

PLANNING BOARD



19 WASHINGTON STREET
SHERBORN, MASSACHUSETTS 01770

MINUTES October 28, 2015

Members Present: John Higley, Eric Johnson, Chris Tullmann (arrived at 7:45 p.m.), Marian Neutra, Joseph Henry Putnam, Associate Grace Shepard, and Town Planner Gino Carlucci

Others Present: Brian McSweeney, Brendan Daly, Peggy Novak, William Leland, Rebecca Hunnewell, Robert Johnson, Richard Robinson

John Higley called the meeting to order at 7:09 p.m. in the Sherborn Town Hall, room 204A.

117 MILL STREET – SCENIC ROAD HEARING (*Reference Document #1*)

This is a continuation of the scenic road hearing for the property at 117 Mill Street which was opened on September 30, 2015 and continued on October 14, 2015. This hearing is being considered in two parts to address both the application to create a new opening in a stone wall and the application to remove a large tree related to the proposed stone wall opening. Mr. Richard Robinson, the applicant seeking to create an opening in the stone wall on his property, gave an overview of the purpose of the opening, citing infrequent and private use for agricultural equipment. He added that the application for the removal of a large tree near the opening was proposed by CMD Director Ed Wagner and Tree Warden Brian McSweeney as they see the tree having a negative impact on sight distance for those vehicle operators exiting the proposed opening in the stone wall. Eric Johnson questioned the Tree Warden directly on the issue of whether the tree presents a sight distance hazard or a safety hazard, to which the Tree Warden responded that the main concern is sight distance but that the tree is also somewhat unhealthy. Mr. Johnson also questioned the land owner for his opinion of the issue, to which the land owner responded that he does not think the tree will present sight distance hazards and would prefer to keep the tree intact.

Marian Neutra offered her view that she tends to err on the side of tree preservation if there are no imminent safety threats. John Higley added that if the tree does not present a safety hazard and is not entirely unhealthy, the Board does not need to require the removal of the tree in order to proceed with considering the application for a new opening in the stone wall. Furthermore, Mr. Higley stated that, should the Tree Warden deem the tree to be a safety hazard, he can have

it removed at any time or, should he deem the tree's health a reason for removal, he can add it to the annual list of trees to be considered for removal. Eric Johnson moved to deny the application to remove the tree in question at 117 Mill Street, and to add it to the Tree Warden's annual list of trees to be removed if it is in need of removal, which was unanimously accepted.

As discussed previously during the hearing for this matter, John Higley outlined the stone wall issue as a careful consideration of the balance between the Town's support for the preservation of scenic roadways and its support for the encouragement of local agricultural operations. Joseph Putnam inquired as to why the proposed opening in the wall should be 20 feet, a measure he feels is excessive. The purpose of the opening was discussed and the applicant described issues relating to complications with narrower openings and large agricultural equipment, but, in response to Mr. Putnam's suggestion, he asserted that he would be willing to reduce the opening to 18 feet wide.

A question was raised by Rebecca Hunnewell as to the possibility of requesting that the stones removed from the wall be used to rebuild other stone walls on the property or elsewhere in Town. Eric Johnson responded that it is best to leave the stones on the property to accommodate the possibility of rebuilding the wall in the future. Gino Carlucci added that it is a common condition of approval of such applications that the stones remain on site and that, furthermore, it is the intent of this applicant to utilize the stones to build up portions of the wall and to create curved turnouts at the ends of the walls at the new opening. Peggy Novak remarked that she is a supporter of the preservation of stone walls on scenic roadways and places importance on aesthetics in Town. She also added that she is a patron of the farm at 117 Mill Street and attested to the high-quality work that the applicant has done on the land so far, and she is in favor of approving an opening in the stone wall. William Leland expressed his opposition to the creation of a new opening in the wall, citing that an opening already exists in the wall not far from this proposed opening and citing the importance of aesthetics and preservation.

As Joseph Putnam was absent for the opening of the hearing on September 30, 2015 and Chris Tullmann missed the beginning of tonight's portion of the hearing, neither can vote. John Higley moved to approve an 18 foot wide opening in the stone wall, with the condition that any and all stones removed remain on the property. Eric Johnson seconded the motion and Marian Neutra voted in favor; the application is approved.

