

Hopkinton Planning Board
Minutes
August 8, 2006

Chairman Bruce Ellsworth opened the Hopkinton Planning Board public hearing of Tuesday, August 8, 2006, at 7:00 PM in the Town Hall. Members present: Vice Chairman Timothy Britain, Celeste Hemingson, Jane Bradstreet and Edwin Taylor. Members absent: Bethann McCarthy, Clarke Kidder, Michael Wilkey and Cettie Connolly.

I. Review of the Minutes and Notice of Decision of July 11, 2006.

Review of the Minutes and Notice of Decision were deferred to the September 12, 2006 meeting.

II. Conceptual Consultations—There were no conceptual plans presented.

III. Applications—

#2006-14 Town of Hopkinton, NH—Applicant was to request Site Plan Review approval to construct a senior center; however, the Planning Board agreed to review the information presented as a conceptual consultation due to the lack of engineering data. The senior center is proposed on property known as Houston Field, located off Pine Street in the VB-1 (village commercial) district, shown on Tax Map 221 as Lot 83.

Selectman Donald Lane addressed the Board explaining that the Board of Selectmen had formed a committee to develop a plan for the construction of a senior center at Houston Fields, adjacent to the Library. While the plans presented did not include all of the needed engineering data, Mr. Lane advised of their intentions of coming back before the Planning Board in September with completed plans.

Mr. Lane introduced Architect Eric Palson of Sheerr, McCrystal and Palson and Civil Engineer Erin Reradon of Nobis Engineering. Mr. Palson and Ms. Reradon have been working on the project.

Mr. Palson addressed the Planning Board presenting architectural plans of the proposed senior center, noting that Ms. Reradon's office is working on completing the engineering data such as the mapping of wetlands, storm water management and the boundaries. The senior center will consist of a total of 7,000 square feet and will be a two-story building with walk-outs at both levels.

At this point, Mr. Britain joined the Board for the remainder of the meeting.

The site plan presented showed the anticipated traffic pattern and area dedicated for drop-offs. The proposed number of parking spaces exceeds the requirements of the Parking Ordinance.

Mrs. Hemingson inquired as to the proposed hours of operation. Selectman Lane advised that the hours have yet to be determined, but assumed that they would be similar to the hours of the Library. Mrs. Hemingson suggested that the Applicant be prepared to address hours of operation, lighting, screening and the issue of noise at the next meeting. Additionally, it was suggested that the Planning Board receive comments from the Fire Department, Police Department and Road Committee.

Lastly, Mr. Taylor suggested that Mr. Palson consider recessing the entrances and exits at the lower level for protection against the weather.

#2006-15 Moser Engineering—Applicant requested Site Plan Review approval to construct a retreat center to be used for dormitory style lodging and meetings. The property is owned by Saint Methodois Faith and Heritage Center, LLC, located at 329 Camp Merrimac Road in the R-2 (medium density residential) district, shown on Tax Map 202 as Lot 8.

Mark Moser representing Saint Methodois Faith and Heritage Center addressed the Planning Board to review the plans of the proposed dormitory style retreat house. The building will be constructed on 144 acres and will be approximately 600 feet to the nearest abutter. The proposal includes the upgrading of the existing gravel driveway that will access the building to 20-feet in width. The proposed building will be 68 feet in width by 196 feet in length and 35 feet in height. The building will consist of 43 rooms with a total of 83 beds. The proposed lighting is directed downward and is shown in the parking lot and recessed in the balcony ceilings. Parking is proposed at one space per room with a circular turn-around. The existing leach fields were constructed approximately six or seven years ago and are believed to be more than adequate to support the new retreat house; however, Mr. Moser will obtain State approval to tie into the system. Lastly, Mr. Moser presented elevation views of the building showing a lower level with a walk out and then an upper level with a walk out.

Chairman Ellsworth inquired as to the status of the existing cabins on the property. In response, Mr. Moser stated that many of the cabins have been renovated; however, there are older cabins that are not presently being used. The cabins that are currently being used will continue to be used to house children during camps or retreats.

Mr. Moser presented detailed drainage and grading plans showing how he intends to handle all drainage on the property with trenches around the parking area and building. He noted that an Alteration and Terrain Permit will be required from the State.

