



TOWN OF NORTHBOROUGH PLANNING BOARD

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Approved 10.16.18

Planning Board Meeting Minutes September 18, 2018

Members in attendance: Theresa Capobianco, Chair; Amy Poretsky; Anthony Ziton; Kerri Martinek; Michelle Gillespie

Others in attendance: Kathy Joubert, Town Planner; Fred Litchfield, Town Engineer; Vito Colonna, Connorstone Engineering; Laura, Dax, and Amelia Ziton, 17 Franklin Circle; Craig and Sharon Johnson, 20 Lincoln Street; Henry Squillante, 72 Crestwood Drive; Darc Barreto, 31 Vale Street, Clinton

Chair Theresa Capobianco called the meeting to order shortly after 7:00PM.

Master Plan Steering Committee Update – Ms. Gillespie noted that she and Ms. Poretsky had attended the meeting of the Master Plan Steering Committee last evening. She stated that there was good discussion and the group had made some presentations to the public at the recent Applefest. She also indicated that there will be a second public forum held on October 4th beginning at 8:00PM at Algonquin High School. She explained that there is a survey now available online that is based on the new material that was submitted. Ms. Joubert voiced her understanding that the second survey pertains to the goals and recommendations as developed Master Plan by the Steering Committee. Ms. Gillespie requested that the Planning Board members review the goals information and provide input about whether they believe the Steering Committee is going in the right direction and advise if there is anything not included that should be. Ms. Joubert noted that she had previously provided the goals information to the board and agreed to send it out again. Ms. Capobianco suggested that a discussion about this matter be added to the agenda for the board's next meeting.

Ms. Joubert indicated that the Steering Committee plans to present the goals at the meeting on Oct. 4th, and the objective of the discussion and survey is to move forward with recommendations and action steps. Ms. Gillespie stated that members of the group spoke to a fair number of people during Applefest and there appears to be considerable interest. Ms. Poretsky encouraged everyone to complete the survey and noted that a link is provided on the town's website.

Town Common – Ms. Poretsky explained that the first design meeting was held last evening, and a copy of the plans is currently available on the Northborough Town Common's Facebook page. Ms. Joubert noted that, at last night's meeting, residents were invited to write their comments and suggestions on the plan. She stated that there were two plans presented and, though no vote was taken, there seemed to be overwhelming support for one of the options. She also stated that a second meeting will likely be

held in November, at which time the consultant will present plans that incorporate the suggestions obtained last night. In response to a question from Ms. Joubert, Ms. Poretsky confirmed that the work being done for the Town Common is consistent with the Master Plan.

Citizen's Planning Training Collaborative (CPTC) – Ms. Joubert explained that the workshop schedule for the CPTC should be published soon and encouraged members to participate in sessions, the cost of which will be covered by the town.

Public Hearing for 267-281 Southwest Cutoff Special Permit Site Plan Approval and Special Permit for Dental Office

Applicant: Dr. Alexander Moheban / Northborough Family Dental

Engineer: Connorstone Engineering Inc.

Date Filed: August 17, 2018

Decision Due: 90 days from close of hearing

Vito Colonna from Connorstone Engineering discussed the applicant's proposal to construct a dental office with associated parking on the site located across the street from the used car dealership and down the street from the intersection for Northborough Crossing. He noted that the site is currently undeveloped, with a cell tower at the rear. He indicated that the site is divided roughly in half with a perennial stream running through the middle of it.

Mr. Colonna explained that the site is located within a zone 3 aquifer district in an industrial area, and the applicant is seeking a special permit for groundwater and a special permit site plan approval. He noted that the proposed building will be 4100 square feet and serviced by public water and sewer that is available in Southwest Cutoff. He indicated that runoff from the parking lot will be directed to an infiltration basin that is sized for the 100-year storm, with roof runoff flowing to a drywell that is also sized for the 100-year storm. He stated that no runoff will be leaving the development area, there will be no adverse impact to the area, and all water will be introduced back into the ground so that there will be no decrease in the existing groundwater recharge to the underlying aquifer. He also noted that, at the request of the Town Engineer, a stormceptor will be included to provide oil and water separation as well as sediment removal, along with a forebay for additional sediment removal and infiltration so that water quantity and quality matches existing conditions.

