

PLANNING BOARD
September 27, 2016
Memorial Hall

Members Present: William Ritter, Otto Lies, John Michalak, Robert Ricker, Tina Stratis, Scott Carlson, Jeff Head

Staff Present: Pam Harding, Director, Liz Fotos, Town Recorder

W. Ritter called the meeting to order at 7:03PM

PUBLIC HEARING- Definitive Subdivision- Greenwood Estates- Jackson Woods Development, LLC

C. Blair, Jackson Woods Development and Julian Votruba, NE Environmental Design were present at the meeting. They asked for an extension of time as the plans were not finished.

W. Ritter asked when they were going to be finished.

C. Blair replied they would be done on Tuesday, October 4, 2016. He stated that they had working with Town Engineering to ensure that everything was correct and they had worked through all the issues prior to submission.

W. Ritter asked how long the Town would need to review the plans.

P. Harding stated that it was a large subdivision and suggested three weeks to a month. I. McCauley agreed.

The Board discussed the date of the Planning Board meeting in November. November 29, 2016 was decided.

P. Harding suggested requiring the applicant to re-notify the public the public of the hearing as a lot of time has passed. C. Blair agreed.

Motion by O. Lies, seconded by J. Michalak, it was UNANIMOUSLY APPROVED EXTENDING THE PUBLIC HEARING FOR DEFINITIVE SUBDIVISION; GREENWOOD ESTATES, JACKSON WOODS DEVELOPMENT, LLC TO NOVEMBER 29, 2016 WITH THE FILING DATE OF DECEMBER 14, 2016.

EXTENSION OF TIME- OAK HILL DEFINITIVE SUBDIVISION SPECIAL PERMIT- OPEN SPACE AND RESIDENTAIL DESIGN// AJ LANE DEVELOPMENT

Robert Langden representative for Oak Hill Subdivision was present at the meeting. He stated that he was requesting an extension of time. He stated that the way that the

subdivision approval read was that if the improvements on the plans were not completed within 36 months the subdivision approval would be rescinded. He stated that he had filed a request for extension believing that there would be two meeting in October and was incorrect. He stated that it was his understanding that as of October 8, 2016 the application would be rescinded and that the developer could take no further action until a new application was filed and approved.

R. Langden stated they were requesting a short extension of time so this did not happen. He stated they were requesting an extension of about thirty days to the October 25, 2016 meeting in order to keep the approval valid until the Board could consider a public hearing. He stated that no one would be prejudiced by the extension because there would be no change in plans and that this matter was procedural rather than substantive. He stated that the subdivision was progressing well and 37 lots have been sold. He stated that the quality of the subdivision and the homes was not an issue either.

P. Harding stated that historically the Board had gone by receipt date but that she spoke to Town Counsel and they did not see any issue for a thirty day extension.

W. Ritter stated that the Board uses such strong language to encourage developers to be diligent and ensure that things are done in a timely manner. He stated that he believes Mr. Langden has been conscientious and suggested moving forward with this extension.

P. Harding stated that they have no objection and that the development has been proceeding well.

Motion by J. Michalak, seconded by J. Head, it was UNANIMOUSLY VOTED TO APPROVE THE EXTENSION OF TIME FOR OAK HILL DEFINITIVE SUBDIVISION SPECIAL PERMIT FOR OPEN SPACE AND RESIDENTIAL DESIGN AJ LANE DEVELOPMENT UNTIL SUCH TIME THAT A DECISION IS RENDERED FOR THE PUBLIC HEARING.

APPROVAL NOT REQUIRED- R-40 Cannon Road Edward Leahy

P. Harding stated that they were taking one lot and dividing it into two.

Motion by R. Ricker, seconded by J. Head, it was UNANIMOUSLY VOTED TO APPROVE THE APPROVAL NOT REQUIRED FOR R-40 CANNON ROAD EDWARD LEAHY.

SUBDIVISION CONTROL REGULATIONS Road Width

P. Harding stated that I. McCauley and C. DeMoranville, DPW had prepared information from Mass Highway and other Towns subdivisions regarding road widths.

W. Ritter asked if the Board any question or concerns regarding 24FT road widths. He asked about the practical applications of plowing, maintenance, people parking or anything else.

I McCauley stated that they understand that there is a limitation if there are vehicles parked on both sides of the road and they did look at emergency access. She provided the Board with memo that provides information about different projects in addition to Mass Highways design use and Complete Streets information. She stated after looking at all this information, they are recommending 12FT travel lanes for the purpose of these subdivisions in residential neighborhoods. She stated they are recommending two 12FT travel lanes, berms, grass buffer, and sidewalks.

I McCauley stated that the benefits of having a smaller footprint is that it is going to encourage people to drive slower, less impact to stormwater by reducing impervious surface, and the narrower roads are better/ easier for town maintenance. She stated that DPW feels as though there are a lot of benefits to the 24ft roadways and that they feel as though the Board should consider the change.

