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From: "Lynne Eckardt" <midfarm@bestweb.net>
Date: Wed Mar 1, 2006 3:24 pm
Subject: SE Planning Board Recap 2/27/06

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Hi All,

This past Monday night I attended the SE Planning Board meeting.

Where to begin... Most of the agenda was old business but the new business was nothing short of a show stopper. A Paul Camarda Production included videotape worthy of 'Winged Migration' (which had more than a few reaching for airsick bags). A dizzying aerial spin over Route 6 east to Danbury and beyond.. .Well, maybe not 'beyond' as we ended the tour on a rather sour note: the ass-end of Home Depot.

In an unfortunately less than rare occurrence I'm pleased to present the coveted NIMBY award to several members of the Planning Board- and I think even they'd admit it. Read on for the winner and first runner-up.

Everything else was rather tame by comparison although the Public Hearing on 'Tenth Jam' elicited several worthy comments and some eye rolling.

As always the opinions expressed are solely my own and represent my often venomous and irrepressible views of Southeast-

Agenda:

- 1. Omnipoint Wireless Telecommunications Facility Amended Site Plan, 1944 Route 22-**
Determination of significance- conditional use permit for extension of existing tower and co-location. An additional 10' will be added. Passed by a vote of 6-0.
- 2. Nextel of New York, Inc, 87 Hillside Park- Marvin Mountain**
6 new antennas will be added. passed 6-0
- 3. Weston Chase Subdivision, Tillman Lane-**
The performance bond was reduced from \$487,000 to \$244,000. passed 7-0
- 4. Route 6 Business Plaza, 4005 Route 6E- Intent to declare Lead Agency**
Represented by Joe Buzinski of Bibbo Associates. According to Chairman Rohrman no action could be taken as drawings were not far enough along. Outstanding issues include: Letter from the state re. discharging stormwater to state land. Board member Manteo was concerned with interior traffic flow. David Rush was concerned with the location of the loading dock.

Dan Armstrong asked if they had received their variance. Answer: Yes.

PUBLIC HEARING:

Tenth Jam Subdivision: Simpson and Old Barrett Roads- Subdivision and SEQRA

Represented by Jeff Contelmo of Insite and attorney Dan Richmond

3 Lots on 130 acres. 2 residential lots of approximately 10 and 20 acres. 100 acres in the RC zone with nothing proposed yet. No variance needed.

Ann Fanizzi asked if there were any DEP comments. Ans. Not yet but they will look at the septic. Ms. Fanizzi said 'We will request a Traffic Study' as the road is already too busy. Chairman Rohrman asked who 'We' was?- Ann said 'The Coalition'.

A neighbor asked if there could be any further subdivision of these lots- Answer: Probably not due to the terrain. The Board mentioned possible Conservation Easements which Contalmo said he would ask his client.

Ms. Fanizzi asked how much fill will be needed? Ans. probably only what comes out of the basements.

Cathy Croft asked if there would be any retention basins- Ans. No, project will use infiltration and that there are good soils for this.

As always there will be a 10 day comment period.

5. Vail's Grove Amended Site Plan: Sketch Review

Applicant did not show up. No review.

6. Stateline Retail Centre, Route 6E:

Applicant asked to be deferred in order to set up equipment.

7. Fisher Subdivision: Nelson Blvd.

Terry Hahn was representing the applicant. This three lot subdivision will now have access through a shared drive of the existing house. Access will be off Nelson Blvd. rather than Reed Road. There will need to be a lot line adjustment. There will now be less than an 'acre of disturbance'. According to Chairman Rorhman there will not need to be another Public Hearing as there is now less impact than before. A 280A will be needed as there will not be road frontage for two of the lots.

This was referred to the TB for a 280A 7-0

Referred to the ARB 7-0

6. Stateline Retail Centre: Route 6

Paul Camarda, along with engineer, Jeff Contelmo, and planner, Tim Miller, gave the presentation. The project's inception was 2003.

The project will be approximately 185,000 sq. feet (about half the size of The Highlands-Home Depot). The anchor store will be 135,000 sq. ft. and will sit below Rt. 84 by 20 to 25 ft.

There was then a five minute video presentation which gave an overview of the Route 6 Route 84 corridor from approximately the Danbury Mall to Home Depot.

Mr. Camarda stated that Route 6 is 46 feet wide and currently handles 7000 cars per day. Route 22 (at 25' wide) handles 25,000 cars per day. The project sits approximately 750 feet from the East Branch Reservoir.

Mr. Camarda continued that he will need no zoning changes, he does not encroach on the wetlands and their buffers and he will not be dealing with steep slopes.

The site has is 3000 feet of linear road frontage. Roof water run-off will be used for irrigation. 200 new jobs will be created and \$3.5 million generated in Sales Tax for Putnam County. Additional property taxes will be generated. There will be 916 parking spaces (approximately 15 acres will be impervious surface). Mr. Camarda mentioned that there were only 6 single family homes on Route 6 to which Chairman Rohrman replied. 'Yes, but how many within a one mile radius? I know one.' At which point another Board member and Mike Manteo indicated that their homes were close as well. According to the Board, lighting will also be a big issue. Mr. Camarda promised lower poles with downward lighting and more of them.

Soil samples have been excellent for septic fields. Stormwater basins will meet with DEP approval. Traffic will be studied in depth.

Chairman Rohrman instructed Jeff Contalmo that the Environmental Assessment Form 'needed work' and that a 'part 3' would be necessary. It was mentioned that there would, most likely, be a Positive Declaration.

Mike Manteo mentioned the traffic problems where Route 121 enters 6. There was concern over the possibility of three new traffic lights.

