

Sutton Planning Board
Minutes
April 24, 2017

Approved _____

Present: S. Paul, W, Whittier, R. Largess, J. Anderson, M. Sanderson, W. Baker
Staff: Jen Hager, Planning Director

General Business

Minutes:

Minutes of 4/10/17 tabled until next meeting.

Filings: Accessory Apartment – 10 Crestview Lane – J. Hager noted although the Board stated at their last meeting that they did not feel any public purpose was served by making this landowner go back through this approval process again as regulations that would effect this filing have not changed, the Building Commissioner stated his hands are tied and he cannot issue a building permit on an expired Special Permit. Therefore, the owner has refiled this application. The Board agreed to hold a special meeting prior to Town Meeting because otherwise this applicant will have to wait until the end of May for action. The Board request this hearing be held at Sutton High School.

Form A Plans: None

Covenant Extension – Bridle Path: J. Hager noted Mr. Funari contacted her earlier noting he wasn't feeling well. The Board has a written request for an extension of the covenant for one year. The Planning Director stated this subdivision is grandfathered until 2020 and it is in the best interest of all parties to have valid surety in place while the project is can still be built. Mr. Funari told the Planner that although they have completed the legal process of clearing the title for the portion of land with questionable ownership, they still have concerns with using this acreage. Therefore, they are currently considering if the project should be pursued in its current form. They hope to come to a decision in the near future.

Motion: To grant a one year extension of the covenant to 4/1/2018, R. Largess
2nd: W. Whittier

R. Largess suggested the Department send a reminder to applicants before extension requests are due.

Vote: 5-0-0

Correspondence/Other: None.

Discussion – Potential Open Space Subdivision – Leland Hill Road

Paul Hutnak of Andrews Survey & Engineering was present with a conceptual plan for an open space subdivision on the former Stockwell Farm on Leland Hill Road. He was looking for some feedback from the board. The conceptual yield plan shown 10 lots, the proposed open space development shows 7 lots on a 700' cul-de-sac and two Form A lots along frontage the property also has on Dodge Hill Road.

J. Hager noted most members of the current Board have never used this bylaw and only one such development has even be brought to the Board in the 18 years she has worked for the Town, so there isn't a lot of familiarity with the regulations.

However, she noted the main purpose of the bylaw is to reduce the amount of roadway and related infrastructure that in this case is proposed to be public. Additionally the bylaw strives to create and maintain large parcels of permanently protected open space created by allowing a reduction in the lot area and frontage to as little as 50' frontage and one third the current area requirement.

Mr. Hutnak noted they have already had preliminary meetings with Conservation. They are proposing a Low Impact Development (LID) drainage system which is easier to maintain and involves less disturbance. The roadway is proposed at 9% grade, lots have a minimal slope through their back yards and then are sloped at 2:1. Most lots are proposed with 75' road frontage and 40,000 s.f. of area. They would need to request a waiver from the dead end road length from 500' to 700' in order to work better with the terrain as well as waivers from buffer requirements in a few spots. They would also like to reduce the pavement width to 24'. J. Hager noted the requirement of 26' is a very wide and unless there is a safety issue a width reduction is usually preferred.

The Chairman noted he does not consider this meeting the official "pre-fling" meeting, but did not have any major issue with what is proposed, only noting more information will be necessary to determine if the yield plan is valid. R. Largess stated he will depend on the input of the safety departments to decide if waivers like dead end road length are appropriate. There was also discussion about who would own and maintain the open space.

Bob O'Neal of 145 Dodge Hill Road noted this land directly abuts the Keown APR land which is a good fit.