I McCauley stated that they do recognize that there are some not so good situations that could occur with the more narrow road but they feel that the likelihood of them happening is not enough to make the roadways larger. She stated that they have information about some towns that have gone to as narrow as 22FT feet and they do okay as well. She stated in an emergency, vehicles can also use the grassy area if needed.

S. Carlson stated that he thinks that this is great in ideal conditions but he does not believe that the developments that are left are quality land. He stated that the developments were steeper and had more difficult land. He stated that in good terrain, he felt as though that width would be fine but with the high terrain, snow conditions, curves, moving trucks, and other things would be problematic and a wider road would at least provide some flexibility. He stated that as a town, he questions the bigger developments and thinks that they should be reviewed.

I McCauley stated that her opinion is that if you make a road wider and it is steeper you will encourage faster driving.

The Board discussed various widths of streets in town.

I McCauley stated that this change is being recommended for residential roads only, not connector or higher volume roads.

J. Michalak stated that he agreed with S. Carlson but not just about grading about curves as well. He stated that he does not think there is a one size fits all approach and by changing the roads to 24FT they will lose the ability to get wider roads if needed. He stated that looking through the information that was provided, it looked as though some of the towns used ranges. He asked how that worked.

J. Michalak stated that he thought that when you considered roadway widths you should also consider the curve of the road as well. He stated that he thinks that they should look to design to the MA DOT Complete Street standards and also look at bike standards when reviewing the widths.

R. Ricker stated that he thinks that they have made some valid points with the range. He stated that he did not want to mix the issues too much but he felt that if they don't require sidewalks and there are narrower streets there could be issues as well. He asked what the fire chief recommendation was.

P. Harding stated that he was worried about snow fall and being plowed curb to curb. He wanted to evaluate it more thoroughly through the winter.

W. Ritter asked if there was any concern for the waivers that were currently given.

P. Harding replied that there were not and that they had done one side of the street parking at his request.

J. Head stated that he agreed with J. Michalak about looking at the conditional access and analyzing what the best width is at a certain location.

P. Harding stated that some of the range was done by pavement width based on the number of lots that they service.

W. Ritter asked if it was based on the number of lots on the street or the number of lots in the subdivision.

P. Harding stated she was not sure.

J. Head stated that another concern was bigger trucks with larger items come to peoples homes now. He stated they may need to look at that as well.

O. Lies stated that a few meetings ago they spoke about categorizing the roads. He asked about the length of the cul de sacs and if those would also be made more narrow. He asked if that changed would it give developers more space for more lots.

W. Ritter stated that he thinks the consensus is that the members would like to experience a winter with narrower streets and get more input from the Fire Department. He also asked P. Harding to look at how other towns approach ranges of street width.

W. Ritter stated that if both the town and the developers both wanted narrower streets then the Board would be seeing more waivers for that. He stated that he thinks they need clear communications from the subdivision standards so developers know what to expect.

J. Michalak stated that maybe they could look into both different classifications of roads in addition to a range based on number of houses or lots.

I McCauley stated that some roads seemed wider because they were in more open spaces. She stated that there were towns with more narrow roads as well and trucks are able to pass as well. She stated that the more residential the neighborhood the more appropriate it was to do this. She stated that curves could come into play as well.

S. Carlson asked about the amount of people and growth in town and how that impacted the roads.

I McCauley stated that towns were going to get bigger but that it does not impact your residential areas too much. She stated that volume will be added on collector roads but the smaller residential roads would not be impacted.

R. Ricker asked if the new subdivisions would be cut throughs.

I McCauley said they would not. She said that they may need to define the roads a little better. She stated that she thinks that having a travel lane or shoulder may be needed to accommodate other types of roads but this would just be for your smaller roads. She stated that the number of homes could be a cut off but possibly look at the slopes in the neighborhoods as well.

O. Lies asked about what type of curb they were discussing.

P. Harding replied Cape Cod.

W. Ritter asked P. Harding to leave road width on the agenda so the Board could continue discussions throughout the winter and once they had more information on the ranges.

Cul De Sac

W. Ritter stated that the Town did not want islands in Town for plowing and maintenance purposes.

P. Harding stated that plans usually come in with the island but the Town asks them to be removed.

W. Ritter asked if anyone wanted to leave the islands in. O. Lies stated that he did.

S. Carlson asked if there was any advantage to the developers to do this; did they get extra lots.

R. Ricker stated that he did not think there would be any extra lots.

I McCauley stated that the width would be kept at a 50FT radius.

J. Michalak stated that was the fire truck turning radius. I. McCauley agreed.

O. Lies stated he liked the islands because they were ascetically pleasing.

T. Stratis stated there were a lot that were not maintained. She stated they were nice if they were maintained but otherwise they were an eyesore.

J. Head asked if they did not have the cul de sac to but the snow in where would the snow go.

I McCauley stated snow would plowed evenly across the abutters property.

