

PLANNING BOARD



19 WASHINGTON STREET
SHERBORN, MASSACHUSETTS 01770

MINUTES

March 26, 2014

Members Present: John Higley (Chairman), Eric Johnson, Robin Perera John Stevens, Charles Yon, Associate Grace Shepard, and Town Planner Gino Carlucci

Absent Members: None

Others Present: See attached sign-in sheet

John Higley called the meeting to order at 7:08 p.m. in the Sherborn Town Hall, Room 204A. He announced that the meeting was being televised and recorded.

PUBLIC HEARING ON ZONING ARTICLES

The public hearing regarding the article to rezone certain parcels of land at 90 Maple Street that from R-B to EA and to approve a Preliminary Development Plan (*Document #1*) for the property pursuant to **Section 5.6.3** was reopened.

Mark Mastroianni from Pulte recapped some of the changes that have been made in the project. They are as follows:

- A small community room was added with a kitchenette and bathroom;
- A restriction to prohibit permanent residents under 18 years of age will be added to condominium documents;
- A contribution of \$66,000 will be made to the Town to use for a sidewalk or other purposes as deemed appropriate;
- The connection to McGregor Drive was eliminated as a potential emergency access. The emergency access options would be from Maple Street or from the end of Wildwood (but Pulte has no rights to cross abutting land at this point);
- The grading plan has been revised so that the proposed retaining wall is no more than 12 feet high at its highest point;
- The site map now shows the distance of the property from the intersection of Washington and North Main Street;

In response to a question, Mark Mastroianni responded that the trails would definitely be open to the public. He said the disposition of the open space is open for discussion. It could be owned by the condo association, the Town or a non-profit group. There was a discussion about how the land would be assessed, how it would be protected in perpetuity and how different ownership options might affect the assessed values. It was agreed that open space commitments should be spelled out in the Preliminary Development Plan.

Mark Mastroianni said that the retaining wall is about 200 feet long. Its height has been reduced from 20 feet to 12 feet at the highest point. He also said that the maximum developed area would be 40% of the total and that it likely be less but they wanted to retain some flexibility during final design. He said that the septic leaching fields and drainage detention basins designs and locations are not finalized, but what is shown on the plans are good representations of what is possible. He said he is comfortable with what is shown. He said gravity would be used for the septic system where possible but some pumps might be needed, depending on final engineering.

He also reported that the unit density of the project would be .75 units per acre. The total floor area would be 161,820 square feet. It was noted that the unit number could not increase but the floor area could increase by a maximum of 10%. He said there are currently 12 duplex units in the design but that number could change. He said it would be finalized as part of the final development plan.

In response to a question he said that his consultant Jay Billings has issued a letter describing how well impacts would be addressed. John Higley stated that he wanted a commitment to that process. A resident stated that there is no plan showing groundwater flows. Mark Mastroianni also noted an Environmental Health Impact Report would need to be filed with Board of Health.

Grace Shepard asked whether it was possible to make 1 or 2 of the duplex units smaller in order to lower the price to make them affordable. Mark Mastroianni responded this would be based on the market at the time. Currently the expected price range is \$500,000 to \$750,000.

Chuck Yon noted that this a significant proposal for the Town. It increases the housing stock by 4%. He is surprised that the offer of mitigation is only \$1000 per unit. He said it is more common to be in the range of 3%-6% of the project and that 3% would equal \$1.2 million.

In response to questions, Mark Mastroianni also stated that the community center had not yet been designed but would be compatible in architecture with the rest of the project. He said the current size was 30' x 50' but that it could be expanded 10 or 20 feet in each direction. Also, the 2-bedroom limit would be in the form of a deed restriction as well be a component of the condo association documents.

Regarding the restriction against permanent residents under 18, Reid Blute from Pulte responded that the definition comes from documents used in other towns with projects of this type.

The hearing was then opened to questions from residents. Among the questions and comments were that there needs to be input from Assessors on the potential revenue from the project; independent reports on the hydrology, septic, traffic, wells, etc. are needed; what if the land doesn't perc for 66 units; how will people get compensated if their well is affected; and what about blasting impacts. In response it was noted that there could be fewer units, if the soil testing

indicates that 66 units cannot be accommodated. It was pointed out that there are specific rules for blasting, and that the Fire Department is the permitting agency for that.

