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From: "Lynne Eckardt" <midfarm@bestweb.net>
Date: Sat Apr 2, 2005 6:09 pm
Subject: SE Planning Board Recap 3/28/05

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Hi All,

Below please find Planning Board notes of last Monday evening (3/28/05). As always the recap is unofficial and the comments tainted by my two and a half year odyssey of Planning Board meetings.

These are mercifully brief as with spring's arrival I'm preoccupied trying to earn a living. Check out SLS Residential as it had a very splashy power point presentation and is actually a for-profit Health Care facility near the banks of the Middle Branch on the same property as the historic Bloomer house.

WORK SESSION:

1. 16 Mt. Ebo Road South:

This was a discussion of interior changes to be made. The building once housed one tenant and will now house four. Michael Liguori, the attorney of record, explained that there is 53,000 square feet of office space and 20,000 of warehouse. All c/os will be handled by the building department as there is no change of use which would impact traffic, wastewater or parking. There are no preexisting files on this building and no one seemed to know why.

2. Durkin Water Co., Fields Lane:

This will need a variance for outside storage. The Board asked if all tenants now were legal. New tenants will need a c/o.

Public Hearing:

Alcon, Fields Lane:

This is Alfredo Landscaping and is on a lot of 6.45 acres north of the Ice Arena and next to Hardscrabble Tennis. The building will have 9600 sq. ft. warehouse, 1200 sq. ft. office and 1200 sq. ft. retail display. This is in an Office Park -1 zone.

Ann Beal asked about the hours of operation (ans. typical daytime hours), Does this have to go before the ZBA (yes). Traffic- how many trucks and will they be large? The applicant was vague and said not many tractor trailers, although they will be selling gravel, stone and plant material. This will be a primarily wholesale yard but there will be retail as well.

Kevin Beal suggested that the town zoning still does not provide enough of a buffer between commercial and residential space.

Regular Session:

1. Landau Subdivision, Joes Hill Road

All lots now comply with town code. After a site walk the Town Planner and Engineer would

now prefer one shared driveway. This avoids a wetlands crossing and cutting down major trees.

The applicant's attorney, Rick O'Rourke asked that frontage be taken from lot two and added back to the Landau's lot. This will need a 280-a. The public hearing will be on April 25th. The voted themselves lead agency 7-0.

2. SLS Residential Inc. Route 6

This property is the old 16 acre Bloomer estate on Route 6 across from Putnam County Savings Bank.

SLS (Supervised Life Styles) is a for-profit health care provider. SLS serves those with psychological problems (depression, bulimia, anxiety- no alcohol or drug abuse) they employ about 120 people and run two facilities in Southeast. This would be a consolidation of both facilities. There will be over 70 'clients' (this is the preferred term rather than patient) and the staff will go from 21 to 25.

There was a power point presentation showing two large buildings. The aim was to make them look like a 'country club' and not institutional.

The applicant was exploring the possibility of tapping into the Brewster Heights sewer and water plan. A board member asked if the Bloomer House was being used legally now.

3. Fox Lane Subdivision: 11 Fields lane

The Planning Board declared themselves lead agency (7-0) and set the Public Hearing date for 4/25/05.

4. Palazetti Warehouse, Hardscrabble Heights Drive.

Final site plan approval was granted by a vote of 7-0.

5. JNR Holdings, LLC, 2469 Route 6

This is the old 'Green Cabins' property where a Self Storage facility was planned two years ago. The applicant would like to change the use of the commercial building to medical offices. Since the property also has a residential unit it may not be combined with commercial. The applicant's architect had not received the Town Engineer's comments which had been faxed that same day (3/28/05) around 3:00 PM.

6. Envirostar Ventures LLC, Fields Lane

The Board voted a negative declaration by a vote of 7-0.

7. Campus at Fields Corners, Pugsley Road

The Board reviewed the amended final plat. All outstanding issues must be resolved by the end of April. Michael Zarin (attorney representing the applicant) said that they would be.

Comments:

1. Mt. Ebo South:

What was cool here was that there is actually more office space than warehouse and the fact that there are no existing files on this building was kind of interesting.

Public Hearing:

Alcon: Yeah, yeah, yeah. Yet another landscaping firm on Fields Lane. Yawn. So what else is new? I didn't really buy that there wouldn't be much truck traffic in and out or that they'll be operating during 'normal business' hours. The wholesalers I know start their day (in Spring and Fall) at 6:30 and knock off about 5:00. But hey, that'll keep Mr. Harper busy after they're approved. Kevin Beal's point that there should be greater buffers between commercial and residential property is a point well taken.

On the 'Believe it or not' side of the coin there are no wetlands on the property.

Landau Subdivision:

This is another 'who's on first'. After sitting through countless meetings on this (well... at least three) we're kinda, sorta back to square one. The Landau's are asking for a ton of frontage to be removed from lot 2 and restored to them- again.

While it's great to move the driveway access to spare large trees and wetlands I'm not clear why this entitles the Landaus to go back to non-conforming lots. I know they want a huge buffer for their own property but then maybe they should consider scaling back to three lots. I understand why, because there may be a shared driveway, the Landaus deserve a 'reward'. They'll still make a fortune subdividing. C'mon Joes Hill Road is the toniest address in the

Town of Southeast. In fact, we could sell a 'Houses of the Stars' map for the area.

SLS Residential:

This one was a little spooky to me. It wasn't at all the behavioral problems that got me but rather the virtual 'fly by' tour Power Point presentation. The architecture looked like something out of the old 'Prisoner' TV show rather than the 'County Club' look it strived for.

I found it odd that the Board seemed so concerned about fences and the like. Was anyone concerned that some bulimic might escape and hold up the nearby pizza joint?

As for hooking into the Brewster Heights sewer district... Well, I know there have been problems there and don't get me started on the water quality of the Middle Branch Reservoir. And now there will be even more impervious surface to direct more pollutants into the same body they want to drink out of. Perfect. Well, perhaps the 'clients' at Supervised Life Styles will be able to gaze out their country-club-like windows watching cars speed down the newly paved Maple Road. Ahhh, always an up side.

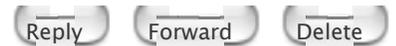
4. Palazetti Warehouse:

I really feel like throwing a Bon Voyage party for the ever affable Harry Nichols. This project has been around for over two years. Sure it has wetland and buffer incursions, sure it needed a special permit for more warehouse than office space- but this project had the guts to hang in there and receive them all. Oh wait, almost every project in Southeast does. Never mind.

One last point, and I've mentioned this before. Our Town Engineer, Tom Fenton, seems to fax questions to the applicants in the eleventh hour. How on earth is an applicant supposed to answer questions posed 5 hours before the scheduled meeting? This is a waste of everyone's time and money and is grossly unfair. Further it kills me to stand up for the applicant but honestly, this is not a sound way to do business. Fix it.

That's it from my desk on a dreary Saturday afternoon. Hope the rest of your weekend is fun- as always feel free to e-mail me with any questions or comments you may have.

With best regards,
Lynne Eckardt



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