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From: "Lynne Eckardt" <midfarm@bestweb.net>

Date: Tue Apr 27, 2004 12:25 pm

Subject: Planning Board Recap

Hello All,

ADVERTISEMENT

Below is my recap of the Southeast Planning Board meeting held last night. Official minutes will be available through the Planning Board.

Another packed agenda. So I'm going to have to edit. I've already heard from one CRSE member who couldn't make it as the agenda was unavailable until 9:45 AM the day of the meeting. As they so aptly put it, "It's almost as if we have to wire tap our town officials to get reasonable notice of public meetings."

No big projects on this agenda. Still a fair amount of residential development. On the 'light side' check out item 11.

The comments that follow are my own observations.

WORK SESSION:

1. ANTHONY PALLADINO, Old Route 22. Harry Nichols- Engineer.

Applicant wants to demolish 4 pre-existing, non-conforming structures totaling approx. 4500 square feet. Would like to replace it with 1 non-conforming 8000 square ft. building. He will need a variance so the PB recommended that Mr. Palladino first go before the Town Board to prove 'hardship'.

REGULAR SESSION:

1. TURK HILL EAST SUBDIVISION: Turk Hill Road. 4 Lots.Engineer: Insite Engineering.

This project received a neg. dec. (7-0) was referred to the Conservation Commission (7-0) and the ARB. There were a lot of comments about the 'historical significance' of the neighborhood and how this should be dealt with. David Rush, newest Board member who lives close to this project and is a neighbor of Councilwoman Mitts, was very concerned and asked that footprints of proposed houses be flagged, fewer cuts be made though old stone walls, that proposed houses conform to 'community character', trees to be cut need to be tagged and finally, that a site walk be done.

2. VITA SUBDIVISION: Brewster Hill Road.

This 3 lot subdivision received a neg. dec. (7-0) and was referred to the Conservation Commission (7-0).

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3. TRIPLE J SUBDIVISION: Welfare Road.

Two of the three Triple J owners are: John Petrillo (local Realtor) and Jay Hogan (formally a Town Attorney and partner of Willis Stephens).

The PB granted 'Conditional Final Approval' By a vote of 6-1 (Mr. Wissel voted 'no'). There are outstanding engineering issues from the town engineer but Chairman Rohrman felt that if the project wasn't moved along (it's been in the approvals process for almost 5 years) that they would lose their former status and have to conform to the newer, stricter zoning regulations. Apparently the DEP has lost much of the paperwork on this subdivision and the Planning Board felt that 'Triple J' shouldn't be 'punished' for this. There are 2 detention basins now located in Patterson at the DEP's insistence.

4. POWERS FASTENERS, Mt. Ebo Road, South: In a last minute letter from Town Attorney, Willis Stephens, it appears that the 'shipping containers' that Powers has been using for storage are NOT legal in Southeast. Thus the PB would not vote on the proposed landscaping plan.

5. ROOT AVENUE SUBDIVISION: Root Avenue. 6 lots. Engineer: Peder Scott

Chairman Rohrman condensed the Town Engineer's letter in describing this project as 'One big mess.' And that 'The project is too complex for this many lots.' and finally that 'the drainage is too complex to maintain.' Peder Scott insisted that the DEP is happy with the drawings and complained that his client 'has waited a long time'. The PB referred this on to the Town Board (for sign approval) by a vote of 7-0. Preliminary approval was not voted on.

8. GASLAND (BREWSTER ATI) Corner of Starr Ridge and Route 6: Engineer; Peder Scott.

It turns out that this station has one pump too many and although the applicant originally promised not to service tractor trailers they have been. The extra pump has been shut down. The cooler in back has been removed. Mr. Armstrong again reminded the applicant that a total of 8 variances had been granted to make this project 'work'. Lighting was discussed (facing up rather than down as it should) and applicant said that it would be fixed. Referred to the ARB re. canopy 7-0.

11. THE HIGHLANDS: MACK'S FAMILY RESTAURANT: There was much discussion on the fact that this project (Harold Lepler is involved) went before the ARB without a referral from the Planning Board. Mack's is, apparently, a 'Diner-like structure' (red and round) that will not conform to the existing architecture of 'The Highlands' (Home Depot et al.) The Planning Board would not refer this to the ARB until they have seen drawings first.

12. BAKER FARM SUBDIVISION: Enoch Crosby Road. 5 lots. Engineer: Harry Nichols.

The Town Engineer feels that all driveways and proposed housing sites need to be changed. This was a sketch plan review so no action was taken.

COMMENTS:

TURK HILL ROAD EAST: While it was nice to see concern shown over the 'historical significance' of a neighborhood it does seem a tad selective. In fact, the Fowler House over on Root Avenue is an older and also important historical site, but when the Root Avenue subdivision came up this was never mentioned. Concerns over 'cuts' in stone walls are important as well. But when an entire stone wall in the Starr Ridge designated 'Historic District' is dismantled and rebuilt 'Greenwich style' nothing is said. Some consistency would go a long way right about now.

TRIPLE J SUBDIVISION: This one's a beaut. Why is that when a project has languished through the approval's process the applicant is always cut a break? It's not like week after week this subdivision wasn't allowed on the agenda. And when was the applicant made aware that the DEP had 'lost' data? And what's the down side for Southeast residents when a project has to conform to the new stricter new regs.?

POWERS FASTENERS: Kudos to Willis Stephens for his letter stating that 'Shipping Containers' do not constitute legal storage space. In a letter sent to the PB back in December I mentioned that allowing 'shipping containers' to be used as storage set a bad precedent. Aside from the sheer ugliness of these temporary 'structures' they are not subject to property tax. A nice double whammy. Ugly, plus no revenue. I had to agree with Mr. La Perch when he stated that 'the applicant should have been informed of this letter before the meeting'. That's simply common courtesy. Continued eleventh hour communiqués continue to plague the Planning Board, its applicants, and waste everyone's time.

ROOT AVENUE:

Again, the nearby 'Historic Fowler House' should be taken into consideration when this goes before the ARB. Also, should we really care when an applicant has 'waited a long time for approval?' This has been one of those complex projects that seems to come and go. It's almost as if the applicant wants the PB to 'forget' the problems inbetween meetings. Thanks to the Planning Board for not voting on this.

GASLAND:

Ahhh, what can I say here. 8 variances and still asking for more. It's no wonder Chairman Rohrman finally snapped. Remember: This was a pre-existing, non-conforming gas station which could have been eliminated or at the very least kept to the same footprint. I'm guessing the town rues the day they decided to let this project proceed. On the bright side most Planning Board members raved about the 'police line-up' of Arborvitae surrounding the property.

MACK'S FAMILY RESTAURANT:

Winner of the coveted 'ironic statement' of the evening award. Apparently there is concern here as the proposed building will not conform to the 'architecture' of 'The Highlands'. Earth to Planning Board: It's hard to fall off the floor.

The main battle seemed to be centered over procedure and why the applicant went before the ARB without a referral. And we thought that this had been all ironed out at the March 8th meeting.

BAKER FARM:

This project has a long way to go as the Town Engineer has asked that all house sites and driveways be moved. Lots of 'cutting and filling', stone walls, steep slopes and wetlands.

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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