

Hi All,

I haven't reported in on any Planning Board meetings for awhile. They've become staid, generally well run affairs with Chairman LaPerch keeping a tight leash on both applicants and consultants. But last Monday was such a winner that I just can't give it a pass.

The highlight was definitely the fabulous batting cage project otherwise known ironically as: Southeast Memorial Park. Why ironic? Because the applicant, John Petrillo, had suddenly totally pulled the plug on the baseball field aspect of the "park" theme. Sure, we knew that he was no longer donating it to the town. And, Petrillo claims this is because the town doesn't want or need another ball field. Hmmmmm, I wonder which elected official really said this to Mr. Petrillo? Anyhow, I wish I had a scanner so I could send you all an artist's rendering illustrating how remarkably unattractive this project is going to be.

Also on the agenda- the new fire substation proposed for all you lucky Milltown Road residents. And finally another cell tower... because the 8206 we now sport (so that North Salem can remain blissfully free of these eyesores) simply isn't enough. Apparently, there's always room for one more. To his credit Chairman LaPerch twigged onto this stunning coincidence long ago and is asking for coverage mapping. Still, I think the real trick here is figuring out how North Salem manages to avoid those pesky monopoles. I believe the short answer is socio-economics- but then maybe it's just me.

For all you trendsetters out there you'll note that 'barns are the new black' and were the architectural style of choice on two out of the three projects. In fact by the time we hit agenda item 3 I feared that the Verizon monopole might be tricked out as a gigantic, cupola mounted weather vane but fortunately my overactive imagination had gone haywire.

As always my sarcastic and cynical take on "planning" in Southeast is my own and reflects no organization unlucky enough to have me.

AGENDA:

Public Hearing:

1. Cerlich Re-Subdivision: Pine View Estates Lot #5- Subdivision SEQRA continuation for wetland permit portion

This was pulled from the agenda.

Regular Session:

1. Southeast Memorial Park Site Plan, North Main Street- Referral to ARB

Jim Nixon presented a rendering of the concession stand that will look like a barn. The concession stand will be open later than the batting cages (the batting cages will close at 10:00 PM). It will serve hotdogs, hamburgers and the like and will be called 'Da Dugout'. The concession stand will also be open later in the season than the batting cages.

At this point it was disclosed that there was to be no ball field on the adjoining lot- but rather a spot seeded, irrigated and mowed. Wetlands Consultant, Don Cuomo, stated that he had advocated for the a wetlands permit for both lots *only* under the condition that the neighboring lot remain green space (or a ball field). Meanwhile, applicant, John Petrillo said that he didn't guarantee that the land would remain green and it was his right to come back before the board with other plans. Planning Board member, Edwin Alvarez, said that while Mr. Petrillo had said he would not be donating a ball field to the town Petrillo had never said that a ball field would not be built. In addition the 'ball field' subdivision contains the parking for the batting cages and concession. Later Mr. Petrillo mentioned that he might want to install an elaborate miniature golf course on the 'ball field' lot.

The filing of the subdivision plat was then discussed. The applicant's engineer, John Lynch, said that it had not been filed. More discussion ensued on whether a deadline for filing had been missed and thus the approval given on May 12, 2008 might be 'stale'.

The Board seemed disinclined to approve the wetlands permit due to the possible change of use at which point Petrillo agreed to the open space/ball fields on the subdivided lot.

Wetlands permit approved 5-0

Referral to the ARB 5-0

2. Brewster/Southeast Joint Fire District Site Plan, 310 Milltown Road- Review

Michael Liguori gave the presentation with Jim Nixon as architect.

This is a 4.5 acre parcel. There were public meetings held in 2006 and 2007 when the building was to be 11,600 square feet- the new project will be 4,800 square feet and has been designed by Jim Nixon to look like a barn. The cost of the original project was \$5.2 million. The new project is estimated to come in under \$2 million. What would have cost the average homeowner \$56 per year will fall to around \$16.

There will be a 30,000 gallon underground water tank. There will not be a siren. Planning Board member Dan Armstrong asked how much impervious surface there would be (answer- about an acre). Wetlands Consultant Don Cuomo asked if the basins could be moved (answer- yes).

3. New York SMSA LP d/b/a Verizon Wireless Telecommunications Facility, 3925 Danbury Road- Review

This 120' tower will be located near the old Lighthouse Motors on Route 6 East (between Route 6 and Route 84). There was an explanation of why the Joes Hill Tower does not provide the coverage needed here. Chairman LaPerch requested coverage maps as it appeared to him that Southeast is again providing coverage for North Salem. There is also a tower in Peach Lake which Verizon was asked to look into.

