

AMHERST PLANNING BOARD
January 18, 2006 – 7:00 PM
Town Room, Town Hall
MINUTES

PRESENT: Paul Bobrowski, Chair; Adrian Fabos, Carl Mailler, Leandro Rivera, Aaron Hayden, Rod Francis, Chris Boyd, Mary Scipioni

ABSENT: No One

STAFF: Niels la Cour, Senior Planner; Sue Krzanowski, Management Assistant

Mr. Bobrowski opened the meeting at 7:00 PM.

I. MINUTES – Meeting of December 7, 2005

Mr. Hayden MOVED: to adopt the Minutes of December 7, 2005 as submitted. Mr. Francis seconded, and the Motion passed 8-0.

Since it was not yet time for the scheduled public hearing, the Chair moved ahead on the agenda.

IV. NEW BUSINESS

- A. Zoning for Affordable Housing: Inclusionary Zoning and Beyond – Workshop –**
Notice in packet
- B. Zoning, Subdivision And Land Development Law In Massachusetts – Seminar –**
Notice in packet
- C. SUB2006-00002, Lawrence Circle – Signing of Plans –** The Board signed the final plans.
- D. Other –** None

II. PUBLIC HEARINGS – SITE PLAN REVIEW APPLICATIONS

SPR2006-00001 – Groff Park, Mill Lane – Town of Amherst

Mr. Bobrowski opened the public hearing for this request for Site Plan Review approval to construct a new 25' x 33' one-story, comfort station containing restrooms, storage area and concession area. Also included would be new walkways, patio areas with benches, plantings, and improvements to the site drainage. (Map 17C/Parcel 13; R-N Zoning District)

Mr. Hayden disclosed that he is employed by Amherst College which is an abutter to the site.

Mr. Paul Dethier, Assistant Town Engineer and Mr. Jason Skeels, Town Engineer, appeared before the Board to present this proposal.

Mr. Dethier described the proposal and said that the improved site drainage will correct drainage problems. The applicant has appeared before the Conservation Commission and expects to go back again in a couple of weeks. The State Division of Fisheries and Wildlife has raised some issues concerning potential impacts on endangered species which may require additional permitting. The applicant is working with the State and the Conservation Commission to address these issues.

Mr. Dethier told the Board that a future pavilion is shown on the plan but is not being proposed right now. It has been accounted for in the drainage calculations, he said.

The only lighting proposed would be two lights mounted on the building for security purposes. There are no lights in the parking lot since Groff Park closes at sunset and is not open in the evening.

Ms. Scipioni recommended that additional plantings be put in the planting bed(s) to capture runoff and which would be particularly effective in absorbing pesticides and fertilizers. She also advised that trees should be planted on flat ground and slopes should be planted with spreading shrubs and ground cover.

Mr. Dethier said that the maintenance plan has been revised to indicate less fertilization and pesticide applications than initially proposed, as well as additional plantings which will be attractive and absorb fertilizers.

Mr. Rivera asked if the changes would improve the existing situation. Mr. Dethier and Mr. Skeels said that they would. Mr. Skeels noted that the budget for the proposal is limited and additional plantings might be too costly.

Mr. Bobrowski asked if plants could be shifted. Ms. Scipioni suggested that the applicant solve functional problems first, then address ornamental plantings.

Mr. Boyd suggested that the sidewalk be reconfigured to go directly to the concession stand. Mr. Hayden suggested moving the storage door around to the same side as the concession stand. The Board further reviewed the design of the proposal while making recommendations. Mr. Francis asked staff to provide a list of plantings that act as absorb fertilizer. Mr. Bobrowski suggested that, as the budget allows, the parking lot be striped or at least the middle area be striped. After discussion about lighting, Mr. Bobrowski recommended that the building lights be activated by a motion-sensor.

There was no public comment.

Mr. Fabos MOVED: to close the public hearing. Mr. Francis seconded, and the Motion passed 8-0.

Mr. Hayden MOVED: to approve SPR2006-00001 – Groff Park, Mill Lane, subject to the following conditions and waivers:

Conditions

- (1) The balance of plantings shall be shifted to ensure there are adequate plantings along the drainage swale to maximize stormwater treatment.

- (2) Pedestrian 'goat paths' shall be stabilized with appropriate material(s).
- (3) Lights shall be shielded or cast-light downward and connected to a motion-sensor.
- (4) The landscaping shall be installed and continuously maintained.
- (5) Four (4) copies of the final plans shall be submitted to the Planning Department.
- (6) This permit shall expire in two (2) years if substantial construction has not begun.