Mr. Litchfield stated that he had provided two comment letters for the board. The first was submitted on behalf of the Groundwater Advisory Committee (GAC), in which he requested additional information and conditions as follows:

1. Additional information is needed regarding the types, volumes and storage of potentially toxic or hazardous chemicals.
2. Confirmation that the x-ray machine to be used onsite will be a digital one.
3. Copies of maintenance contracts for the Amalgam separator used to remove amalgam products from patient's spit to prevent it from going into the sewer system are to be provided.

4. A Stormwater Operations and Maintenance Plan was included in the application packet and should be included as a condition of approval.
5. The plans indicate the proposed building is to be connected to both Town sewer and water, which is beneficial.
6. An Earthwork Permit is required.
7. An as-built plan is to be submitted upon completion of the project.

Mr. Litchfield noted that the GAC hearing, held earlier this month, was continued because the application indicated that there will be no potentially hazardous or toxic materials stored on site but at the meeting the applicant indicated that there might be. He indicated that the GAC has requested that the Planning Board continue their hearing pending conclusion of the GAC process.

Mr. Litchfield noted that the second comment memo pertains to the Engineering and DPW review of the site plan, and many of the comments are the same. He explained that the piping connecting the building to the water line in Route 20 that was shown on the plan was not indicated to be copper, but he has since received a revised plan specifying that.

Mr. Litchfield suggested that the board discuss requiring an additional light somewhere in the vicinity of the driveway where traffic is entering and exiting as it appears that the roadway is quite dark in that area.

Mr. Litchfield commented that both he and the DPW Director have recently begun requesting that a condition be included to specify that a final review and approval of any plans that have been changed as a condition of approval or afterwards be done prior to the start of construction to minimize confusion.

Mr. Litchfield explained that the Conservation Commission had an issue with the advertising for their hearing, so will be holding a second meeting in September to hear this project.

Ms. Gillespie stated that the applicant met with the Design Review Committee (DRC) several times and noted that Ms. Joubert had provided a comment letter on their behalf. In response to a question from Ms. Capobianco, Ms. Gillespie indicated that the DRC had requested a reduction in the amount of landscaping proposed for the site. She also noted that there is a small area for snow storage that may not be sufficient. Mr. Colonna commented that snow may need to be hauled offsite, but noted that there are excess parking spaces that could also be used. Ms. Joubert stated that she has asked Mr. Colonna to have Dr. Moheban bring a copy of the plans to the board's next meeting. Ms. Poretzky asked that a copy of the landscape plan detailing the planting schedule and caliber and types of plantings also be provided at the next meeting.

Ms. Gillespie asked if it is possible to place a street light near the driveway. Ms. Joubert explained that doing so would be up to the town and not the applicant. Ms. Capobianco indicated that the board could ask the applicant to provide additional lighting on his property.

Ms. Martinek asked for clarification about the amalgam separator. Mr. Colonna explained that amalgam removed during dental procedures is separated and retained in the tank to be removed and properly disposed of by a maintenance vendor. Mr. Litchfield added that amalgam is metal particles that are removed from the mouth and taken offsite to be recycled or disposed of, and the cleaned water from the process goes into the sewer system. He stated that state law requires the use of an amalgam separator by all dentists regardless of whether they are on sewer or septic.

Ms. Martinek voiced her understanding that Mr. Litchfield has requested information about any use of x-ray developer fluid. Mr. Litchfield explained that Dr. Moheban had indicated that digital x-rays will be used and he is simply seeking written confirmation to include in the file.

Ms. Joubert explained that Dr. Moheban was unable to attend this evening's meeting due to the holiday but will be at the board's next meeting.

Ms. Martinek asked about an excess of fluoride or any other materials used in the office that could impact the water supply. Mr. Litchfield reiterated his request that the applicant provide information about types, quantities, and storage of any hazardous materials. He noted that the list of chemicals and quantities will dictate the type of storage cabinet and other measures needed to ensure protection of the groundwater.

In response to a question from Ms. Poretsky about the DRC's request for a reduction in the landscaping, Ms. Joubert explained that the DRC saw a need for more snow storage and there was also simply too much landscaping with a lot of it up against the building, which becomes a fire safety issue. Mr. Litchfield explained that the snow storage location at the front of the parking lot was necessary due to the location of the wetland and riverfront areas nearby.

Mr. Colonna asked the board to clarify their request for a light near the front entrance. Ms. Capobianco indicated that it would be beneficial if it were functionally equivalent to a street light.

