

SE Planning Board Meeting Recap 2/12/07

Hi All,

On Monday night I attended a Southeast Planning Board meeting. With only two items on the agenda I figured this for a record breaker- and so did Chairman Rohrman who was genuinely surprised and couldn't figure why anyone (in their right mind) would attend.

WHAT!#\$%^&* And miss 'A Tale of Two Terrys' (Hahn and Ryan)... or miss a meeting with Dykeman's Corporate Park on the agenda? Are you kidding. This is always worth it for the irony alone. Besides, there's the possibility of an always debonair Mr. Leper sighting. And really, who doesn't appreciate an Auto Body shop in a corporate park? This gem has always been near and dear to my heart since the Town Board backed the 'special permit' zoning in for Lisi's Towing several years ago. Ugh. Warning: a full blown Eckardt rant follows.

You'll note that 'Pegasus Therapeutic Riding' was also on the agenda. Unfortunately Pegasus was recently granted a variance by my favorite Board in town. I was so bitterly disappointed and distraught by this ill-advised decision I came down with the vapors and I took to my bed for several days. I never did manage to pen a recap so more on this later as well.

As always the drivel above and below is my own peculiar and disillusioned take on life in Southeast- my opinion only. These musings are solely mine and reflect no organization to which I belong.

Planning Board Meeting:

Regular Session: 12 February 2007

1) Pegasus Therapeutic Riding Peach Lake Road-

Continued Review. Referral to the Town Board for a Special Use Permit (Equestrian Center):

Pegasus received a variance from the ZBA in January [Ed. note: An Equestrian Center needs 25 acres, Pegasus is around 21] Teresa Ryan from Insite is the project spokesperson. She told the Board that the Center would be limited to 30 horses instead of 70. As there were only 3 people in the audience Chairman Rohrman allowed Meg Flannery from Vail's Grove in Peach Lake to speak. Ms. Flannery explained that Vail's Grove had retained Hahn Engineering to do a study of the property in question as there is a lot of runoff which ends up in the Peach Lake Canal. Chairman Rohrman explained that it would be necessary to get this report in within two weeks so that the Town Engineer and the Planning Board had time to review it.

Ms. Ryan asked that this also be referred to the Architectural Review Board. Pegasus was referred to both the Town Board and ARB by a vote of 6-0.

2) Dykeman's Corporate Park- Route 312

Referral to the Town Board for a Special Use Permit (Motor Vehicle Service Station), review architectural drawings.

Terry Hahn was the project representative. The property is 52 acres and there will be two matching buildings (the front building is being constructed on spec). Lisi's Towing will occupy one. The buildings will match Westchester Tractor (Terravest) and will be gray block with red accents.

Ms. Hahn explained that 'outside storage' can not exceed 5% of the property size and that although they were entitled to over 100,000 square feet they would need only 42,000. A PB member asked if the site would be visible from surrounding areas. Ms. Hahn replied that there would be screening- although she admitted that more landscaping would be beneficial. Town Attorney, Willis Stephens, mentioned that 'outdoor storage' is actually calculated by building size.

Ms. Hahn also said that she wasn't sure her renderings were completely accurate. It was mentioned that the old Lisi's site can remain a repair facility and might still have an old gas station permit.

Board member Dan Armstrong asked if the owner of Dykeman's Corporate Park, Harold Lepler, still intended to sell 30 acres of the site to the town for one dollar. Tom LaPerch thought that perhaps a conservation easement made more sense as it would remain on the tax rolls. Ms. Hahn said that she'd have to check on these questions.

Ms. Hahn also mentioned that there would be a 'small disturbance' in the wetland buffer area.

The Planning Board referred this to the Town Board for a Special Permit by a vote of 6-0.

