

## PLANNING BOARD

### TOWN OF PETERBOROUGH, NH

Minutes of September 11, 2017

**Members Present:** Chair Ivy Vann, Ed Juengst, Bob Holt, Jerry Galus, Rich Clark and Joe Hanlon

**Staff Present:** Peter Throop, Director and Laura Norton, Administrative Assistant, Office of Community Development

Chair Vann called the meeting to order at 6:30 p.m. and introduced the members and staff. “This is our regularly scheduled Monday night meeting and we have two things on the agenda tonight she said.

#### **Preliminary Conceptual Consultation:**

Regarding a proposal to construct Riverwalk Park, a 60-space parking facility, access driveway, and pedestrian park with a bridge across the Nubanusit River. The project will be accessed off Grove Street and constructed on land owned by the Town of Peterborough, Parcel No. U017-023-100.

Chair Vann noted Town Administrator Rodney Bartlett was present to review the project. Mr. Throop interjected the consultation had been noticed as a public hearing “but it is a design review and it will then will go to Minor Site Plan Review for approval when we get there.” Mr. Throop also noted some drainage plan issues yet to be resolved.

Mr. Bartlett began by noting the project had been under consideration for a fairly long time. “Over a year to design the parking lot, Depot Park access and the bridge over the brook” he said. He told the members Silvia Benedito of OFICINAA had designed the project “and the materials and associated costs are more than what the budget has.”

Projecting several slides Mr. Bartlett reviewed the 60-space lot telling the members he was going to the Conservation Commission next week and was in the process of setting up meetings with the Parks Commission as well. He pointed out the amenities leading to the bridge over the brook and into the park. He briefly reviewed the method in which the lot would be marked for parking, the grading and storm water designs as well as landscaping (seeding, planting, boulder crack planting, shrubs and trees) and lighting (two tall parking lot lights in the center

with downward lighting and bollard style along the walkway) while reiterating the plan to seek alternative means of funding (not town funds) to make up the deficit for the project. "There are some challenges" he said.

Mr. Bartlett then reviewed the site development plans submitted to the town by Hoyle & Tanner Associates which included site and utility plans, drainage and erosion control, roadway plan and construction details. He told the members the lot surface would consist of a course gravel stone surface. "Eliminating the hard surface helps get us back on budget. We'll consider a hard surface in the future" he said.

As Mr. Clark questioned the boulder planting Mr. Bartlett noted the boulders were cut and then ground back together on site with plantings set into them. He noted the architect's desire to reflect the raw stone seen in and around the Downtown. "Silvia's goal is to play on that theme" he said. Mr. Clark replied "cutting them in half sounds ridiculous to me." Mr. Bartlett concluded "there is certainly a lot of financial conversation going on."

Concerned with New England winters Mr. Galus asked about course stone as a surface on the parking lot. Mr. Bartlett explained the lot could be plowed. "It would be just like a gravel road, done with small trucks" he said adding "it is another challenge but it can be accommodated."

Mr. Juengst interjected "my thought, when push comes to shove regarding money is that the Town voted for a parking lot and a bridge, and if something has to go it should be the amenities." Mr. Galus asked "what about trees? Don't we like trees?" Mr. Bartlett reiterated the landscape architect's focus on the amount of rock used in the Downtown (round rock to cut granite) and bringing that into the parking lot and down to the edge of the river. Chair Vann interjected "I spoke in favor of the lot but I would be very disappointed if all we get is an asphalt lot so I am all for the boulders."

Moving on to the bridge across the Nubanusit River Mr. Bartlett projected a slide of a bridge constructed of post-tensioned granite from KUSSER, a company headquartered in Germany. He pointed out the slimmer design compared to a typical reinforced-concrete bridge and explained how the bridge was anchored. "It is slab of non-slip stone put in place with a crane. Its unique aspect is it is post-tensioned granite with steel rods and bolts on a parabolic curve." He added "the maintenance is dramatically limited, their references has been checked and there is a one-year guarantee to have it in place." Mr. Bartlett concluded by noting "it is an attractive combination of looks and strength."

Mr. Clark asked how the (granite) slabs fit together with Mr. Bartlett replying “it is my impression that there is a single slab” He went on to say new abutments would be placed on each side of the river for the bridge. Mr. Clark asked about any climate concerns with Mr. Bartlett noting “they are resilient in a cold weather environment, absolutely.” Mr. Galus pointed out what appeared to be an observation deck area. Mr. Bartlett confirmed the deck area and that is was included in the original \$250,000.00

Chair Vann opened the preliminary to the audience. Peter LaRoche introduced himself and asked about the two tall lights in the center of the parking lot. “60-feet is a long way to go at night” he said. Mr. Bartlett assured him the plan was not completed. “We will have more lighting analysis” he said. Cynthia Nichols of the Conservation Commission introduced herself and asked about the vegetative buffer along the river. Mr. Bartlett noted nothing would be done with the buffer until next spring “when we will have sufficient time to do a walk through and see how things fit.” Ms. Nichols then asked about the surface of the walkway with Mr. Bartlett replying “it will be concrete.”

