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

Date: Fri Apr 30, 2004 6:01 pm

Subject: Southeast Town Board Work Session

Hello All,

Below please find a recap of the Town Board's Work Session last night. The full agenda can be found on the Town's website. I am editing in the interest of time. These are not official minutes and none are taken during work sessions.

As always the comments that follow are my own observations. Please, before your eyes glaze over and your head hits the desk try to hang in through 'Drainage District' comments. There are a few 'Fun Facts' that you might enjoy.

AGENDA:

1. MACO LAND: Route 22 (Between Colonial Square and Bob's Storage) Engineer: Bibbo Associates.

A proposed 10,000 sq. ft (3300 sq. ft. footprint) three floor office on 2.62 acres. 45 Parking Spaces. Steep land with a stream/wetlands behind. Fill will be needed.

This project has a long history. Two variances have already been granted by the ZBA (one for an oversized retaining wall and one for a tiered retaining wall). After the moratorium on Route 22 was enacted this was forwarded to the Town Board for a 'hardship' variance. The TB turned down this request in August of '02.

The TB suggested that the applicant apply for an economic hardship variance in writing. If granted Town Attorney, Willis Stephens, said that new wetland's regs. would apply. This will be placed on another Work Session.

2. WESTON CHASE DRAINAGE DISTRICT: Turk Hill Road, Attorney: Donald Rossi.

There were many questions about how potential property buyers were made aware of the fact that their new home would be located in a 'Drainage District'. There are no deed restrictions so this fact is only picked up by a Title company. The Public Hearing will be held on May 27th.

3. STARR RIDGE WATER IMPROVEMENTS: Starr Ridge manor.

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There wasn't much open discussion on this but the sum of \$83,000 was mentioned.

5. WETLANDS PERMIT: Paul Jonke, Joes Hill Road.

This will be on the May 27th meeting.

7. BLACKBERRY SEWER PLANT- Proposal: Blackberry Village

Again not much open discussion. The sum of \$2700 was mentioned. Will be on the May 27th agenda.

8. REQUEST FOR SCHOOL FACILITIES: Ballfields. Discussion on lack of town ballfield facilities. The fields at JFK school will be available in July and August.

COMMENTS:

MACO LAND:

It was admitted that this site is very 'limited' as to what it will allow. But part of this problem has been solved by the two already granted variances- imagine that. The Board seemed very concerned procedurally (and a little confused, for example, a Performance Bond was established at a Town Board meeting last September but no variance had ever been issued). Other concerns were another Route 22 curb cut and parking that surrounds the building rather than parking in the rear etc. It seems a little late in the game to be worried about curb cuts and parking. In fact, two much larger buildings, approved but not yet built, will generate far more traffic.

Still the Board keeps blaming 'environmentalists', 'Community activists' or whatever 'designation du jour' they can come up with for holding up 'improvements' on Route 22. Funny, isn't it, that they created the problem and are now blaming 'us' for holding up the solution that they want. Is it at all surprising that the Assistant Attorney General wants 'Land Use' agreements to be considered?

WESTON CHASE DRAINAGE DISTRICT:

Why the angst over this I'll never understand because basically this is a classic game of 'smoke and mirrors' .

Here's how it works:

The Planning Board creates drainage districts when an applicant is allowed to build on steep slopes and have incursions into wetlands buffers. In theory this makes the new subdivision monetarily responsible for the convoluted drainage that is needed. Thus other residents in Southeast will not be left holding the bag. I did say 'in theory' didn't I? Good, because here's what's happened so far:

There are at least seven drainage districts in Southeast (with more on the way). Some have been in for over eight years. Yet NOT ONE of these districts has ever paid a dime into drainage maintenance. There was actually a public hearing on the 'Indian Wells' subdivision where the estimated drainage costs were \$4000 per year. 'Indian Wells' residents were outraged as they already pay high taxes. Result: No 'Drainage District' taxes have been levied. So guess who's picking up the tab for the 'Fake Drainage Districts'?

How's this for a concept: stop allowing developers to build on steep slopes, wetlands and wetland buffers and these districts might just 'go away'.

STARR RIDGE WATER IMPROVEMENTS: Although the sum of \$83,000 was bandied about those of us in the audience heard little else. My guess is it's going to cost Starr Ridge residents some dough- sorry I don't know more.

BLACKBERRY SEWER PLANT: The sum mentioned here was \$2700 see comments above.

REQUEST FOR SCHOOL FACILITIES: It's late Friday afternoon and honestly, I can't bear to write anything about Southeast's Ball Field Crisis. I suppose it's better to approve any schlock project that comes down the pike as long as Southeast gets the raw land (sometimes even partially within the wetland buffer) just to make the ball field trauma go away. Working with the schools (which, if memory serves has always been done)

seems to be a good alternative.

Oh, and for the record, I am not against 'recreation' but I am against ill-conceived projects that can't possibly enhance the quality of life in Southeast.

As always please feel free to e-mail me with any comments that you might have.

With Best Regards,
Lynne Eckardt

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