Discussion – Clean Energy Collective Solar Screening – 60 W/P Turnpike

Doug Carton of Clean Energy Collective was present to discuss how to deal with the significant amount of large rocks that were excavated during panel installation at this site. Many were stacked in the setbacks where understory growth was supposed to remain intact, killing this growth. J. Hager noted she had met Mr. Carton on site. She provided the Board with Mr. Carton's restoration suggestion in map form as well as various photos from the site visit. She stated at a minimum the plantings proposed along the southern fence line directly adjacent to panels should be moved back to the property line where they will be much more effective as screening. She noted the rock pile acts as a buffer on its own. She also stated it is likely new plantings of understory plants like mountain laurel will need to be added in the western buffer and within the southern buffer toward the west end.

James Marran of 80 Burbank Road reminded the Board this developer knew the stumps of trees and understory plantings were to remain. They just ignored this and placed the rocks in the buffer destroying the understory. They should have known there would be rocks to deal with. He felt they should be crushed and removed otherwise they will grow up with bittersweet etc. and become a huge eyesore and regular maintenance will be impossible.

Mr. Carton noted they will only be maintaining inside the array twice per year and cutting back growth outside the enclosure every 10-15 years and if that requires handwork that's what they'll do.

After discussion the Board was open to burying what rocks they could and removing and or neatening up remaining rocks including moving them closer to the fence enclosure creating a separation to the property line.

They agreed most of the southern fence plantings should be moved to the property line and there should be supplemental plantings as well. They requested a much more detailed plan. Mr. Carton noted they want to get the plantings in now so they have time to take root before summer. The Chairman noted they may be able to schedule a special meeting if necessary once the more detailed plan is ready. J. Hager suggested the members should go see the site.

Request to Reconsider Bylaw Recommendations

Central Turnpike Re-Zoning:

A motion to amend the property description was received that eliminates Lot #1 per the metes and bounds description which lies north of Central Turnpike. Otherwise the description and map are consistent showing approximately 6.59 acres to be re-zoned from R-1 to B-2.

J. Hager reviewed how the petition and amendment would need to be presented at Town Meeting.

R. Largess noted it would be very hard to do residential at this location. He noted as a Planning Board member he has to consider what is best for the Town as a whole.

Carla Stem of 190 Central Turnpike asked how much business land is available in Sutton. Less than 6% of land in Sutton is zoned to allow business uses. She noted this is still a lot of land and asked why more is needed? She stressed it is hard to get out of her driveway now and this will just make it worse. She noted this area is all residentially used and asked that she and other area residents who bought homes in a residential neighborhood be respected.

Motion: To recommend that Town Meeting approve the article with the proposed amendment,
R. Largess

2nd: M. Sanderson

M. Sanderson noted she is in favor of residents being able to discuss this issue on the Town Meeting floor.

W. Whittier noted he sees both sides of this issue and does not feel anything that is developed on this tiny lot will make a big difference.

J. Anderson was uncomfortable changing the Board's recommendation outside the public hearing. J. Hager noted Town Counsel had been consulted and noted most boards do all their consideration outside the public hearing and that as long as discussion is posted on an agenda it is legal. She added as soon as she knew this was going on the agenda she sent notice out to the abutters again although not required by law.

Vote: 4-1-0, J. Anderson opposed as he didn't agree the recommendation should be considered outside the public hearing

Solar Overlay District:

Attorney Henry Lane was present with a proposed amendment to the petition to allow large solar systems in a residential area east of Route 146, south of Stone School Road, and just north of the Northbridge Sutton line at Purgatory Road.

The language has been adjusted in accordance with recommendation from the Planner and Town Counsel and the area has been reduced to 40 acres.

He reminded the Board the installation will be invisible from Route 146 and inaccessible from Sutton. It will also generate significant taxes. It was noted Mr. Gopfert, a concern abutter at the last meeting, is aware of the proposed amendment and is more comfortable with this change.

Motion: To recommend Town Meeting approve this article with the proposed amendments,
R. Largess

2nd: W. Whittier

Vote: 4-1-0, J. Anderson opposed as he didn't agree the recommendation should be considered outside the public hearing and still wasn't comfortable with the precedent this may set.

Motion: To adjourn, W. Whittier

2nd: M. Sanderson

Vote: 5-0-0

7:43 PM