Ms. Gillespie voiced her understanding that the applicant is scheduled to appear before the ZBA next week for a sign variance to allow the sign to be enlarged by 4 square feet, which exceeds what is allowed in the bylaw. Ms. Gillespie noted that Moe's Garage had done a test for their illuminated sign and asked if the ZBA had asked Dr. Moheban to do one. Ms. Joubert commented that the LED test done on the sign at Moe's Garage was done by the business owner's vendor to determine the correct illumination.

Ms. Joubert asked the board to decide on the date for their October meeting. She noted that, since the applicant is not meeting with the Groundwater Advisory Committee until October 9th, there is no need for a meeting on October 2nd, so the next scheduled meeting date is October 16th.

Ms. Poretsky emphasized that, given the time needed to research and consider any recommendations to bring to Town Meeting, the board should start discussing the matter now. Ms. Joubert recommended that the board not consider any zoning changes since the town is in the midst of the

Master Plan process. Ms. Poretzky reiterated that she does not want to run out of time to be able to address any concerns at Town Meeting.

Ms. Martinek asked about the impact to the ZBA hearing if the Planning Board continues this hearing. Ms. Joubert stated that the ZBA issue is separate and independent of anything being addressed by this board.

Michelle Gillespie made a motion to continue the hearing to Oct 16, 2018 at 7:15PM. Anthony Ziton seconded, motion carries by unanimous vote.

Continued Public Hearing for 222 West Main Street Site Plan Approval, Special Permit Common Driveway and Special Permits Two-Family Dwelling Units

Applicant: Abu Construction Inc.

Engineer: Connorstone Engineering Inc.

Date Filed: June 15, 2018

Decision Due: 90 days from close of hearing

Ms. Capobianco noted that the board had received an email from Mike Sullivan requesting a continuance of the hearing to the November meeting on behalf of the applicant. Ms. Joubert advised that the board cannot meet on November 6th due to the election. Members agreed to meet on Wednesday, November 14th.

The hearing for the project at 222 West Main Street was continued to November 14, 2018 at 7:15PM at the applicant's request.

In response to a question from Ms. Gillespie about changes to the board's regular meeting schedule, Ms. Joubert noted that it will be on the agenda that is posted on the town website. Ms. Gillespie noted that the board's minutes posted on the town website are not up to date and asked if there is a way to ensure that they are updated in a timelier manner. Ms. Joubert indicated that all minutes that have been approved have been provided to the office that posts them and agreed to check into the matter.

205 Brewer Street – Ms. Capobianco asked about the upcoming ZBA hearing for 205 Brewer Street. Ms. Joubert explained that the applicant is interested in purchasing the property and operating a dog walking business. Ms. Capobianco commented that the proposed business is classified as a home personal service not to exceed 3 dogs at a time, with occasional overnight stays. Ms. Joubert stated that more than 3 dogs at a time would result in the business being considered a kennel, which would involve an entirely different process. She noted that the hearing is on the agenda for the ZBA's October meeting.

Guidelines for 2-family dwellings – Ms. Joubert explained that she had provided board members with a copy of the guidelines drafted for the town by Judy Barrett. She noted that the guidelines will be reviewed by the Design Review Committee on Friday, September 21st, at 8AM.

Central Massachusetts Regional Planning Commission (CMRPC) – Ms. Capobianco mentioned that Ms. Martinek had provided the board with census information obtained at the CMRPC’s recent quarterly meeting. Ms. Martinek commented that the census contained some interesting projections for what to expect for the Town of Northborough up to the year 2040. Ms. Gillespie suggested that the information be reviewed by the Master Plan Steering Committee. Ms. Joubert indicated that the town’s consultant will certainly use the information as part of the process.

Budget – Ms. Capobianco indicated that the board was provided with the budget calendar. Ms. Joubert stated that Town Meeting is scheduled for April 22, 2019, warrant articles are due to the Town Administrator February 4, 2019 and the warrant closes March 11, 2019.

Signs – Ms. Poretsky addressed the issue of illuminated signs and electronic message boards, which she had previously raised in January 2018. She recalled that, at the time, the board did not have sufficient time to get it on the warrant for the 2018 Town Meeting and suggested that it be revisited for the 2019 Town Meeting. She indicated that there has been some talk about this issue in town, and many residents have expressed a desire for the downtown area to have a more classic look and feel. She commented that a large illuminated sign in the center of town will not fit with the classic look of the Town Common. She explained that she had looked at neighboring towns (Marlborough, Westborough, Southborough), who do not allow electronic message board in their downtown. She expressed a desire for these signs to be more clearly defined in the bylaw as they are in other towns. She also stated that these types of signs should only be allowed in certain areas.

