

AMHERST PLANNING BOARD
Wednesday, June 1, 2005 – 5:00 PM
Home Economics Room, Amherst Regional Middle School
MINUTES

PRESENT: Paul Bobrowski, Chair; Chris Boyd, Carl Mailler, Pam Rooney, Mary Scipioni

ABSENT: David Kastor, Adrian Fabos, Aaron Hayden, Rod Francis

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

Mr. Bobrowski opened the meeting at 5:01 PM.

I. MINUTES – Meetings of April 13 & May 4, 2005

Mr. Boyd MOVED: to approve the Minutes of April 13, 2005 as submitted. Ms. Rooney seconded, and the Motion passed 4-0-1 (Rooney abstained).

Ms. Rooney MOVED: to approve the Minutes of May 4, 2005. Ms. Scipioni seconded, and the Motion passed 4-0-1 (Mailler abstained).

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

III. NEW BUSINESS

A. Lot Release Requests, Lots 1, 2, 7 & 8, Palley Village – Paul Zahradnik

Mr. la Cour said that staff recommend that the lots be released because all necessary work had been done and there were still many lots under covenant. Two of the releases will be for affordable duplex units and two for market rate duplexes.

Mr. Bobrowski MOVED: to release Lots 1, 2, 7 & 8, Palley Village. Mr. Boyd seconded, and the Motion passed 5-0.

The Board signed the Certificate of Performance for the four lots.

II. APPEARANCE

ZBA2005-00031, 151 Amity Street – Barry L. Roberts

Request for a Special Permit under Section 3.322 and Section 9 of the Zoning Bylaw to convert the existing funeral home on the premises to 2 living units and to construct an additional 4 townhouse units.

Noting a fairly large number in the audience, Mr. Bobrowski, explained that this application was for a Special Permit and the Zoning Board of Appeals would be the Permit Granting Authority. Because the proposal is located downtown, he said, the Planning Board expressed interest in reviewing the site features and plans.

Mr. Barry Roberts, applicant, said that the impetus for the project came from people who have expressed interest and desire to have residential units in the downtown.

Mr. John Kuhn, architect, presented 3D photographic perspective renderings to show what the development will look like when completed. It's a very appropriate development for the site, he commented. The developer intends to keep as much of the existing vegetation and trees as possible, he said.

Board members and staff expressed concern about the quality of existing vegetation and whether much of it would even survive the construction process. A comprehensive planting plan was strongly recommended.

Mr. la Cour, Senior Planner, said that the proposal is a good example of appropriate infill and preservation of an historic structure. Mr. la Cour said that there were additional issues and concerns which staff would like to see addressed. It is important to maintain a pedestrian connection to the downtown; adequate fire truck access; drainage calculations should be provided; additional information on lighting should be submitted; the proposal should be submitted to the Historical Commission.

Mr. Tom Lardner, who said he lives on the property to the west of the site, said that the existing trees are not in very good shape and should be addressed. He also said that there are trees on different sides of the property line. Mr. Lardner requested that a fence be installed on the west to prevent car headlights from shining onto his property. He raised concerns about snow removal and drainage problems. Philosophically he likes the idea of the proposed housing for the downtown, he said, but would like to have his concerns addressed.

Mr. James Muspratt, 38 North Prospect Street, commented that this is a massive project which would have a major impact in a well-established area and questioned whether it is really appropriate.

Mr. Richard Brown, 143 Lincoln Avenue, said that there is a beautiful 16-inch white birch in the middle of the property which will be lost. He also raised concern about snow removal and drainage problems.

Mr. Kuhn presented the drainage plans and described the proposed drainage as a system of swales leading to underground recharge chambers.

Mr. Joe Cook, 157 Lincoln Avenue, asked that lighting be directed toward the building and not at his property.

Mr. Peter Brown, 145 Lincoln Avenue, said he was concerned about drainage and told the Board that his yard gets to be a lake.

Mr. Bobrowski suggested compiling a list of issues for the applicant to consider:

- a planting plan be provided, indicating whether large trees are expected to survive;
- a fence should be installed on the west;
- snow removal/storage;
- drainage;

- garages; amount of coverage;
- sidewalks;
- lighting;
- Historical Commission;
- having a revised survey completed;
- minimize grading; use alternatives like retaining walls;
- leaching basin must be appropriately sized for the site;
- provide reinforced base under lawn for Fire Truck access.