Waivers

- (1) Traffic Impact Statement
- (2) Sign Plan

SPR2006-00003 – Porter House Accessibility Improvements – Amherst College

Mr. Bobrowski opened the public hearing for this request for Site Plan Review approval to add two accessible entrance ramps to an existing building and the addition of a patio at the back of the sunroom. (Map 14A/Parcel 272; R-G Zoning District)

Mr. Hayden noted that he is employed by Amherst College, recused himself from the hearing and left the room.

Mr. Chris Riddle, Kuhn Riddle Architects and Mr. Jeff Squires, The Berkshire Design Group, appeared before the Board on behalf of Amherst College. Mr. Squires presented the proposal to the Board, and said that a few changes had been made to the plans in response to the Design Review Board review the previous night and concerns raised in the Development Application Report. These included reducing the radius on the accessible walkway and re-grading to save the butternut tree, and the inclusion of the utility lines and floor drains on the drawings. Mr. la Cour asked if the DRB had made a recommendation. Mr. Squires said that the DRB recommended approval.

There was no public comment.

Mr. Francis MOVED: to close the public hearing. Mr. Fabos seconded, and the Motion passed 7-0.

Mr. Francis MOVED: to approve SPR2006-00003 – Porter House Accessibility Improvements – Amherst College, subject to the following conditions and waivers:

Conditions

- 1) The changes in grading made to save the butternut tree shall be shown on the final plans.
- 2) Utilities shall be shown on the final plans to the satisfaction of the Town Engineer.
- 3) All landscaping as proposed shall be installed and continuously maintained.
- 3) Four (4) copies of the final plans shall be submitted to the Planning Department.
- 4) This permit shall expire in two (2) years if substantial construction has not begun.

Mr. Rivera seconded, and the Motion passed 7-0.

Mr. Hayden returned to the Board.

**SPR2006-00002 – Amherst Shopping Center, 175 University Drive – CRES
Development Company, Inc.**

Request approval for expansion of Amherst Shopping Center by adding 2,200 sq. ft. of free-standing commercial space and 2,080 sq. ft. of space to the north end of the main building, and the addition of drive-up facilities at each location. (Map 13D/Parcels 59 & 62; B-L zoning district)

Mr. Bobrowski noted that the hearing was continued from December 7, 2005.

Attending on behalf of Amherst Shopping Center were Mr. David Stone, CRES Development Company and Mr. Bill Garrity, landscape architect with Garrity & Tripp.

Mr. Garrity presented revised plans to the Board. He said that parking on the east side of the building, which will be a Dunkin Donuts, had been eliminated and replaced with a concrete paved plaza with landscape beds, providing separation from the service drive. Sliding the building 9 feet to the east improved the design considerably, Mr. Garrity commented.

Given that CRES Development has been cooperative with the Town, Mr. la Cour said that the Town Engineer believes that \$10,000 would be a sufficient amount for the applicant to place in escrow for pending improvements to the entrance of the shopping center. Mr. Stone has indicated that he is ready to go forward once the Town decides on a plan. He asked how the escrow payment usually works. Mr. la Cour said that the funds would be held in an interest-bearing account and then released once the work is completed.

Mr. Bobrowski noted that a bike rack should be shown on the plans.

Mr. Garrity said that there were two sewer lines on the site and they had gotten mixed signals from DPW as to which sewer line they should hook into. He said they would have another conversation with the Town Engineer to address his concerns and clear up any misunderstandings.

Ms. Krzanowski told the Board that Mr. Walter Wolnik had called the office regarding his request for a path between the two shopping centers which he had raised at the last meeting. While Mr. Stone said that he would be willing to allow such a path, there would be issues to consider. It was noted that the area is located in Hadley, not Amherst. The Board generally agreed that the matter would be better served by bringing it to the Public Transportation Committee.

There was no public comment.

Mr. Francis MOVED: to close the public hearing. Mr. Hayden seconded, and the Motion passed 8-0.

Mr. Bobrowski MOVED: to approve SPR2006-00002, Amherst Shopping Center – CRES Development Company, subject to the following conditions and waivers:

Conditions

- 1) The final plans shall be approved by the Town Engineer.
- 2) A bike rack shall be installed on the northeast side adjacent to the patio area.
- 3) Lighting provided on the building shall meet Town lighting standards.
- 4) Prior to the issuance of a Certificate of Occupancy for the free-standing commercial space, the applicant shall provide \$10,000 to be placed in an escrow account to ensure completion of the entrance/intersection reconstruction.
- 5) All landscaping shall be installed and continuously maintained.
- 6) Four (4) copies of the final plans shall be submitted to the Planning Department.
- 7) This permit will expire in two (2) years if substantial construction has not begun.