With no other questions Chair Vann asked the members “so, are we comfortable sending this to Minor Site Plan or would you like to see it again?” (Mr. Galus was the only member who expressed interest in seeing it again). “So we are getting there with the design and the cost of design as one might image” said Chair Vann adding “we did the work to get the art, then by God we should get the art.” Mr. Clark replied “I am pretty sure we wanted a *parking lot*.” Mr. Juengst added “that is what the people voted for.”

### **Preliminary Conceptual Consultation:**

Regarding a proposed use of the Traditional Neighborhood Overlay Zone II for the construction of 21 single-family homes, to be located on land owned by 161 Wilton Road, LLC located off Church Street, Parcel No. U019-001-100. This proposal would *replace* a 24-unit multi-family residential development previously approved for this lot, but never constructed.

Jack Belletete introduced himself along with Peter LaRoche as he distributed a plan set to the members.

As he did so Chair Vann reminded everyone “this is a conceptual design consultation that is being brought before us so that we might offer advice.” She also noted a problem with the Driveway Standards and the use of the Traditional Neighborhood Design Overlay II (TND II). “Driveway Standards are their own animal” she said adding “and it is not clear how the driveway standards are applied

in this overlay” (given the reduced frontage of 50 feet). She went on to say “driveways belong to the Department of Public Works (DPW) and they need to suggest a design standard for this project.”

Mr. Belletete began by noting a site plan the Board had approved two years ago for 24 units on his parcel off NH Route 101. “Then along came TND II” he said and noted his interest in applying the regulation to his development. “I want to have separate single family houses” he said adding “condos are a lot of work and this way people would be allowed to have a small unit on their own property so they can control their property.” He mentioned a housing association that would establish rules to live by noting “may be that could be done with deed restrictions or stipulations, I don’t know but something to protect the value of the neighborhood would be established.” He told the members the road would be built to town standards and given to the town. Mr. Throop interjected “so you are proposing a public road?” “Yes” replied Mr. Belletete.

Mr. Belletete then presented a graphic of a model house for his project and began to review the typical unit. Chair Vann immediately interjected “I must remind you that we require the garages to be back 20 feet from behind the front building line of the house. That is what the design standards say.” A brief discussion about the setback of the garage and how parking a car in the front yard changes the way a neighborhood feels. “There is a reason the design standards exist and I would really like to see them stepped back” she said. Mr. Belletete replied “is that required?” Quoting the regulation Mr. Holt read “parking spaces or garages must be located at the rear of the lot unless the applicant can demonstrate that it is either not reasonable or feasible to create a parking area in the rear. If a garage cannot be located in the rear of the lot, it must be located 20 feet behind the front building line of the house.” Chair Vann interjected “and we *do* encourage shared driveways.” Noting his displeasure and that the requirement did not lend itself well with his design Mr. Belletete said “I agree to disagree but we will redesign them.” “There are ways to manage this” said Chair Vann adding “this is a thing, that is why we are here to remind you what we care about. We feel strongly about it.” From the audience Mr. LaRoche interjected “you feel strongly about it.” Chair Vann concluded “others feel strongly about it as well.”

Mr. Juengst asked about additional costs. “Part of this concept of new zoning is to make houses more affordable. We need to be aware of what we are doing.” Chair Vann replied “well there are plenty of other reasons we enacted this zoning besides small affordable housing.”

As a builder, Mr. Belletete noted stepping back the garages and shared driveways were a negative when trying to sell homes. Mr. LaRoche pointed out the Planning

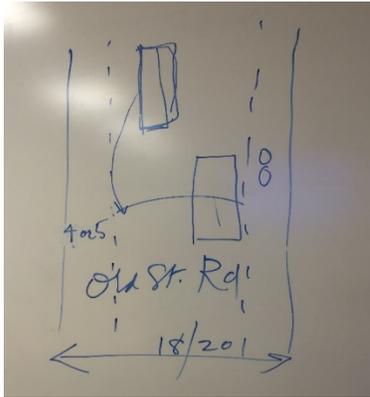
Board has seen several home owners come back to the Board to divide shared drives. Mr. Belletete told the members “we have 21 units here, is there any latitude to have some of the garages less than 20 feet from the front building line of the house?” Chair Vann replied “you can move the house forward” adding “the setback requirement is that dwellings shall be set back at least 2 feet but not more than 20 feet from the front property line.” She went on to note they required and got these setbacks from a development recently completed on Vine Street. “I don’t think we would be wildly enthusiastic in waiving this” she said. Mr. Belletete told Chair Vann he knew where she was coming from but did not necessarily agree with her. Mr. LaRoche added “everybody wants a little front yard.”

Chair Vann took a moment and said “I am not sure this is the most effective way to think about it” adding “we need to think about the street as a space created by the front of the buildings, where the buildings create a regularity. Worrying about all the buildings being the same distance from the street in not a place to put your worry.” She went on to say “the point is flexibility with lot sizes and the noted diversity of how you treat the front of the house. Regularity built into projects in the beginning brings a neighborhood together.”

