

**TOWN OF NORTHFIELD  
PLANNING BOARD  
MINUTES**

**December 14, 2005**

Members present: Doug Read, Steve Bluhm, Dick Maher, Christopher Hunt, Fran LaBranche, Glen Brown, Alternate Bill Dawson. Also present: Mike Izard, LRPC and Eliza Conde, Secretary.

Christopher Hunt asked Bill Dawson to be a voting member to replace George Flanders for this meeting.

Dick Maher moved, seconded by Glen Brown to accept the minutes of Nov. 16, 2005. Motion passed.

Glen Brown moved, seconded by Fran LaBranche to accept the minutes of Nov. 11, 2005. Motion passed.

**REI Development Company LLC: Application for a 7 lot subdivision of 10.24 acres at 219 Zion Hill Road (Tax map R6, Lot 35) in the R2 zone.**

Christopher Hunt stated that the Planning Board wants the Storm Management Plan reviewed by the Town's Engineer, Lisa Martin. Alan Clark, REI, agreed to pay for this review.

Alan Clark, REI, explained the changes that have been made to the plans as per suggestions made at the last meeting and the site walk:

- All frontage calculations are clear on the map and meet the 150' requirement
- The shoulder has been increased from 4' to 6' to accommodate walking, biking, etc. while improving the drainage
- A 10' easement has been included to accommodate the existing town drainage system
- An easement will be granted to the town for access to the Southwick property for drainage construction and maintenance.
- A 5' drainage and slope easement will be granted to the town for drainage.
- State subdivision approval has been granted
- REI is currently working with the town's engineer to improve the existing town's drainage issues onto Forrest Road
- Addressing the Board's concern about raised septic systems, the plan calls for small enviro-systems which do not require the large mounds.
- Four lots will share 2 driveways, reducing the site distance and safety issues.
- Traffic study report indicates that increased traffic will not be an issue, the drainage work will increase the site distance for the driveways and suggests that signage and lighting may increase safety.
- Covenants and restrictions on the lots will dictate size and style of homes, no accessory structures within setbacks or in front of the homes and no more than 20% of the lot can be of impervious material.
- All homes will be required to install sprinkler systems.

Stephen Pernaw, Traffic Engineer confirmed that his study did not indicate that 6 new homes would cause a traffic issue as the project is a "low traffic generator". The shared driveways will help with safety issues and minimize curb cuts. The driveways meet or exceed the site

distance requirements and the increased shoulder width will further improve the distance. He suggested signage indicating the corner and perhaps a street light at the Peverly Road intersection could improve safety issues. Christopher Hunt asked Mr. Pernaw if he thought the lower curve closer to Forrest Road should be straightened. Mr. Pernaw replied that NH is made up of curving roads and straightening it would increase speed. An advisory speed sign could be installed for this corner. Mr. Pernaw indicated that the traffic count showed peak hour traffic at 2-250 cars per hour.

Fran LaBranche asked Mr. Pernaw for suggested ways to control speed on Hodgdon and Zion Hill Roads. Other than increased patrolling, methods used to slow traffic such as speed bumps, etc would not be advisable at this location. Bill Dawson asked about the location of the driveway on Hodgdon Road. Mr. Pernaw replied that site distance is not an issue, therefore the location is not a critical issue. Dick Maher commented that a portion of the shoulder could be paved for biking and walkers. Mr. Pernaw replied that it would not be necessary for the volume of use and wouldn't really fit into the neighborhood.

Referring to REI's plan to remove the stone wall altogether, Christopher Hunt noted that the Conservation Commission requested that the wall be reset further back after drainage work has been completed. Mr. Clark replied that this is a small, 6 lot subdivision. REI has already agreed to do drainage work to correct an existing problem that is not impacted by this subdivision. The cost of rebuilding the stone wall correctly would be prohibitive. The current wall is merely rocks removed from the field and piled in a row, it is not a "good" stone wall. Christopher responded that simply moving the rocks further back would not be costly, but Mr. Clark stated that they would not want to simply drop the rocks in a row. The trees will be removed and it will appear quite different than it currently does. Christopher Hunt noted that the Road Agent expressed concern about losing the windbreak and asked if some sort of wind break could be installed. Mr. Clark would be willing to plant a reasonable number of trees instead of replacing the stone wall. Fran LaBranche disagreed with requiring trees in the front yard as the purchasers of the lots will want to do their own landscaping.

Dick Maher inquired about the plans for drainage to Forrest Road and how the water will be controlled. Mr. Clark responded that the plans are being designed for the town by Lisa Martin. REI has agreed to do the work, but is not involved in the planning. There will be a 24" conduit along the side of the road with drainage swales on top. The plan is for the system to handle the existing drainage off the hill.

Christopher Hunt asked REI to provide a "built out" conceptual contour with the houses and septic systems.

Public hearing opened:

Gary LeBreche questioned the water ending up on Forrest Road and on Southwick's land. He doesn't believe the planned drainage work is sufficient to solve the problems. He stated that removing the trees and stone wall will create snow drifts on Zion Hill Road. Mr. LeBreche is also concerned with safety issues at the entrance to Forrest Road. Bob Loranger stated that Forrest Road has already been washed out with this year's rains and the new drainage will make it worse. He questioned the town's ability to divert water onto someone's property.