A resident from the audience said the COA survey did show a significant desire for lower priced housing. He also opposed the restriction on those under 18 asking are kids so bad? Another commented that the project could be more appealing if it were smaller, used Low Impact Development stormwater measures, used native species and low water use plants, prohibited phosphorus, pesticides etc. and in general was greener and more sustainable. This was followed by a resident who suggested disturbing as little as possible, retaining large trees, eliminate the retaining wall, and use rain gardens and porous pavement. He also suggested going beyond normal on energy efficiency.

The next speaker said Sherborn needs to be more adaptable to change. She was in favor of this and the Town needs the revenue. Another resident said she moved here in 1960 when there was a boom and people then were outraged at the developments that resulted in houses where many in the room now live. She reiterated that the COA supports this but would like to see a sidewalk on Maple Street.

Another said he likes progress but is concerned about the size. He feels a 2-acre lot development would be appropriate. The design should have features that are needed by the elderly. He was concerned that it doesn't address the need for affordable housing. He suggested that the projected revenues should be discounted by about 20% due to families replacing the Sherborn residents who sell their houses to move into this development.

A member of the audience said that more independent data is needed. He asked if the independent market assessment is being done. John Higley responded that the suggestion was made to Pulte but they declined to fund it.

Another resident said he has lived here since 1966 but will need to leave soon. The Town needs the revenue. Another questioned whether the site qualifies as within 1 mile of the intersection of Washington and North Main, and whether there will be any public parking for access to the trails.

A resident reported that the Advisory Committee voted 4-4 on this issue so it is not in favor. He said the two primary issues are money and senior housing. He wants to start organizing to stop this project. He thinks the project would devalue his multi-acre property and he predicts that he will receive an offer from a developer to sell his property as well, and that the next developer will say there is too much senior housing and propose a project that is not age-restricted.

A resident stated that it is the Planning Board's job to determine if this project is right for Sherborn. She believes buyers will not value Sherborn assets and Sherborn as we know it will slip away. Another mentioned Abbey Road and asked whether 59 Main Street would work for another similar project.

Another resident said we should cut through the rhetoric; this project is senior housing, not a nursing home. It preserves open space and provides public trails. There is no open space or trails with single family development. This is in the middle of town, not the edge like Sherborn Meadows or Whitney Farms. The argument that if this project is approved others will come is

not true. He said he supports the project. He has been a resident for 50 years and he wants to stay.

John Higley asked Pulte for additional documentation of details. Eric Johnson said he would like to see the offer of \$66,000 for mitigation to be removed because it was insufficient but would be OK if it were stated as a minimum. The Board voted 5-0 to continue the hearing to April 2 at 7:00 PM at Town Hall.

ANR - 18 PROSPECT STREET

A strip of land is being carved off this property in order to convey it to the abutter. After a brief discussion, the Board voted 5-0 to endorse the plan.

HOUSING PRODUCTION PLAN

In response to comments that Sherborn could avoid Chapter 40B projects simply by preparing and adopting a Housing Production Plan (HPP), this item was placed on the agenda for discussion. Gino Carlucci noted that well over 100 communities have HPP's. However, it is not a matter of preparing an HPP. The HPP itself is an undertaking but in order to get a 1-year moratorium from 40B projects a town must actually produce affordable housing units equal to .5% of its housing stock or 1% to get a 2-year moratorium. Only 6 communities currently qualify for such moratoria and 3 of those expire by this summer.

It was suggested that perhaps this could be done in conjunction with preparing the housing element of the General Plan. It was noted that there are two issues involved. One is to stop a 40B but the other is to actually get some affordable housing built. John Higley suggested that the Built Environment Committee might consider a subcommittee to prepare both a housing element and an HPP.

TOWN MEETING

It was decided that Eric Johnson would present the lighting article at Town Meeting, Gino Carlucci would present the flood plain article and John Higley would present the medical marijuana article.

OTHER

The Council on Aging is having a forum on the Pulte project on April 7 and would like a Planning Board member to attend. Eric Johnson reported that he has received the final report from the Charles River Watershed Associating and would send it out to the Smart Sewer Task Force.

The meeting adjourned at 10:26. The next meeting is April 2.

Respectfully Submitted,

Gino Carlucci
Town Planner

DOCUMENTS REFERENCED DURING THE MEETING

1. Preliminary Development Plan for Pulte Homes, February 24, 2014