Mr. Ziton commented that the current bylaw is very vague and open to interpretation, and he agreed that it should be revised to be very specific with regards to signs, definitions, and allowed locations. Ms. Poretsky emphasized the importance for the matter to be addressed at the 2019 Town Meeting before the town gets overrun with this type of signage. She requested that the issue be discussed at the next meeting.

Ms. Martinek stated that she has heard a lot of feedback about the new sign at Moe’s Garage on Route 20, most of which has not been positive. Ms. Joubert commented that it was only a few years ago that this board changed the bylaw to allow this type of sign. She noted that one objective at the time was to eliminate the temporary a-frame signs that were being used. She recalled that the board had held a series of meetings with business owners from all of the districts to obtain input. She stated that the Planning Board and Building Inspector had worked with the business community and decided to allow changeable copy signs. Ms. Poretsky indicated that she had attended those meetings but never imagined that it was going to result in allowing for electronic message boards. Ms. Joubert noted that the Building Inspector at the time had talked about signs with a continually running message (ticker-style) and, while the board did not want to allow those, members did agree to allow changeable copy. She noted that the board had also changed the size allowed to provide for the additional portion to accommodate changeable copy in an effort to eliminate the use of a-frame and other temporary signs. Ms. Capobianco commented that, in some districts, the bylaw requires 3 or more tenants in order to have a sign with changeable copy.

Mr. Ziton mentioned that technology has changed in recent years and signs are much brighter. Ms. Gillespie agreed that the issue is with the illumination of these signs. Ms. Joubert mentioned that the Building Inspector will speak with a business owner about reducing a sign's brightness if he receives any complaints.

Ms. Capobianco noted that Dr. Moheban's current office, in the Business West district, has a sign with changeable copy. Ms. Joubert commented that the business will be moving to the Industrial district. Ms. Gillespie stated that the entire sign is illuminated but only a portion has a changeable message. Ms. Joubert indicated that Dr. Moheban's current sign has 20 square feet of changeable copy and he is seeking approval to increase it to 24 square feet at the new location.

Ms. Capobianco mentioned the Lion's Club's electronic message board near the railroad tracks. Ms. Joubert explained that, because the sign bylaw is in the zoning bylaw, any existing signs would be grandfathered if the town opts to change the regulation. She advised that some communities, like Framingham, have removed it from their zoning bylaw to prohibit the ability for signs to be grandfathered, and provide a "sunset clause" that requires compliance with the new regulation within a specific time period. In response to a question from Ms. Capobianco about who regulates signs in Framingham, Ms. Joubert agreed to find out. Ms. Capobianco requested that the matter be put on the agenda for the board's next meeting. Ms. Joubert agreed to look for some examples for consideration, and to get input from the Building Inspector about definitions, etc.

Minutes of the Meeting of August 21, 2018 - Ms. Capobianco noted that the August 21st meeting was very long and the minutes were done somewhat uniquely. She explained that minutes are intended to be a summation of the meeting and not intended to be a transcript. She indicated that Ms. Martinek had requested that additional information be included in the minutes but noted that the town has limited resources and does not have a stenographer to do so. She stated that the minutes provided by Ms. Joubert meet the standards for minutes so she is inclined to keep them in their current format.

Ms. Martinek clarified that she had suggested the use of the "Transcribe" application (app) and was not requesting a full transcription. She recognized that minutes are not a transcription but emphasized that the minutes that were provided did have details missing so she is not comfortable approving them as drafted. Mr. Ziton agreed that the length of the meeting and amount of information was excessive and agreed that the minutes need to be more specific so that comments are better documented. Ms. Capobianco noted that this is easier to do for shorter meetings but becomes more of a challenge when meetings run so long. She stated that, given the town's limited resources, if the board wants more comprehensive minutes for the August 21st meeting then completion of the minutes for subsequent meetings will be delayed and will result in the board not meeting the time standard for minutes that Ms. Martinek has demanded.

In response to a question from Ms. Gillespie about further investigating the possibility of using the "Transcribe" app, Ms. Joubert indicated that she feels strongly about having a board secretary and would not want to see the elimination of the board secretary, but she did agree to get further information on the app.

Ms. Joubert commented that board members can add pertinent information to the draft minutes if they so desire. Ms. Capobianco asked Ms. Martinek to revise the August minutes in the manner she feels appropriate and then circulate them among the other members of the board for additional input.

Meeting adjourned at 8:25PM.

Respectfully submitted,

Elaine Rowe
Board Secretary