Michael Sintros, Director of the Faith and Heritage Center addressed the Planning Board explaining that it is their intentions to use the retreat house for parish counselors and parents of children. It is anticipated that the use of the retreat house will not be during the same five weeks of summer camp; however, there could be overlapping times when the retreat house is used at the same time as camp. Typically, the retreats consist of 15 to 40 people with a half a dozen priests and their families. During the winter, cabins six through eleven are used with a maximum of 45 in attendance.

Lastly, Mr. Sintros noted that he had spoken with the Fire Chief and has agreed to sprinkle the building and construct a dry hydrant. Fire Chief Rick Schaefer addressed

the Planning Board expressing concern with the width of the road which he estimated at between 14 feet to 17 feet and the height of the power lines in the area. In response, Mr. Sintros agreed to have the power lines adjusted and address concerns with the roadway.

Mr. Moser then presented an elevation view of the building, explaining the building will not contain a full kitchen and instead dining will take place at the existing dining hall which is a separate building.

Mrs. Hemingson asked whether a special exception had been obtained for the use of the building, recalling previous discussions concerning the issue. In response, Mr. Sintros explained that the Zoning Board of Adjustment had approved the special exception at their August 1, 2006 meeting. The special exception was required under the category of a non-profit overnight and day camp per Table of Uses 3.6.B.1 of the Zoning Ordinance.

Mr. Moser explained that each room will have a terrace with lighting recessed and directed downward. Additionally, there will be four (4) lights in the parking lot that will also be shielded. Chairman Ellsworth questioned the impact that the new lighting may have on the lake. In response, Mr. Moser stated that there should be little impact at all lighting will be directed downward and recessed in the ceiling. The area in front of the building would remain wooded.

Chairman Ellsworth then questioned how the proposed retreat house would affect the character of the camps along the lake. In response, Mr. Sintros believed that the majority of the noise is as a result of the summer camp. He noted that he had visited residents along the lake with some not being home and attended the Josylvia Lake Association meeting to discuss the proposal.

Motion made by Mrs. Hemingson, seconded by Mrs. Bradstreet, to accept the application for consideration. Motion carried unanimously (Britain, Bradstreet, Hemingson, Taylor, and Ellsworth).

Karen Harmon, owner of the property at 176 Camp Merrimack Road, addressed the Board expressing concerns with the increase in the level of traffic and noise due to the construction of the new building. She expressed concern with the affects on safety and the life style of the residents, noting that her cottage is less than 20-feet from Camp Merrimack Road. Ms. Harmon discussed issues with the current level of traffic which included the blocking of the street so that residents are unable to get to their properties. In response, Mr. Sintros stated that there have been events in which the roadway was blocked; however, he has agreed to discuss the matter with the staff so that it does not affect the residents in the future.

David White addressed the Board discussing the ownership and condition of Camp Merrimack Road. Mr. White believed that residents along the pond should have been notified of the hearing.

Mark Reil addressed the Board explaining that he had sold the yellow cottage to Saint Methodios (Camp Merrimack). Mr. Reil expressed concern with the noise that is heard from the camp, suggesting that at one point in time there were speakers and that now there is a bell that rings.

Charles Myers questioned the purpose of the Shoreland Protection Act. In response, Mrs. Bradstreet explained that the Act regulates activities within a certain distance of a lake, pond or river. Mr. Myers then asked about the status of the Zoning Board of Adjustment meeting that had occurred, noting that he was not aware of the meeting. Mrs. Bradstreet responded that the Applicant was required to obtain a special exception for the use of the building of which they did on August 1. Mr. Britain then explained the differences between the Zoning Board of Adjustment and Planning Board with the Planning Board having jurisdiction over the site design and the Zoning Board of Adjustment having jurisdiction over the use.

Elaine Loft of South Shore Drive questioned whether the lighting from within the rooms would reflect out onto the lake. In response, the architect for the retreat house spoke of the design and elevation of the building. The gentleman noted that the building will be located at a much higher elevation than the water. He believed that there would be little impact during the summer months with more of a visual impact during the winter.

