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From: "Lynne Eckardt" <midfarm@bestweb.net>
Date: Fri Sep 16, 2005 2:23 pm
Subject: Southeast Planning Board Recap 9/12/05

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Hi All,

Monday night's Planning Board meeting was mercifully short. As usual there was one 'I want to open a vein...' agenda item but I readily admit this is my 'Fields Lane Phobia' going into overdrive.

All and all a fairly subdued meeting- there was no public hearing. And as always the comments that follow are my customary quirky and jaded take on life in Southeast. They represent no one's opinions but my own.

WORK SESSION:

The Baseball Academy: Fields Lane- Conceptual Review:

Joe Buschynski from Bibbo Associates was the engineer representing the applicant. The property is owned by John and Kathy McNamara. The 9.4 acre piece shares access with the Brewster Ice Arena. There will be one baseball and one softball field both with night lighting. 130 space parking lot and a Field House that will have metal panels on two sides. There may be additional parking available at the ice arena which the applicant is hoping to negotiate.

The Field House will be no taller than 50' and have three stories. It will include: An infield with viewing area, offices, a pro shop, pitching and hitting cages, party rooms, locker rooms, exercise rooms, storage and showers.

Planning Board member David Rush asked if there was a similar facility nearby and the applicant answered that they were originally on Court Street in Bedford.

The facilities manager spoke about the Academy's role in obtaining scholarships (\$2 million last year). He said that women's softball was an important component as women's colleges now offer softball scholarships.

Various Board members voiced concern over the night lighting. The applicant mentioned that most night games would end before 10:00 and that only 10% of the games involved using the lights.

Other Board members mentioned that a traffic study would be essential as the Ice Arena has had some serious traffic issues. The applicant was asked how many people would be there on a 'best' day. The applicant answered 140.

Mr. LaPerch asked if the Academy would work with the schools over possible field time. The answer was a qualified 'yes'

Owner, Mr. McNamara, got up to speak about access and stated that it was not an easement but rather a right-of-way.

Chairman Rohrman said that he thought the project was a good addition to what's going on 'down there'.

REGULAR MEETING:

1. Villavicencio Accessory Apartment, 12 Manor Way

This item was incomplete and was referred to the October 24th agenda.

2. Route 6 Business Plaza:

Referred to the ZBA. 7-0

3. Torhan/Johnson Lot Line Adjustment, Gage Road

The last submission satisfied the Town Engineer. Final approval was passed by a vote of 7-0.

4. Penella LLC, 261 Fields Lane

This will be placed on the October 24th agenda to complete the preliminary site plan review and determine lead agency.

5. Millennium Site Plan, Route 6

This was a sketch Plan review. This property has roads on all three sides and is on Route 6 east of the Route 312 intersection. It is 300 feet from a reservoir stem. 5000 sq. ft. of retail space (used as a convenience store- designed as a 'country store') is proposed. This is in a Gateway/Commercial Zone.

The building will be seen from Route 6 (although the back of the 'country store' will front the road). Planning Board member Armstrong suggested that all sides of the building be front facades.

JP International asked to be taken off the agenda-

6. Campus at Fields Corners, Pugsley Road

The applicant, represented by Dan Richmond, asked for a 90 day extension on final subdivision and re-subdivision conditional plat approval. Due to the difficulties in meeting all the conditions. The Board granted the extension by a vote of 7-0.

COMMENTS:

1. The Baseball Academy: Field's Lane

You weren't thinking, even for an instant, that there might actually be an office going into our Office Park Zone on Fields Lane, were you? Excellent. Then you won't be disappointed as there's a new (ta da!) sports venture planned.

For the record. I like Baseball- it's the only professional sport I watch or listen to. That said this was a really lame presentation with way too many buzzwords for my taste.

Number one: The word 'scholarship' was bandied about with abandon. Apparently it'll be the mitigating factor when 'Special Permitting' time comes around. In second place came all things 'female'. 'Girls' and 'Ladies' especially in regard to 'Scholarship (there's that magic word again) money'.

