

AMHERST PLANNING BOARD
Wednesday, March 2, 2005 – 7:00 PM
Town Room, Town Hall
MINUTES

PRESENT: Aaron Hayden, Vice Chair; Mary Scipioni, David Kastor, Pam Rooney, Chris Boyd, Adrian Fabos, Rod Francis

ABSENT: Paul Bobrowski, Carl Mailler

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

Due to Mr. Bobrowski's absence, Mr. Hayden served as Chair for the meeting. Mr. Hayden opened the meeting at 7:00 PM.

I. APPEARANCE – Ms. Elsie Fetterman (Logtown Road group) Transfer Station/Landfill Proposal

Ms. Elsie Fetterman, 148 Logtown Road and Mr. Jim Bess, 186 Harkness Road, appeared before the Board to discuss ideas/issues related to the transfer station and old sanitary landfill. Ms. Fetterman told the Board that a group of approximately 40 people, including the Superintendent of Public Works, met last summer to discuss the transfer station and how what happens to it will affect the community. One idea being discussed is moving DPW to the old sanitary landfill, which would then make the DPW building on South Pleasant Street available for a fire station, which would then free the downtown fire station site. They are trying to meet with several Town committees and will then compile a report for the Select Board.

Mr. Bess said that they have been in contact with DEP about what would be allowed on the site, but have been told to come up with a proposal first.

Mr. Harry Brooks, 32 Hickory Lane, told the Board that Mr. Mooring was very supportive of moving DPW to the old landfill. The fire station could go to the DPW site if they move, he said. Other possibilities were discussed, Mr. Brooks said, but Mr. Mooring didn't like them as much.

Mr. Stan Ziomek, representing the LSSE Commission and former superintendent of DPW, said that the Town accepted state money to use the landfill for recreational land which is badly needed in Town.

Ms. Fetterman told the Board that a deed restriction was never filed. Regulations have changed since then and everything would have to be tested again, she said.

Mr. Kastor asked if the Fire Department was enthusiastic about moving to the DPW site. Ms. Fetterman and Mr. Bess said that there was some concern about the response time for the ambulance.

Mr. la Cour commented that the DPW building is in a good location but has historical significance because it's an old trolley barn.

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Ms. Scipioni told the group that their actions are commendable, but suggested that they direct their energies into a master plan. Other members of the Board voiced support for the group's work and added that it should be placed in the context of a master plan.

Mr. Hayden expressed appreciation for citizens doing work for the Town's good.

Since it was not yet time for the next scheduled timed item, the Chair moved ahead on the agenda.

V. OLD BUSINESS – None

VIII. UPCOMING SPC/SPP/SPR/SUB APPLICATIONS – None

XI. REPORT OF THE CHAIR – No Report

XII. REPORT OF THE DIRECTOR – No Report

II. DISCUSSION – East Woods Subdivision (SUB 96-0002) – Tanglewood Road – Street Trees

In an attempt to resolve an issue concerning street trees, several residents of Tanglewood Road were invited to come in for a discussion with the Board, staff, the developer of East Woods subdivision, Mr. Douglas Kohl, and the Shade Tree Committee. Street trees are required in the Subdivision Regulations and were also a condition of approval of the subdivision. Although most of the trees were planted by Mr. Kohl according to the plans, several neighbors do not want trees planted because they want to maintain their view. However, in order for Town Meeting to accept all of Tanglewood Road as a Town road, the condition needs to be met.

Mr. la Cour, Senior Planner, gave a brief, concise, power-point presentation on the Subdivision Regulations, Landscaping Guidelines, benefits of street trees and a map indicating other areas of town where the subdivision can be seen from.

Mr. Bill Hutchinson, Shade Tree Committee, told the Board that the Town has lost more trees than have been planted in the last twenty years. Street trees add so much to a neighborhood, he said.

Mr. Stan Ziomek, Tree Warden, said that two trees per lot are required. Roads are not usually accepted without trees, he commented.

The following residents of Tanglewood Road spoke against adding street trees to their yards: Mr. Tim Schmitt, Ms. Sally Darby, Ms. Casey Schmitt, Mr. Richard Spurgeon, and Mr. Peter Pryciak. Concerns/comments included: trees would make it too dark, owners were not made aware of the condition until two years after they bought their house, there are a lot of trees in the neighborhood, there are only 9 houses without trees, residents want trees of their own choosing and placement, property values will diminish, views will be spoiled, houses were sited in order to take advantage of views, and a lot of time, effort and money have already been spent. A couple people said that they would be happy to accept Mr. Kohl's offer to provide trees and donate them to the Town to be planted elsewhere.

Mr. la Cour said that staff are really hoping to reach a compromise and there is a lot of flexibility in doing so. He noted that Town Meeting accepted the rest of Tanglewood Road but did not accept this part because of the tree issues.

Mr. Kohl said that he was looking for guidelines and asked what kind of flexibility would be acceptable.

Ms. Rooney suggested that maybe some smaller species could be used on the downhill side of the road. While the Board might be willing to compromise somewhat on height restrictions, they are hoping not to set a precedent here, she said. Usually trees are planted first, she commented, and no one gets to say anything about it.

Mr. la Cour said that larger deciduous trees are needed to soften the impact of the development from the community. He said that staff would be willing to work with the developer and neighbors to come up with a plan. Mr. Kohl again asked for guidelines. Mr. Hayden said that the intent is for all parties involved to come up with a plan that meets the intent but has a little flexibility. He recommended that all parties involved familiarize themselves with the regulations. Mr. Kastor asked what the specific requirement for tree heights was in the actual decision. Mr. la Cour replied that the landscape plan that was accepted and approved included large-scale trees. There is flexibility within that, he said, in terms of species type, and moving things around, but Mr. Kohl was directed to plant large deciduous trees when the plan was approved.