Ms. Rooney MOVED: that the Planning Board recommend that the Zoning Board of Appeals consider the following issues when reviewing the plans:

- The plans should incorporate a pedestrian connection to the sidewalk along Amity Street. The applicant should consider reducing the amount of pavement devoted to parking in order to accommodate the pedestrian connection while remaining within the limits of lot coverage.
- The vegetation on the site should be evaluated for age, condition, screening potential, and survivability of the site work in order to determine what vegetation should remain, what vegetation should be replaced and where additional plantings may be needed.
- The applicant should consider the possibility of providing a fence along the western boundary to shield neighboring houses from the headlights of cars.
- The plans should include information about the location and types of lighting fixtures to insure that there will be no light trespass offsite.
- Grading and drainage plans should be required to meet the approval of the Town Engineer.
- The grading be revised and include a retaining wall(s) in order to ensure the preservation of the large oak tree on the southeast boundary of the site and other valuable plant materials on the site.
- The applicant should provide a snow removal plan that will ensure that there are no drainage problems offsite.
- A reinforced base should be installed under the lawn on the east side of the buildings that will allow access for fire trucks to the buildings in the rear.
- The Historical Commission should review the plans.

Mr. Boyd seconded, and the Motion passed 5-0.

Mr. Kuhn commented that Mr. Robert's will consider all of tonight's comments seriously and would likely address as many as possible before the ZBA hearing.

B. Town Meeting – Attorney General Forms – The Board signed the forms for the four zoning amendments which were adopted by Town Meeting.

C. Upcoming Meeting Schedule

Mr. la Cour said that a Preliminary Subdivision Application for a residential subdivision off Owen Drive has been filed. The public hearing is scheduled for June 15. The Board scheduled a site visit for Wednesday, June 8th at 8:00 AM. Mr. la Cour said that he would mail out a set of plans beforehand. The Board decided to try to address the meeting schedule again at its next meeting, hoping to keep July 6th as a possible picnic date.

D. Planning Commissioners Journal – in packet

E. Planning Briefs – in packet

F. Other – None

IV. OLD BUSINESS

A. Signing of Decision – SPR 2005-00007, 367 North Pleasant Street, Mercyhouse –
The Board signed the decision as submitted.

B. Other – None

VI. UPCOMING ZBA APPLICATIONS

The Board decided not to review the following:

ZBA 2005-00032, 63 North Prospect Street – Howard Ewert
ZBA 2005-00033, 321 Main Street – Ester Rodrigues

V. FORM A (ANR) SUBDIVISION APPLICATIONS

The Chair endorsed the following:

ANR 2005-00018, 270 East Leverett Road – Mark A. Stowes

Ms. Rooney MOVED: that the Board establish June 2005 as the date that the new lot will be eligible for a building permit. Mr. Boyd seconded, and the Motion passed 5-0.

VII. UPCOMING SPC/SPP/SPR/SUB APPLICATIONS – A preliminary subdivision Application for a cluster subdivision off Bay Road near Middle Street is expected to be filed very soon.

VIII. PLANNING BOARD SUBCOMMITTEE REPORTS

A. Zoning – No Report

B. Atkins Working Group – Mr. la Cour said that a meeting is scheduled for June 9.

IX. PLANNING BOARD COMMITTEE REPORTS

- A. Pioneer Valley Planning Commission** – Mr. Mailler announced that the annual meeting is scheduled for June 9th at the Basketball Hall of Fame in Springfield.
- B. Community Preservation Act Committee** – Ms. Rooney noted that the Plum Brook funding is in jeopardy.
- C. Farm Committee** – No Report
- D. Comprehensive Planning Committee** – Ms. Scipioni announced that a Community Forum is scheduled for June 16th at the Community Hall of Grace Church for 7:00 PM.

X. REPORT OF THE CHAIR – Mr. Bobrowski said that he would like to attend the annual PVPC meeting and if anyone else is interested, they should contact him. Cost is \$20/person and includes a tour at 5 PM.

XI. REPORT OF THE DIRECTOR – No Report

XII. ADJOURNMENT

Mr. Boyd MOVED: to adjourn this meeting at 6:30 PM. Ms. Scipioni seconded, and the Motion passed unanimously.

Respectfully submitted:

Sue Krzanowski, Management Assistant

Approved:

Paul G. Bobrowski, Chair

DATE: _____