Comments/Opinion:

Pegasus:

I'm still so bitterly disappointed in the ZBA's decision to grant a variance to this Equestrian Center it's difficult to write about. For the record the ZBA vote was not unanimous as Paul Vink was the lone dissenting vote- I believe that he found the variance excessive despite the difficult-to-enforce compromise

offered. Oh, and faulty percentage of variance needed. Gosh, in another sure sign of the Apocalypse Mr. Vink and I are in agreement.

Pegasus has now been referred to the Town Board for a Special Permit and some Vail's Grove residents living directly downhill are less than thrilled. As has been explained, there is no question that Pegasus is a laudable operation. But unfortunately, while this Equestrian Center will be doing good works, sh*t still flows downhill and therein lies the problem.

Chairman Rohrman was good enough to allow Meg Flannery the floor. But it was obvious he regretted the decision almost immediately as there seemed to be a real communications gap. Hopefully the Hahn engineering report will be available in two weeks.

Dykeman's Corporate Park

How do I hate this project? Let me count the ways... and for the record I like Lisi's and have always been a satisfied customer. For me, this is really more about how the town treats the property owner, Mr. Lepler. Because it's always 'all about Harold'.

So, not in any order of importance here are my top ten objections:

1) I intensely dislike how the Town Board rewrote the zoning code to allow 'motor vehicle repair' in Economic Development zones. And this was after Lisi's (with Mr. Lepler) had already been in front of the TB. It was all so cheap and tawdry- Hey, why worry about a silly little variance when we can simply rezone to make this happen. For the record CRSE wrote several letters and spoke out against this rezone.

2) Terry Hahn positively effervescing about how the Lisi's architecture would match 'Westchester Tractor'. Like that would be a good thing. Oh goody, twin buildings that can only be described as 'early cell block' with matching pantone red accents.

3) I believe that this project will be visible for miles. Thus the big bonus of 'matching Westchester Tractor'-which can also be seen for miles. It really seemed a little suspect when Ms. Hahn waxed poetic about the 'screening' rather than answer the question of how visible the finished product would be. And I can only hope we won't be treated to the 'police line-up' of Norway Spruce that now 'disguise' Westchester Tractor.

4) Lucky us. Only one acre of outside storage... in this case cars and trucks in various states of disrepair. The glint of crushed metal will be so attractive when viewed from afar. On top of this I believe Town Attorney was correct about the outside storage area being tied to the size of the building- not just the property size. But conveniently this seemed to be ignored.

5) In one of my favorite moves the applicant tells us that they **could** have had 100,000 square feet in outdoor storage but (out of the goodness of their heart) have cut this figure in less than half. I suppose canonization is right around the corner.

6) As added 'eye candy' (although left unmentioned) I'll just assume we'll be treated to a six foot chain link fence surrounding all the wrecked vehicles. Hmmmm, perhaps capped with a little razor wire to add that 'Je ne sais quoi'.

7) Calling this a 'Corporate Park' doesn't make it so. How about finally calling a spade a spade: you know, something like: 'The usual hodgepodge of crap that substitutes for corporate in Southeast'.

8) Using up the 'good' land on the parcel and then 'donating' the leftovers to our town. The 30 or so acre 'handover' will be great for an October photo-op- I mean, it sure sounds good and the building won't be up. A conservation easement would be much more appealing here and would help buffer the Lake Tonetta Conservation area.

9) Early in this process we were told that Lisi's moving out of our 'Gateway' area would be a good thing. Now we're told that the old Lisi's site can remain the same, and not only that- may have 'gas station status'. Can you say: Bill of Goods...

10) Erecting a neighboring 'corporate' building on spec... yeah, great... right next to an auto body shop. That'll be appealing we'll have to beat off corporations with a stick. On the bright side, maybe we can get a 'tool and dye' guy to move in.

A small disturbance in the wetland buffer area? Hardly worth discussing at this point, I mean why should I even be surprised. I swear, sometimes it's like shoveling snow with a spoon...

That's it from my desk. As always feel free to e-mail me with any comments or suggestions you might have. And enjoy the snow-

With Best Regards,

Lynne Eckardt