Mr. Alan Snow, Shade Tree Committee, commented that houses on the east side are pretty high. It will be 30 years before trees block anyone's view, he suggested. Beautiful views will not be blocked drastically, they will be framed by trees. Mr. Snow added that it has been proven that tree-lined streets increase values.

Ms. Rooney suggested that the Board draft some general flexibilities for Mr. Kohl. That generally there should be two trees per lot, except where the frontage is significantly less, there can be some flexibility with spacing between trees to work with existing trees and with the distance back from the curb; there should be consistency in placement of the trees, she said.

Mr. la Cour said that he would be willing to design a proposal and facilitate communication between all parties. Mr. Hutchinson noted that the trees are intended to be public shade trees. On behalf of the Board, Mr. Hayden accepted Mr. la Cour's offer to facilitate a resolution between the parties involved.

III. APPEARANCE

Big Y Shopping Plaza (SPR 2005-00001) – Hollywood Video Sign Approval, Mr. David Stone

Mr. David Stone, owner of Big Y shopping plaza, presented the proposed sign for Hollywood Video. Mr. la Cour noted that the sign meets the technical specifications of the sign bylaw.

Mr. Boyd MOVED: to approve the sign for Hollywood Video that was presented at tonight's meeting. Mr. Francis seconded, and the Motion passed unanimously, 7-0.

IV. NEW BUSINESS

- A. **Road Acceptance – Owen Drive, Barkowski Meadows Subdivision** – The Board reviewed a request from Ms. Cinda H. Jones asking that Town Meeting accept Owen Drive. Mr. la Cour said that almost all of the work has been completed except that as-built plans need to be submitted and other minor work. Mr. Kastor said that the detention basin has been a problem. Mr. la Cour said it has been fixed. Mr. Fabos asked if the street trees have been put in; Mr. la Cour said that they have.

Ms. Rooney MOVED: that the Board recommend that Town Meeting approve the acceptance of Owen Drive subject to the approval of the Town Engineer that any outstanding issues regarding as-built plans and other minor work have been resolved. Mr. Boyd seconded, and the Motion passed 6-0-1 (Kastor abstained).

- B. **Removal From Chapter 61A – Assessors Parcel 03B000080, East Leverett Road** – The Board received a copy of notice that this parcel is going to be removed from Chapter 61A. Mr. la Cour described the parcel and said that the Conservation Commission has not taken a position. It is not part of any blocks of conservation land, he said. These are all on the other side of Cushman Brook. Although some of it might be of interest, the Town doesn't really have the money to purchase it now, anyway. It's not on any conservation priority list or prime agricultural land or in any future plans, he said.

The Board discussed the merits of recommending or not recommending that the Town exercise its right of first refusal. During the discussion, it was noted how a master plan would be helpful in the process. Ms. Rooney suggested that some of the other Board members would be able and willing to provide research for the Zoning Subcommittee's many items on the work list. Mr. Fabos noted that there might be items of interest or pressing need that the Subcommittee has missed and he suggested that members should provide these to the Subcommittee if there are any.

Mr. Boyd MOVED: that the Board recommend that the Town waive its right to purchase the property.

The discussion then turned to how to form a motion which would include the merits of the Board's discussion and how it reached a decision. The item was tabled for a few minutes while Ms. Rooney worked on a motion.

- C. **Planning Commissioners Journal** – in packet. Mr. Hayden commented that he is interested in working on energy conscious growth which was one of the articles in the Journal.

B. Removal From Chapter 61A – Assessors Parcel 03B000080, East Leverett Road (continued)

Ms. Rooney MOVED: that in the absence of a Master Plan that guides quality and quantity of development, being mindful of the Town's financial situation, and acknowledging that this parcel is not a priority of the Conservation Commission, the Planning Board regretfully recommends the town not exercise its right of first refusal to purchase the property. Mr. Kastor seconded, and the Motion passed unanimously, 7-0.

D. Planning Board Meeting Schedule – March, April

The Board agreed to hold three meetings in March and one or two in April as necessary. Several people indicated that they will not be available to meet in the third week of April since that will be school vacation week. The schedule will be:

March 2, March 16, March 30; April 6, April 13

E. Updated Address List – in packet.

F. Other – None

VI. FORM A (ANR) SUBDIVISION PLANS

The Chair endorsed the following:

ANR 2005-00010, 25-35 University Drive, Summerlin Trust

VII. UPCOMING ZBA APPLICATIONS

The Board decided not to review the following:

ZBA 2005-00020, 491 Pine Street, Peter Sylvan and Haim Shahar

ZBA 2005-00021, 1467 South East Street, Sonya R. Sofield

The Board decided to review the following:

ZBA 2005-00022, 81 Meadow Street, Abbass Bozorg

IX. PLANNING BOARD SUBCOMMITTEE REPORTS

A. Zoning – No Report

B. Atkins Working Group – No Report

X. PLANNING BOARD COMMITTEE REPORTS

- A. Pioneer Valley Planning Commission** – No Report
- B. Community Preservation Act Committee** – No Report
- C. Farm Committee** – Mr. Kastor said that there is a meeting scheduled for next Monday.
- D. Comprehensive Planning Committee** – No Report

XIII. ADJOURNMENT

Ms. Rooney MOVED: to adjourn this meeting at 9:42 PM. Mr. Kastor seconded, and the Motion passed unanimously, 7-0.

Respectfully submitted:

Sue Krzanowski, Management Assistant

Approved:

Aaron A. Hayden, Acting Chair

DATE: _____