

**TOWN OF NORTHFIELD
PLANNING BOARD**

October 11, 2006

MINUTES

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

Public hearing – adoption of revised fee schedule: Christopher Hunt reviewed the proposed fees for Planning Board and ZBA applications as follows:

- Major Subdivision application \$200
- Minor Subdivision application \$100
- Major Site Plan application \$300
- Minor Site Plan application \$100
- Excavation application \$50
- Excavation Permit \$500
- ZBA application \$100
- Abutter notices \$8/per abutter including applicant and agents
- Subdivision approval \$150/lot
- Site Plan approval \$150/unit residential
- Site Plan approval \$150/1500 sq. ft commercial
- Recording fee \$40/sheet

The purpose of the increase is so that costs of an application are born by the applicant.

Public hearing opened and closed with no comment. Glen Brown moved, seconded by Doug Read to accept the above schedule of fees. Dick Maher asked Mike Izard if these fees are in line with other towns. Mike responded that the new fees will be more in line to cover the expenses of the town for planning and zoning applications. Motion passed.

Don Wilson: Informal discussion relative to potential subdivision: Mr. Wilson explained that he has 38.4 acres with 50 foot frontages on Sandogardy Pond and Peverly Roads. He would like to create two lots, with each one having its own frontage on a road. Wetlands are not an issue, site distances for the driveways are fine, there are no intentions for further subdivision. Members saw no reason why this subdivision could not occur.

FAL Holding Company: Application for an Excavation Permit on Industrial Drive (Tax Map R14 Lots 7-2 and 7-4) in the C/I zone. Members reviewed the Planning Report from Mike Izard. Of the 2 waivers requested by the applicant, the Report did not recommend approving the waiver of the required 3:1 slopes in favor of 2:1 slopes. Peter Howard, representing the applicant, demonstrated on his drawings that the abutting property currently has a 2:1 slope and they would simply be continuing that slope.

Because the application could not be accepted as complete until the waivers were approved, it was decided that the applicant should explain the scope of the project before the Board voted on the completion of the application. Mike Izard explained that he did not recommend the 2:1 slope, because the location of this slope is actually the access to Lot 4. Bill Nutter of FAL

explained that the road on the map is only a paper road, it is currently too steep to be considered as an access road to lot 4. Christopher Hunt expressed concern about the plan to remove the buffer along Route 140 while leaving the large ridge in the back of the property. He urged the board and the applicant to look ahead to when these lots will be developed. The intention is to flatten the lot in order to create a developable lot for commercial use, and removing the front buffer while leaving a large 2:1 sloped bank at the back of the lot, doesn't seem like good planning. Discussion followed relative to:

- The practicality of not removing the front berm
- The fact that the state owns the actual buffer along Route 140 and FAL may or may not be able to purchase the state land
- The abutting property currently has a steep sloped bank that requires FAL to keep the bank in the back of the property. The abutter may be willing to remove the bank at some time, but not currently.
- This is a 5-6 year project removing material from the back of the lot first.
- Any future development will have to get permits from the state and town and buffers can be included in those site plans.

Dick Maher stated that this property is only of commercial value if it is leveled and the town is encouraging development to increase the tax base. He suggested that leaving a buffer is not necessary at this time, get it leveled and then developed. Fran LaBranche rebutted that this property is on the aquifer which needs protection. He also reminded the board that the Master Plan reflects the town's desire to maintain the rural character. A buffer would help maintain the rural quality while allowing the commercial activity. He encouraged the board not to allow the town to become industrialized with no feeling for the town's character. Fran challenged the applicant to come up with a plan that is aesthetically pleasing. Christopher Hunt pointed out to the Board that it had required Eptam to maintain a buffer and that has worked quite well. Michelle Bonsteel added that some of the most successful industrial parks are ones that use the natural topography and create pleasant surroundings. The board has the opportunity to work with the applicant to keep the character of the land while allowing development.

Bill Nutter stated that he does not want it to look like a wasteland and he is more than willing to make a buffer, but there isn't enough land to leave the high slope that exists. If you leave the front berm and the back ridge there isn't anything in the middle to develop. He added that you don't need the existing 50 foot high berm to protect the visibility. Both Mr. Nutter and Mr. Howard agreed that the back ridge needs to be removed, but they don't own all of it, therefore they can't remove it. Christopher Hunt explained to the applicant that the Board needs to plan ahead to what will be there and how it will look in the future.

Fran LaBranche asked the applicant to be creative and come back with a plan that satisfies the concerns of the Planning Board. He would prefer that none of the existing berm be removed, but asked if they could leave a suitable buffer while the lot is being excavated so that it is not visible. Mr. Howard replied that he didn't know if it was possible to make it completely hidden, but they can work with some buffer. He noted that the lots are small and they need to be able to use all of them.

Christopher Hunt noted that the current plans show land that does not belong to FAL, so the application shouldn't be considered complete. Mike Izard asked about the ownership of the

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paper street. It is not clear. The current access for Lot 2 is on Industrial Drive and probably the lots would be merged at some point.

Fran LaBranche moved, seconded by Glen Brown to declare the application incomplete for the following reasons:

- The application does not meet the regulation requirements final grade. The proposed final grade of 2:1 requires a waiver from the 3:1 slope requirement. The Board considers the proposed final grade to be inappropriate for the site.
- The application proposes excavation of land which is not owned by the applicant. The inability to reach an agreement with the land owner would significantly alter this proposal and final grades proposed.
- The Planning Board and applicant have expressed a mutual interest in exploring alternatives for this site.

Motion passed. The application is incomplete. It was agreed to conduct a site walk on the property at 9 am October 14, 2006.

Lewandowski: Application for a building permit on the Class VI portion of Fiddler's Choice Road. After discussion it was determined that there was no opposition to granting this permit, but requested that the Fire Chief be asked to inspect the road for emergency vehicle access.

Meeting adjourned at 9:45 pm.

Respectfully,

Eliza Conde, Secretary