Discussion followed concerning the drainage onto Forrest Road and where it should or will end up. Public hearing closed.

Christopher Hunt explained to the board and audience that the drainage system will be designed and supervised by the Lisa Martin, Engineer. Fran LaBranche wanted to make it clear that this proposed subdivision is not going to make the situation worse than it already is. The developer has volunteered to pay to help solve this long term problem and we can't expect them to solve all the town's problems. REI has agreed to work with the town and the Planning Board has to decide how much can be asked of this developer. Christopher Hunt stated that any time soil is disturbed it creates water issues and perhaps it would be prudent to require BMP for construction. Alan Clark replied that it would be difficult to enforce as individual contractors would be doing the work. Steve Bluhm asked if the drainage system would be installed before the sale of the lots. Mr. Clark responded that he would like to be able to sell the existing farm but that none of the new lots would be sold until the drainage work is completed. Christopher asked Mike Izard if bonding would be required. Mr. Clark volunteered to supply a bond or financial guarantee. Fran LaBranche inquired how the court issue impacts the subdivision. Atty. Paul Fitzgerald stated that he believes the Board should act on the merits of the subdivision. If the Court rules that the lot cannot be subdivided the subdivision would be null and void and the Planning Board can revoke the subdivision. Atty. Fitzgerald commented that REI cannot convey a deed before the court issue is resolved however he believes it will be resolved soon. Mr. Clark asked the board to approve subdivision of the farm lot now and do the rest of the lots when drainage engineering has been completed, bonding issued, etc.

Mike Izard commented that phasing the project makes sense so that the farm can be sold and the lots continued until further work is completed. Mr. Clark stated that he had not intended to phase the project but he is concerned about leaving the farm buildings empty. The drainage work is more involved than they had planned, but they have volunteered to help fix the town's drainage problems.

Doug Read agreed that the Planning Board should not deal with the legal issues at all. If the court rules that this lot cannot be subdivided, the court will overrule the Planning Board's decision. Doug moved to approve phase 1 of this subdivision to create 2 lots with the following conditions:

1. That REI grants a 10' easement to the town for drainage
2. That the town's right of way is included as shown on the plan
3. That boundary pins will be set

Bill Dawson seconded the motion. Motion passed.

Alan Clark asked for an extension until the February 8, 2006 meeting. Fran LaBranche moved, seconded by Steve Bluhm to continue this application until February 8, 2006. Motion passed.

**Robert Barr/ Armand Masse: Application for a Site Plan Review for Electrical Contractor office space with 4 bays used for trucks and stock room at 55 Park Street (Tax Map U7, Lot 6) in the C/I zone.**

Dick Maher moved, seconded by Steve Bluhm to accept the application as complete. Motion passed. Armand Masse stated that he plans to have his electrical contracting office, truck parking and supply storage at this location. Sewer and water are currently being installed and a restroom will be included in the building. The business is for employees to pick up supplies

and leave trucks in the evening. There will be no customers on site. Mr. Masse has 8-10 employees, with 6-8 trucks operating between 7 am and 5pm. Christopher Hunt suggested that there should be designated parking spaces on the site plan and Mike IZard suggested screening of the parking area. The 20' right of way is used by two abutters and the deed specifies it shall not be blocked by any of the users. The dumpster is to be located behind the building away from abutters.

Public hearing opened: Louise Forsythe had previously called to say that she had no objection to this use. Public hearing closed.

Further discussion:

- The purchase of the property is contingent upon site plan approval
- The storage shed/mobile home will remain in its location until it can be replaced. It is currently non-conforming relative to setbacks.
- Lighting needs to be considerate of the neighbors. Mr. Masse stated there would be no lighting at night. There are currently lights attached to the building. Any new lighting should be directed downward.
- Any signage will require a building permit
- Dumpster will not be visible to anyone as it will be behind the building.

Fran LaBranche moved, seconded by Bill Dawson, to approve the site plan for an electrical contracting business. Motion passed.

**Subdivision regulation changes:** Will need to remove the remaining paragraph on page 31 section C.2 a,b and c.

**Zoning Ordinance changes:** Christopher Hunt asked members if they wished to reduce the R2 zone to just the down town area and change the balance of the current R2 zone to R1. Much discussion followed with Doug Read disagreeing with changing our zoning every time we feel a threat of too much growth. The Planning Board needs to be careful of too many restrictions on people's properties. Fran LaBranche moved, seconded by Glen Brown, to put this issue before the public hearing in January. Motion passed 5-1.

Dick Maher suggested that the commercial/industrial zone along the river and Scribner Road area perhaps should be changed to R1 also. No further discussion of this issue.

The public hearing for the suggested changes will be held at the next regular meeting, January 11, 2006.

The workshop with developers and surveyors will be held off until February. This workshop will be discussed at the next meeting.

Meeting adjourned at 10:10 pm.

Respectfully submitted,

Eliza Conde, Secretary