

SE Planning Board Recap 7/23/07

Hi All,

I'm still incredibly far behind on my recaps... My apologies.

In any case I'm gonna tackle the Planning Board Meeting held on July 23rd as my notes are pretty clear.

The really big news is that after serving for 26 years Chairman George Rohrman has resigned effective August 4th. Since some refer to Southeast as 'The town that George built' this *may* be a real change. And for as many times as I've gone head-to-head with the Chairman he should be commended for his service to the community. While I didn't like a lot of Mr. Rorhman's decisions I think that he was treated pretty shabbily by the Town Board in the end. But then, no surprises there.

Mr. Rohrman's replacement is Tom La Perch. Mr. LaPerch is a really affable guy- however, I do worry about his love of all-things-commercial.

Easily my favorite part of the night centered around the Public Hearing for Southeast Memorial Park. This complete train wreck of a 'land donation' has been in the works for over four years- and just never gets any better. This is like that really, really hideous piece of expensive jewelry your husband gives you and you have no idea what the hell you're gonna do with it.

Like the proverbial bad penny Westchester Tractor is back- again with the outdoor storage. Represented by Terry Hahn this was recently before the Town Board. Ms. Hahn decided to give it a whole new spin in front of Planning earning an solid 'A' for creativity.

As always the opinions above and below reflect only my own personal snarky take on life in Southeast. They reflect no organization to which I belong.

AGENDA:

Public Hearings:

1. Sutton Corporate Park- Lot 1- Site plan and SEQRA:

This is a 40,000 square foot building with a 20,000 square foot footprint. It will be 50% office 50% warehouse. Approvals were given two years ago with the only change being the first floor will be raised by two feet.

Lighting, traffic and hours of operation were also discussed.

2. Southeast Memorial Park- North Main Street, Subdivision, Site Plan, Wetlands & SEQRA

A two lot subdivision owned by John Petrillo. The 3.2 acre lot will be donated to the town while the 2.8 acre lot will be retained by Mr. Petrillo for batting cages. A Little League field will be built along with a parking lot and rest rooms- grading will be done by Mr. Petrillo.

Town parking on the donated piece will also serve the batting cages. A pervious surface will be used.

Questions:

I asked if core samples would be taken as the site was formerly used to dump construction debris from Route 684. Also, years ago a well up the street had been contaminated, I believe, by Metro North cleaning chemicals.

I asked how much of the property was within the wetland and buffer.

According to wetland's consultant, Don Cuomo, 95% of the developed land will be within the wetland buffer and 75% within the wetlands. Although it was mentioned that the land had been previously disturbed. The wetlands hearing will be continued until September 10th.

3. Buonodonna Grading and Filling Plan, 58 Indian Wells- Special Permit and SEQRA

1000 cu. yards of fill were brought in (300 were allowed).

There were no questions and the Public Hearing was closed

Regular Session:

1. Pegasus Therapeutic Riding, Route 124- Final Site Plan Approval, Referral to the Town Board for Establishment of Performance Bond

No Putnam County Board of Health approval so the Planning Board can not grant final approval. Theresa Ryan was the applicant's rep.

Performance Bond total: \$403,000 referred to Town Board. 6-0.

2. D'uva Site Plan, Fields Lane- continued review and wetland permit application:

Retaining wall need to be shown on final plat. Mr. Cuomo concurred with AKRF that the site's wetlands were 'highly disturbed'. There will be a Public Hearing on September 10th.

3. Millennium Realty, Route 6- Continued review, review wetland permit application, set Public Hearing date:

No updated site plan yet. Don Cuomo would like to see wetlands on plat. The Public Hearing will be held on September 10th.

4. Westchester Tractor, Terravest International Corporate Park- Discussion regarding outdoor storage:

Outdoor storage now proposed for under the NYSEG power lines. There is an easement. Chairman Rohrman asked how the town could keep the storage site from 'growing' (graders and back-hoes will be 'stored'). Very expensive landscaping was proposed. Planning Board member, Dan Armstrong, asked for a power point presentation so that the PB could see exactly what the storage would look like. Terry Hahn suggested that a photo simulation would do. There will be additional review on August 13th.

5. Root Avenue Subdivision: Root Avenue- Review for final subdivision approval:

Final Plat approval: 6-0. Not ready for the Performance Bond to be set.

6. New Cingular Wireless Telecommunications Facility, Vails Grove Golf Course- Final conditional use permit, referral to the Town Board for establishment of Performance Bond:

Bond amount: \$80,400 (\$38,000 to remove tower when obsolete) 6-0

7. Brewster Plaza LLC, Route 22- Final amended site plan approval, referral to the Town Board for establishment of Performance Bond:

Final approval granted 6-0. Performance Bond \$39,000 referred to Town Board. This is the old USA Baby building. The applicant was commended on his reuse and redesign of the old building.

8. Dodge Grading & Fill Plan, 15 Peter Road- Sketch Plan:

No representative showed up. It was mentioned that the fill used came from DEP dam work.

Comments/Opinions:

There are really only two projects worth noting here- but they're real winners.

Southeast Memorial Park:

I still think this one takes the cake for shortsightedness and lack of due-diligence. Could someone, anyone, explain to me why we'd want a ball field that's 75% in the wetlands? While the site is disturbed it's still amazingly wet- and until core samples are taken we don't know if it's toxic or not.

To add insult to injury we'll be building a parking lot on our dime so that Mr. Petrillo's batting cages will be serviced by our town lot. Huh?

This has been in front of one Board or another for the past four years. Perhaps Mr. Petrillo thinks the longer it plods through approvals the more disinterested the public will become. Well, sorry Mr. P but I'm still really interested and eagerly await answers.

Westchester Tractor:

How do I loath this project... let me count the ways. I guess just the fact that variances were given to ram this project through still rankles. I simply adored Ms. Hahn's spin where she neglected to mention that the Town Board was less than thrilled with the entire outside storage thing- even though relegated under power lines. Nah, Ms. Hahn inferred that the TB was much happier with the new storage location- but this isn't at all what I saw from my perch at the TB meeting.

Anyhow, in its brief but now infamous history, WT insisted that there would be no servicing on site- yet they opened with 16 service bays. Or maybe the fact that they were declared 'not retail' even though they sell both new and used equipment. Perhaps it's the fact that they I just hated the entire charade from start to finish- because it's not that this is an inherently bad business it's more that Harold Lepler played the Southeast system for them. And what the always debonair Mr. Lepler wants he usually gets. Witness the zoning changes soon to be made on Route 22. An 80,000 square foot footprint may now be allowed- So much for our quaint fake village.

Finally, I sat through meeting after meeting where WT assured the PB that if they got their 10,000 square foot open-sided storage building they wouldn't need any additional outdoor storage. And of course, this proved to be complete BS. It simply amazes me that no one on Planning, Zoning or Town Board could give a rat's a** that they've been completely duped.

Brewster Plaza LLC: (USA Baby)

It's such a refreshing change to see an older building used and refurbished. The Planning Board was totally on target with their commendation.

Off to another Planning Board meeting in a few... As always if you have any comments or questions please don't hesitate to e-mail.

With best regards,

Lynne Eckardt