to the Commerce Park.

Mr. Hicks noted “I have two questions to start a conversation.” He gave a brief history of the district noting “I’ve paid more on taxes than I paid for it.” Mr. Hicks noted the district allows mixed use adding “it allows just about anything but has attracted nothing.” Chair MacDonald noted “we worked with you to develop the parameters (of the district)” with Mr. Hicks replying “I know that” adding “I have looked at corporate housing to warehousing and it ain’t happening.” Mr. Monahan noted his concern of reducing the amount of commercial or industrial land in order to make more residential land. “I don’t agree with that” he said. Mr. Hicks replied “but it is my nickel not anybody else’s and nothing is coming to town.”

In reference to Robbe Farm Mr. Hicks noted he would like to develop another neighborhood adding “but it would need more density than even that.” Chair MacDonald noted “maybe we could revisit the cluster regulations” Ms. Vann added “that would give us a good opportunity to take a piece of land and talk about it.” Mr. Hicks concluded by noting he would look forward to coming back to hear the Board’s ideas. Mr. Monahan noted the Board would look at the feasibility of what is possible. Chair MacDonald noted the Contact Sensitive Solutions approach used in West Peterborough. “It looks beautiful up there and no terrible, horrible things have happened as a result that I know of.” The members agreed it would be a good opportunity to take the district and talk about it as an example. Ms. Vann noted that with Mr. Hicks’ permission they could run exercises “and see what we come up with” adding we’ll have to see what fits with the topography, what is down there, and the notion of creating a North Village node.” Another member noted a large apartment complex and condominium development in the area with Mr. Hicks interjecting “there are two large schools, and you can’t buy gas on that side of town.”

Mr. Hicks gave his opinion of the shopping conditions in town and noted “there is a lot of money going out of town because you can’t shop here” adding “we have walked away from a lot of opportunity. Not to mention what we are doing environmentally by driving out of town. The fact of the matter is we limit ourselves, people should not have to drive to Timbuktu to do their shopping.” He pointed out the success of Keene, New Hampshire’s development of the Monadnock Market Place and how it did just the opposite of killing their downtown as it actually attracted more merchants to the downtown. Mr. Hicks went on to note “the *we don’t want to rob downtown* is an obsolete argument” adding he was thankful for the Board’s consideration noting “nothing ventured nothing gained. I ask you to use your brains and decide on what you can stomach and what you cannot.” He reiterated the natural setting of the left of Commercial Park for commercial and the right for housing. He added “I will guarantee I will sit on some of it but I have to do something with it. It is this group’s job to bring potential and everyone else’s job to actually do it.” Ms. Vann again noted she would be happy to sit with the map “take out my little monopoly houses and see what we come up with.”

The members briefly discussed elevations and excavation with Mr. Hicks noting the potential of a north entrance (Route 202) to the Peterborough Players location. Mr. Hicks concluded by thanking the members and saying “there are two blank pieces of land right now that are not doing much and an owner who is willing to work with you.”

A very brief discussion about the potential of the sand pit south of the downtown and property on Mercer Avenue (both within the Village Commercial District and walking distance to the Plazas) followed.

In regards to the sand pit area one member asked about its status with Ms. Ogilvie reviewing the process of yearly inspections and writing a report for the file. “There has not been any activity there in two years” she said. A brief discussion about excavation incidental to the project (the owner said he was planning to build a grocery store/shopping center) followed. The discussion included protection from excavation and reclamation privileges for the town. Ms. Ogilvie noted “excavation is not permitted as incidental without all other permits in hand; it has to be a real project for it to be permitted.” It was noted the excavation permitting was granted with a formal permit through §155-E or through Site Plan. The members briefly discussed commercial excavation and restoration. As the members briefly talked about the activity of other sand pits in town it was noted that there was not a definition listed for excavation. Ms. Vann interjected “there may be no definition but we know what it is when we see it.”

In closing Mr. Groff asked about the decision regarding the subdivision request for Taggart Farm. He specifically asked about the easement and if it had been deeded. Mr. Monahon explained “it was written up and submitted to us Bill. It left a funny taste in my mouth, same as you.” The members briefly discussed the fact that no institution with a life beyond Ms. Clement’s sister Margaret existed. The members agreed that an easement of this kind “is not worth much.” Mr. Groff noted his concern that the condominium owners were not a part of the decision. “I think the owners should have the ability to enforce it.” Mr. Monahon replied “amen to that” adding “usually it is a part of the deed.” Ms. Vann noted “I think that for it to go in perpetuity you have to have a permanent recipient.” One member asked “why not Casalis?” (Casalis State Forest) with Ms. Ogilvie reminding the member the applicants did not want any logging done “and the state won’t take it with that clause.”

Chair MacDonald concluded by noting “the condo thing drives me nuts” adding “I don’t understand why it is advantaged, I don’t want to disadvantage it but the way it is now is not right.”

The Workshop concluded at 6:53 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Laura Norton,
Administrative Assistant