Mr. Francis seconded, and the Motion passed 8-0.

VI. FORM A (ANR) SUBDIVISION APPLICATIONS

The Chair signed the following:

ANR2006-00014, Belchertown Road & Linden Ridge Road – Tofino Associates, Inc.

Mr. Hayden MOVED: to establish February 2006 as the Development Authorization Date for these lots which are subject to the Phased Growth Development Bylaw. Mr. Francis seconded, and the Motion passed 8-0.

III. ELECTION OF OFFICERS

At the October 5, 2005 meeting, the Board approved the following nominations: Mr. Hayden as Chair, Mr. Kastor as Vice Chair, Mr. Bobrowski as Clerk. However, since that time Mr. Kastor has taken a leave of absence from the Board. Mr. Bobrowski nominated Mr. Mailler to serve as Vice Chair, Mr. Rivera seconded, and the nomination passed 8-0.

The Board voted 8-0 to approve the slate of candidates. Officers are Mr. Hayden, Chair, Mr. Mailler, Vice Chair and Mr. Bobrowski, Clerk.

VII. UPCOMING ZBA APPLICATIONS

The Board decided not to review the following:

ZBA2006-00026, 1185 North Pleasant Street – Robert M. Pollak

ZBA2006-00027, 296 North Pleasant Street – Diane M. Bagg

ZBA2006-00028, 265 East Pleasant Street – Robert Day

ZBA2006-00029, 17B Montague Road – Paul C. Jones

ZBA2006-00030, 71 North Pleasant Street, Mauro Aniello

VIII. UPCOMING SPC/SPP/SPR/SUB APPLICATIONS

Mr. la Cour noted that Tofino Associates has filed an application for a cluster subdivision at 447 Bay Road. The public hearing will be scheduled for February 15th. The Board scheduled a site visit for Tuesday, January 24, at 8:00 AM.

IX. PLANNING BOARD SUBCOMMITTEE REPORTS

- A. **Zoning** – Mr. Mailler reported that the Subcommittee reviewed their work list and is working on prioritizing items.
- B. **Atkins Working Group** – Mr. Rivera said that a conceptual proposal for two roundabouts had been approved by the working group. The engineers were working to develop 25% plans to be reviewed in late February/early March.

X. PLANNING BOARD COMMITTEE REPORTS

- A. **Pioneer Valley Planning Commission** – Mr. Hayden said that the recent session was on “green” bylaws to encourage environmentally conscious construction.
- B. **Community Preservation Act Committee** – Mr. Francis said that the Committee has reviewed proposals, many including multiple projects. The recommendations will be reviewed by the Select Board. Mr. Francis also told the Board that he was elected Secretary at the last meeting.
- C. **Farm Committee** – Mr. Boyd is waiting to be appointed.
- D. **Comprehensive Planning Committee** – Ms. Scipioni said that a subcommittee has been formed to review RFPs. Mr. Hayden added that ad hoc working groups will be formed to tackle the various components of the master plan.

Mr. Francis asked staff to request a summary from Town Counsel regarding the “special municipal employees” and conflict of interest issue.

XI. REPORT OF THE CHAIR – Mr. Bobrowski conveyed congratulations to Mr. Tucker on his recent promotion to Planning Director.

He also summarized a couple of issues which he asked the Board to consider. The first was whether it is appropriate for the Zoning Subcommittee to take a position on zoning articles before participating in the public hearing with the full Board. It has been the standard practice for the Zoning Subcommittee to make a recommendation to the Board at the public hearing stage. However, Mr. Bobrowski noted that a purpose of the public hearing is to accept and review information and wondered if members should come to the public hearing with their minds already made up.

Mr. Bobrowski also recommended that the Board establish a relationship with the Finance Committee related to zoning articles that may have an impact on the tax base.

XII. REPORT OF THE DIRECTOR – No Report.

XIII. ADJOURNMENT

Before the Board adjourned, Mr. Rivera expressed appreciation to Mr. Bobrowski for his dedication and competence while serving as the Chair.

Mr. Rivera MOVED: to adjourn this meeting at 9:25 PM. Mr. Fabos seconded, and the Motion passed unanimously.

Respectfully submitted:

Sue Krzanowski, Management Assistant

Approved:

Carl Mailler, Vice Chair

DATE: _____