Bob White discussed the condition of Camp Merrimack Road. Mr. White stated that during the spring the road is impassable due to flooding. He expressed concern with the affects that the condition of the road will have on the Town's ability to fight a fire at the facility. Mr. White then addressed the issue of noise, stating that the noise level has increased over time and continues to affect their ability to quietly enjoy their camp. In response, Mr. Sintros stated that he had replaced the old speaker system with a bell thinking that it would be less obtrusive. While he agreed to speak with the campers about the noise coming from the stereo during the five weeks of summer camp, Mr. Sintros believed that the issue is unrelated to the proposed retreat house. Mr. Sintros then offered to meet with the neighbors to discuss their concerns with the noise.

Chairman Ellsworth questioned whether there would be any constraints or controls on the new building to control the noise and use of lighting. In response, Mr. Sintros stated that he has discussed the issue with the clergy, but that they had not made any decisions. Mr. Taylor suggested that lighting could be controlled so that it would automatically shut-off when a person left a room. Mr. Sintros agreed, stating that he would follow-up on the matter.

Ruthie White addressed the Board expressing concern with the condition of Camp Merrimack Road.

Bob Willard of North Shore Drive questioned the height of the proposed building as it relates to the tree line. Mrs. Bradstreet suggested that based on the elevation of the property and the height of the building that the only visual aspect of the building would be the roof. Mr. Willard suggested that the use of windows be minimized.

Jason Gilligan questioned who would address the issue of noise. Chairman Ellsworth suggested that residents would need to speak with the Police Department and the Board of Selectmen.

David Dufault stated that it is the Board's responsibility to plan. He suggested that the Planning Board consider whether allowing the construction of the building would cause

additional problems in the future for the Town. Again, Mr. Sintros stated that he is willing to discuss concerns with the neighbors.

At this point, the Board discussed concerns raised with the condition of Camp Merrimack road, suggesting that the Superintendent of Public Works and the Town's Consultant Engineer Vollmer Associates review the road to determine work that would be necessary for vehicles to safely travel the road. The Board agreed to conduct a site walk, prior to the next meeting.

Following discussion, a motion was made by Mr. Britain, seconded by Mrs. Hemingson, to continue the application to the September 12, 2006, hearing in order to allow the following:

- 1) Input from the Road Committee, Public Works Director, and Town's Consultant Engineer, Vollmer Associates, concerning the condition of Camp Merrimack Road and the minimum improvements necessary for vehicles to safely travel the road.
- 2) Revisions to the plans to show the location of the Shoreland Protection Reference Line and the proposed dry hydrant.
- 3) Input from the Police Department concerning the proposed retreat center.
- 4) A policy to be developed addressing noise and lighting as it relates to the proposed retreat center.
- 5) Confirmation concerning the height of the trees located between the pond and the proposed retreat center.

Motion carried unanimously (Britain, Bradstreet, Hemingson, Taylor, and Ellsworth).

IV. Any other business to legally come before the meeting.

- Capital Improvements Plan— The Capital Improvements Plan for the year ending 2007 will be prepared by the Planning Board, rather than a Capital Improvements Committee. The process will begin in late September or early October, following receipt of completed capital improvements forms by Town departments.
- Growth Management Report – A draft report of Findings of Fact will be prepared and presented to the Planning Board in October, following receipt of the school enrollment figures for 2006/2007.
- Phasing Standards— Phasing timeline for subdivisions approved begins at the time the conditions of approval have been met and the final subdivision plan is recorded at the Registry of Deeds.
- Active and Substantial Development of Subdivisions—Active and substantial development is required by the owner or the owner's successor in accordance with the approved subdivision plat and within 12-months after the date of approval; otherwise, failure to do so may result in revocation of approval.

V. Adjournment

There being no further business, Chairman Bruce Ellsworth declared the meeting adjourned at 9:30 PM. The next scheduled meeting of the Planning Board is Tuesday, September 12, 2006 at 7:00 PM in the Town Hall.

Karen L. Robertson
Planning Director

In accordance with RSA 677:15, any person(s) aggrieved by any decision of the Board concerning the application(s) may present to the Superior Court a petition, duly verified, setting forth that such a decision is illegal or unreasonable in whole or part and specifying the grounds upon which the same is claimed to be illegal or unreasonable. Such petition shall be presented to the court within thirty (30) days after the Board's final decision regarding the application in question has been filed and becomes available for public inspection in the Planning Office.