W. Ritter asked the Board what their thoughts were. O. Lies and J. Head stated that they liked them and were opposed to removing them. W. Ritter asked P. Harding to keep that on the agenda for future discussion.

Retaining Walls

W. Ritter stated that they want to make the rules pertaining to retaining walls more clear in the bylaws.

R. Ricker stated this was a no brainer and that it is a burden to the town once it becomes town property.

P. Harding stated that retaining walls would not be approved if they were in the right of way. She stated that applicants are putting them outside the right of way but the Town does not want an HOA maintaining something that is supporting public streets.

O. Lies asked if they could do a certain setback requirement.

P. Harding replied that the Town does not want them. She stated that there has been subdivisions that have been able to grade out the slopes and eliminate the walls. She stated that there were 20FT high retaining walls proposed in some places that are supporting public roads but are being maintained by HOA's. She stated they did not want them at all to support a public road.

W. Ritter stated that the one at the Big Y plaza was problematic and it had to be taken down and redone within a year.

R. Ricker stated that they were going to see more walls because there was more difficult land.

W. Ritter suggested adding something to the regulation that allowed the Board to deny a plan if there was a wall built to support the public way.

J. Michalak asked for an example of a failing wall in town.

I McCauley replied Vista Circle had one that was over 20FT high.

P. Harding stated the Oaks of Holden had one as well.

W. Ritter asked of the consensus on retaining walls. The Board agreed and kept the matter on for a future meeting.

Submission Requirements

R. Ricker stated he felt this was something the Town should have. He stated that they should be able to have a developer be required to show the Board what they want to do and come in with an conceptual plan that would show all the walls, roads and everything. He stated this would be a minimal expense to the developer and then they could make any necessary changes on the plans rather than waiting for the expensive prelim plans that could cost \$20,000 to \$40,000. He stated the developer would be more prone to make changes if they knew about them before they spent a lot of money. He stated he felt it was very development friendly and he thought it was an important change.

P. Harding stated she didn't know if the Town could require a conceptual plan but they could encourage it.

R. Ricker stated that he thought other towns did that.

P. Harding stated they could make it more beneficial to the developer to do one.

J. Michalak asked if they could tie it to waiver requests.

P. Harding stated she was not sure but would look into it.

R. Ricker stated from conceptual plan it would only then be sewer and water.

P. Harding stated that they did a preliminary plan for Salisbury Street and it was to the developers benefit to get input from the Board at the beginning phases.

J. Michalak asked if the Town used electronic submittals.

P. Harding stated they did not.

OPEN SPACE AND RESIDENTIAL DESIGN BYLAW Review of CMRPC Recommendations

P. Harding stated that this was an ongoing item.

W. Ritter stated that he believes the Board is thinking about reducing or eliminating the density bonus.

O. Lies asked if they could look at the setback requirements as well.

W. Ritter added that he wanted to look at frontage too.

S. Carlson stated he was interested in the lot size to the house size.

O. Lies asked if there was some sort of foot print formula that they could come up with pertaining to the amount of land to the house size.

W. Ritter asked P. Harding to keep this on the agenda so they could look at density bonus, side and front setbacks, and frontage.

WACHUSETT VALLEY ESTATES RELEASED OF COVENANT AND BOND-GREENSTONE PROPERTIES, LLC

Motion by R. Ricker, seconded by J. Head, it was UNANIMOUSLY VOTED TO REDUCE THE BOND TO 134,939.67 FOR PHASE I OF WACHUSETT VALLEY ESTATES/GREENSTONE PROPERTIES AND RELEASE THE COVENANT FOR PHASE I.

BUILDING PERMIT- Phased Growth Bylaw

P. Harding provided the Board with the reports regarding the building permits. She stated she also had provided them with last months reports for all buildings for information purposes.

S. Carlson asked about the rule on larger developments and permits.

P. Harding replied that it was based on the amount of lots in the development. She stated it was separated by the size of the subdivision.

APPROVAL OF MINUTES

Motion by R. Ricker, seconded by S. Carlson, it was VOTED TO APPROVE THE JULY 26, 2016 PLANNING BOARD MEETING MINUTES BY A VOTE OF 5-0-2 (Ritter: abstain, Head: abstain).

Motion by T. Stratis, seconded by R. Ricker, it was VOTED TO APPROVE THE AUGUST 23, 2016 PLANNING BOARD MEETING MINUTES BY A VOTE OF 5-0-2 (Michalak: abstain; Lies: abstain).

Misc.

W. Ritter stated that there was no meeting on October 11, 2016 and the next meeting would be held on October 25, 2016.

W. Ritter stated that the November meeting would be on November 29, 2016.

Motion by S. Carlson, seconded by R. Ricker, it was UNANIMOUSLY VOTED TO
ADJOURN THE SEPTEMBER 27, 2016 PLANNING BOARD MEETING AT 8:33PM.

APPROVED: _____