Few questions were answered directly. I mean, jeeze, several Planning Board members asked if there was a similar facility nearby but no answer was forthcoming. Finally (because third time's the charm) the applicant admitted that the project on Fields Lane would be the prototype.

Lots of comments on the night lighting. I loved when the applicant said they **once** had a game end at midnight. But that most ended before 10:00 and besides only 10% of the games played were under lights. But since we never heard how many games are played I have no idea what this number might be.

Doing the Math: What seemed really odd to me was the answer given when Mr. Armstrong

(again asking all the right questions) inquired how many people would be at the Academy on a 'best' day. The applicant answered 140. So, here's what I don't get. Why all the fuss over parking if you have 130 spaces and the applicant figured several people per vehicle?

Finally, would it kill any engineering firm to include more points of reference on the map? No one could tell how close residential areas are or where the Ice Arena parking lot was. C'mon guys- throw us a bone.

4. Penella Warehouse

Like the proverbial bad penny it's back. And this little number seems to be to taking an awfully long time in the process. I sometimes get the feeling that the applicant hopes we 'forget' the bad stuff. In this case going back to December of '04 there was wetland buffer incursion, steep slopes, proposed 10' retaining walls (mitigating factor: They applicant mentioned something about 'vines'- Oh well, then the sky's the limit) and a 90% warehouse 10% office split in a 6000 square foot building. Completely co-incidentally there was to be between 6000 to 10,000 sq. ft. of wetland buffer disturbance with part of the driveway and septic fields within the buffer. Color me there.

I doubt you have to even ask where all this splendor will arise. See above or I'll be forced to go into a gratuitous and boring Fields Lane rant.

5. Millennium Site Plan: Route 6

Looking at this site for the life of me I couldn't remember where the hell it was. Fortunately, thanks to the hot tip from Planning Board member LaPerch after the meeting, I remembered that it's the site east of the Route 312/Route 6 traffic light on the reservoir side. And this one's been in the hopper for awhile- having had to wait out a moratorium.

Anyway, now the plan is to build a convenience store disguised as an 'country store'. Problem is, the side that faces Route 6 will actually be the back of the store. And this is in our new 'Gateway/Commercial' zone- because nothing says 'welcome' quite like the a## end of a convenience store.

Chairman Rohrman felt the project to big for the site- and it was deemed '10 lbs in a 5 lb bag by another Board member. I'll say.

6. The Campus at Fields Corner

Don't get me wrong- this is a large residential project (143 houses) that I've never cared for. But at least they are trying to use 'best management practices' to mitigate storm water run off including street cleaning every two weeks.

Nah, what really stands out here is how much worse 'The Meadows' project is yet how much better the applicant is treated.

'The Meadows' is represented by Village Justice Rick O'Rourke. And it has had extensions granted up the whazoo with barely the blink of an eye. While 'The Campus' (represented by out-of-towner Dan Richmond) is grilled as to why an extension is needed. Don't misunderstand- the Board should be very circumspect before granting any extension- I just think that all applicants should be treated equally. And as the standard sidebar, enjoy your school taxes once these babies are up and running. No matter how you do the math (and I still believe that one child per household is low-balling it) between both projects you're looking at minimally 125 students up to almost 400 using the 'accepted-by-many, shunned-by-a-few' 1.6 children per household. Remember, as it stands now, both projects propose large, expensive homes.

Gives one pause, doesn't it.

As an update on The Meadows-the project is still stalled as the County will not give the needed permits to lay pipes under Deans Corner Road. I understand through the grapevine that the Town may ask the applicant to remove all equipment from the property until this issue is resolved.

In less than a news flash- the only people getting rich off this project are the attorneys. Ka - Ching.

That's it from here- As always please feel free to e-mail me with any comments or questions that you may have.

Have a great weekend-

With Best Regards,
Lynne Eckardt



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