Mr. Belletete went on with his review of the project telling the members “rectangular works best, a master on the first floor with a second bedroom upstairs.” Chair Vann replied “the challenges of that suggests that will not be in keeping the price down.” Mr. Belletete projected a photograph of several homes in a residential condominium development in Jaffrey, New Hampshire called Coburn Woods. “This is similar to what we want to do” he said adding “this is a matured subdivision and you will notice the garages are not set back 20 feet.” “Right, and I think that is a problem” replied Chair Vann. Mr. Belletete noted it would be difficult to stay in the range of \$250,000 and below with so many restrictions. Chair Vann replied “I have some designs I will share with you.” Mr. Holt offered “you don’t have to build a garage on every lot.” Shaking her head local Realtor Heather Peterson interjected “that would *not* be good, especially with no basement.”

With no other questions Chair Vann thanked Mr. Belletete for his revised plan. “I was not a fan of the original plan you proposed.” “I know” replied Mr. Belletete. Mr. Throop raised a question about whether the revised project would provide a sidewalk as was approved in the prior plan. Chair Vann added “it still needs a sidewalk.” A brief and colorful discussion about sidewalks followed with Chair Vann in favor of them (no pedestrian access, no pedestrians), Mr. Belletete not seeing the need (“there are no sidewalks on Church Street, it would be a sidewalk to nowhere”), Mr. LaRoche was in agreement adding “there are no sidewalks on (Route) 101” with Mr. Juengst agreeing sidewalks were not necessary and only

added to the overall cost.



Chair Vann went to the white board and sketched this drawing to show a technique for striping roads to promote traffic calming as well as safer spaces for pedestrians and bicyclists. She explained she'd learned this strategy at a recent NNECAPA Conference and the approach had been implemented in Hanover, New Hampshire and in parts of Maine and Europe.

The drawing itself shows an example of a road 20 feet in width with 4 or 5 foot isles lined out on both sides for pedestrians and bicyclists creating borders for those populations versus vehicles “and calms traffic at the same time” she said adding “you just have to make sure you have enough room before striping the road.”

Mr. Belletete asked about any other criteria with Chair Vann noting “you meet the setbacks, and be the less than 40% maximum lot coverage. My Throop asked if the site included any land area within the Ground Water Protection Overlay District.” Mr. Belletete replied “There is no groundwater overlay involved.” She did note they needed to make a recommendation to the DPW for the driveways for this project. “I'd like to see a 10-foot paved width but we could go to 12 feet if Rodney thinks that is too narrow” she said. After a more discussion on setbacks, separation standards (and how they are measured) and one versus two-car garages Chair Vann said “let's make a recommendation for a 10-foot width paved width 15 feet at the street for this project only.” Mr. Throop interjected is that minimum, maximum or absolute?” “Absolute” replied Chair Vann adding “and parking will be tandem, not side by side. 50 feet of frontage does not allow for that. Driveways belong to DPW so we need to make the recommendation on how to handle this project.” She concluded by noting “I would like to get a sense of the Board and ask for a show of hands supporting a driveway 10-foot wide (15 feet at the street) for this project only. Chair Vann, Mr. Holt, Mr. Galus and Mr. Juengst raised their hands. Chair Vann noted “the point is to increase density in a way that is not destructive to the character of the neighborhood. Asphalt belongs to cars, the more asphalt in a place, the more it belongs to cars. The advantage to require narrower driveways is that it equates to less car space and more grass, gravel and people.” Mr. Juengst added “and if these are one-car garages why would you want to make them wider?”

“That is just it, we have to make decisions that are better for the town as a whole. It is a pain but it is not about more cars it is about more people. That is what we have

been asked to do” said Chair Vann. Mr. Galus interjected “I wonder about variability” with Mr. Clark adding “it just seems so controlling.”

Mr. Bartlett asked Mr. Clark “what is the average width for a garage right now?” Mr. Clark replied “ten feet and pave to match the door.” Chair Vann repeated “10 feet and pave to match the door.” Mr. Holt interjected if you want to build like this it comes with design standards.” Mr. Clark replied “*that* is a reasonable argument right there.”

Mr. Throop concluded “the ordinance offers higher density with shorter frontage. We have got to be able to tell the applicant how to meet that frontage.”

**Minutes:**

A motion was made/seconded (Galus/Hanlon) to approve the Minutes of August 14, 2017 as written with all in favor.

Mr. Throop reminded the members about the public workshop at the Library (September 13th at 6:30 p.m.) to discuss the TND I and TND II. “Their differences and how to combine them” said Chair Vann. Mr. Juengst told the members he would be on vacation for the meetings in October and asked if another select board member could step in for him as the Board of Selectmen Liaison. Mr. Throop replied he was not sure and that he would check into it.

Mr. Throop concluded by updating the members on the Cobb Condominium application. “There were no site changes so under the Board’s rules, it can be approved administratively” he said.

**Next Meeting:**

October 9, 2017

The meeting adjourned at 8:10 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Laura Norton

Administrative Assistant