There will be 2 additional carriers on this pole. A storm water plan is needed as well. The Board referred this to the county by a vote of 5-0.

New Business:

Dan Armstrong is looking at 2 already built commercial projects to see if their landscaping is in compliance with their original plans. The two are: Route 6 Business Plaza (I believe that this is Suozzi) and Cerebral Palsy off Doansburg Road- Mt. Ebo.

Comments/Opinion:

Southeast Memorial Park:

I really thought my head was gonna explode or my eyeballs stuck in my forehead after all the prolonged eye-rolling I did. My not-so-subtle heavy sighing was undoubtedly really annoying as well.

So... What's uglier than batting cages? Give up? That's correct... abandoned batting cages! Does anyone remember the ones situated along Route 52 in Kent?

Sure, I know we're not supposed to project into the future (except with cell towers that must be dismantled when they become obsolete) but still- does this really sound like a viable business plan? The rendering looks like 'Ladies and Gents... Welcome to the big top!' Because there's miles of chain link, six batter's boxes, six pitching machines and a 32' monopole holding up hectares of netting. Now you're thinking... there's bound to be some landscaping, right? Well, there is now after some not-so-subtle persuasion. Originally the applicant wanted to throw down some seed and call it a day but now we have more of a landscaping plan- and while some of it is fine (native plants, wetland plants, decent sizes) all we have 'hiding' the cages from North Main Street is a police line-up of Forsythia. UGH. While Forsythia will be a painfully cheerful, two week, screaming yellow extravaganza in early spring by late fall it looks like a denuded, tangled mess- and this is just when you most want the cages hidden.

And 'Da Dugout' !#\$%^&* Double UGH. Talk about lowering the bar. I mean, maybe it will be great family spot but that illiterate name coupled with what was supposed to be a mere adjunct (with bathrooms) to the cages will remain open later and longer into the season- who knows maybe throughout the year. No one ever asked.

I especially loved the applicant's possible 'elaborate' miniature golf proposal for the 'green space' parcel. I don't care how 'elaborate' it is- it ain't green. It's built on slab and all the Astroturf and darling little windmills in the world won't make it environmentally sound- especially given that it would be totally within the wetlands and buffer.

This project has been bait and switch from the get-go- including the fact that this entire scheme is located on three separate parcels. The batting cages are on one, the septic on another (not owned by the applicant.. And here I thought only the debonair Mr. Lepler could pull this off) and the parking on yet another. More importantly, approximately 400 feet from the site there are NYDEC Petroleum Bulk Storage sites that have recorded petroleum spills. As of last January there was one open spill (0602782) and the Town Planner's company wrote that based on their location these spills could have impacted the Southeast Memorial Park site. The applicant's engineer says that they won't. Case closed. Me? I'd still like to see the soil sample results that were supposed to have been taken.

Finally, just do me a favor. Please, please don't call this nightmare Southeast Memorial Park. Number 1: We don't own it. Number 2: It's not in memory of anyone or anything and Number 3: It isn't a park by a long shot. Frankly this should have been built on Fields Lane.

Brewster Fire Substation: Milltown Road

What a difference a year makes. This scaled down version is an improvement over the substation on steroids of yesteryear.

Still, there's a lot of impervious surface and I still wonder if this part of town is already covered by the Ball Pond and Putnam Lake firehouses. In this economy aren't we supposed to be consolidating services? In addition I can't understand why a substation couldn't be incorporated into a large (hint, hint Mr. L) commercial development off Route 22, thus not disturbing an historic residential district at all.

Of course, we'll all have to see how the neighborhood feels on this latest application.

Cell Tower: Route 6 East

Once I read that this was to be yet another Verizon venture I was all set to hurl my Nokia at the terminally cheerful presenter. For the record I've never had reception problems when over on this side of town.

Chairman LaPerch was spot-on when he questioned the need for another 120' monopole and the incredible coincidence that it sits so close to the North Salem border didn't escape him either. North Salem has been aces at avoiding cell towers which is no mean feat. I'll be waiting for those coverage maps with baited breath. Can you hear me now...

I think that Dan Armstrong's idea on site plan/Landscaping follow-up is terrific. He should be commended for taking this on- because quite often in Southeast it's only through enforcement that the best intentions really do come to pass.

That's it from my desk. Have a wonderful remainder of this chilly weekend and please don't hesitate to contact me with any questions or comments you may have.

With Best Regards,

Lynne Eckardt