Questions were asked as to what retailers might end up here. Mr. Camarda stated that specific tenants were not signed up but that he was talking to: Dick's Sporting Goods, BJ's, Sam's Club or an electronics store. A Car Dealership was not a possibility.

The Town Planner said that the Sketch Plan Review stage was where more input would be helpful as plans can be changed more easily. David Rush asked that parking be considered behind the building. He also mentioned Green Roofs and renewable energy recourses. And Mr. Armstrong suggested that great attention be paid to architectural detail and all facades be treated as the 'front'. He also mentioned the use of berms.

Mr. Camarda assured the Board that he will work hard to accommodate any concerns.

COMMENTS:

Cell Towers:

On the first two items (cell towers) I'll simply say that it's become de rigueur to come back before the Board to ask for more. Ten feet here, six new antennas there. Remind me again why many of us find big business almost as sleazy as local and big government... And as soon as the lawsuit is settled I'd watch for these add-ons at the Peach Lake tower as well.

Route 6 Business Plaza:

Well, well, well... the ink is barely dry on the ZBA decision and this is before the Board. This is a lot of square footage on a skinny lot. Still Mike Manteo didn't care for the interior traffic flow and Mr. Rush seemed less than thrilled with the loading dock. And really, is it too much to ask that the applicant be prepared? Now we're going to have to sit through the same questions again... Ugh.

Ooooo, and this may be one to watch. Within spitting distance of Charming Paul's 'Retail Centre' this gets a variance about a month ago and Charming doesn't even need one... Ouch.

Tenth Jam, John Simpson Road:

If you've seen the property (and caution to all who suffer from vertigo) there's not much more to be said. Sure it's only 2 lots on thirty acres. Things could be much worse. Suffice it to say that once these homes are built (albeit on 'plateaus') someone gets to write those always perky and slightly euphemistic real estate ads- So, in case it's not me, below are some heading suggestions: 'Jump to Roof', 'Bring your own Sherpa' and 'Paging Sir Edmund Hillary'.

Fisher Subdivision: Nelson Blvd

Although the amount of wetland buffer incursion was not clearly indicated this plan is less disruptive than before and should please the residents of Drewville Heights. Although why we need any incursion at all on this size property escapes me. Still, at least a lot more effort was made on this site.

Stateline Retail Centre:

I'm convinced the spelling of 'Centre' was used just to irk me- Charming knows my hands cramp just typing in this pretentiousness- but putting petty pet peeves aside this is actually a tough one to write about.

I'm really angry about this proposal for many reasons and some you'd never suspect so I'm resorting to 'bullets' for emphasis. No, not real bullets... Although my favorite e-mail received since the 'Centre' first came to light said simply, 'Start cleaning your gun.' Ah, some of you know me so well.

- Councilmen, Paul Johnson and Dick Honeck, ran on a platform assuring us that no more Box Stores could be built in SE. Gentleman, you weren't fibbing then were you?
- I believe that certain members of the Town Board have known about this project for a while. Clearly the recent re-zoning discussed (specifically on this piece) may open us up to a costly and, possibly un-winnable, lawsuit.
- And speaking of spot zoning... I opposed the 'backed in' zoning at Dykeman's Corporate Park. This rezoning now allows Auto Body repair and it's been no secret that Lisi's Towing has been interested in moving there. By the way, and completely co-incidentally, Dykemans Corporate Park is owned by (cue scary music) Harold Lepler.
- In my opinion the Route 6 east corridor, whether we like it or not, has unquestionably the best traffic infrastructure for commercial (or better yet, corporate) space in Southeast. And please, please don't even try to argue that Route 22, Route 312 or Route 6 West even compare. They do not- and that argument would be specious at best.
- And speaking of traffic, I love the hand-wringing over the possibility of three new traffic

lights. Because, apparently, this was of little or no concern when Mr. Lepler proposed Ace Endico off Route 312- where the lights will be far closer together.

- The same goes for lighting. Lots of concern on this project... but Ace Endico has downcast lighting and, earth to Planning Board, for god's sake it's on a ridgeline. It's a veritable beacon!
- Ask who lives closest to this project? While I'm sure it's completely co-incidental many of Southeast's movers and shakers live in this quadrant.
- My favorite comment to the always charming Mr. Camarda: 'How many people live within a one mile radius of this project?' And I couldn't agree more with Chairman Rorhman's sentiments here. But what annoys the snot out of me is that this question is never, ever asked in other parts of SE. Ace Endico? Never came up. The rather large Gateway Summit/Fairways project on the border of SE. Our town can't even get its act together to respond with a few lousy comments or suggestions. The hypocrisy is stunning.
- On that last note I'm pleased to present the NIMBY award to Chairman Rohrman and Mike Manteo. Guys, congrats and welcome to the club. Your badge, sash, scepter and decoder ring are in the mail.

Seriously, it was heartbreaking to watch Mr. Camarda's video and see how stunningly beautiful the land in Putnam County is. But right now, as far as I can tell, the bottom line in Southeast is this: We look at the developer rather than the development. And it also seems that a project is judged more on whose backyard it's in rather than whether the project itself has any merit.

If I could wave a wand and freeze Southeast as it is now or was twenty years ago I wouldn't hesitate. Really, despite recent designations as necessities, I don't **need** a wide screen TV, a palate of toilet paper, or 83 different brands of tennis rackets. Really. And if I do, I actually enjoy jaunts (when I'm allowed out) of Putnam County. That said, if our Boards in Southeast **had** been more diligent and consistent in the writing and enforcing of our zoning codes then this project wouldn't even be on the table.

Now it appears that there is finally a project our elected and appointed officials don't cotton to. Trouble is they're a day late and an equitable and timely zoning amendment short.

As always I welcome any e-mail questions or comments you may have.

With Best Regards,
Lynne Eckardt



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