WOODLAND-GOULDING STREET WEST INTERSECTION

Information regarding the change in the recalculated cost associated with alternative configurations of this intersection is not yet available. Pending the receipt of that information, this hearing is continued to November 18, 2015 at 7:00 p.m.

ABBEY ROAD

Robert Murchison presented the Board with several modifications to the Abbey Road site plans, for which he is seeking recognition that the modifications are minor and do not require the opening of a public hearing to proceed with carrying them out. One such change is to move the main driveway on the site five feet to the east to preserve a sugar maple tree. Four guest parking spaces are proposed to be moved 10 feet to preserve additional trees. It is also proposed that a 10-foot extension of pervious pavers at the end of the lot adjacent to the library building be

added to allow vehicles to back out of the adjacent spaces. It was also proposed to add an area of pervious pavers of 10' x 75' along the driveway around the curve at the back of the units to facilitate backing out of the garages in the area. The underground septic tank is going to be moved for the sake of preserving a large tree. The issue of septic will be considered by the Board of Health. Minor changes are proposed to the landscape plan, mainly involving the types of plantings to be added to the site. John Higley reminded Mr. Murchison that the Board needs to see a complete landscape plan by 120 days from the approval of the special permit, which falls sometime in late November. Mr. Murchison reports no changes to the lighting plan now, but he will likely return before the Board to present some changes to lighting fixtures. Eric Johnson moved to accept that all proposed changes are minor modifications but requested that the back-up area be reduced to five feet. The motion was unanimously approved.

GENERAL PLAN UPDATE WORK GROUPS

John Higley will contact members of the Built Environment work group and suggest that the group meet on Monday, November 2, 2015 at 7:00 p.m. The Fiscal and Economic work group is meeting next on November 2, 2015. The Land Use work group met on October 27, 2015 and dedicated much of the discussion to the Town's water resources, including goals associated with their maintenance and protection. The group will recommend that the Groundwater Action Committee be reactivated so that the General Plan can include an informed plan for the monitoring of wells and water sources near potential pollutants. During the next meeting, the group expects to discuss forest resources.

2016 ANNUAL TOWN MEETING

The possibility of the Planning Board submitting a lighting plan as a warrant article for the 2016 Annual Town Meeting has been discussed at previous meetings. Grace Shepard, at tonight's meeting, warned against attempting to submit a plan that is too technical or too restrictive as such a plan is not likely to pass in Sherborn. Marian Neutra suggested that the Built Environment work group for the General Plan update should incorporate a thought-out lighting plan as part of the General Plan and that the Planning Board should not submit it as a warrant article for the upcoming Annual Town Meeting.

OTHER BUSINESS THAT MAY COME BEFORE THE BOARD

Annual Tree Removal List – Tree Warden Brian McSweeney has compiled a list of trees he has selected for removal. Mr. McSweeney reports that Eversource has also compiled a list of trees the utility company would like removed for their potential impact on utility wires; these trees will be removed, pending approval from the Board, at the expense of Eversource. Mr. Carlucci and Mr. McSweeney will divide the list of trees provided by Eversource into those on scenic roads and those not on scenic roads. The hearings will take place on November 18, 2015, with the trees on non-scenic roads being considered at 6:30 by the Tree Warden alone and the scenic road trees being considered at 7:30. It is likely that those trees not on the list provided by Eversource will be considered at a hearing in the late spring when they are leafed out. Mr. Carlucci will provide the Board with the Eversource list via email prior to the hearing.

The Fields at Sherborn – The next meeting of Zoning Board of Appeals for the hearing on the Fields of Sherborn will be held on November 2, 2015.

Abbey Road – Town Administrator David Williams, John Higley, and Gino Carlucci will meet on November 2, 2015 to discuss the steps needed to formalize the installation of the sidewalk on North Main Street, which will preferably occur while construction on the Abbey Road project is underway. Peggy Novak, a member of the Historic District Commission, reports that the Commission has not received a formal application from the developer, to be signed by the Town as the owner of the land, for the moving of a section of stone wall in the path of the proposed sidewalk.

The meeting adjourned at 9:50 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Samantha Shepherd

DOCUMENTS REFERENCED DURING THE MEETING

1. Four Google Maps images of the proposed stone wall opening location, surrounding area, and aerial view, provided by Richard Robinson.