

**TOWN OF SOMERS  
PLANNING COMMISSION  
P.O. BOX 308  
SOMERS, CONNECTICUT 06071**

**PLANNING MINUTES  
REGULAR MEETING  
Thursday, January 11, 2007  
7:00 p.m. Town Hall**

**I. PUBLIC HEARING**

**a. Subdivision Application #397, 23 Lots (Gillette's Crossing), 180 Battle Street & 7 Eleanor Lane, KRL Builders**

Chairman Karl Walton called the public hearing to order at 7:00 p.m. and the legal notice was read. Receipts were presented showing that notices had been sent to each of the abutting property owners.

Sandy Aeschliman, Aeschliman Land Surveying, spoke on behalf of Ric Leno of KRL Builders, and requested that the minutes and record of the last public hearing be combined with this public hearing. A motion was made by Cliff Bordeaux, seconded by Joe Iadarola and unanimously voted to incorporate the minutes as requested.

Mr. Aeschliman explained that the property is a 61.5-acre subdivision on the northerly side of Bailey Lane and southerly side of Battle Street. The applicant is proposing to continue Bailey Lane to Mason Lane, which will be a cul-de-sac off of Battle Street. Four of the proposed lots will be fronting along Battle Street and the remaining 19 will be fronting along interior roads. He added that all of staff comments have been addressed and approval has been received from the Conservation Commission. The applicant is seeking a waiver of the radial lot line requirement and proposes to give a fee in lieu of open space.

David Spear, Principle Engineer with DLS Consulting Traffic Engineering, reported that the site would generate about 230 trips on a daily basis and 23 trips during the peak hour. He explained that when this is compared with the background traffic, there would be no significant traffic issues.

The geometry of the proposed road is the biggest concern, with the jog in the connecting road. Various meetings were held with staff and after considering several options, it was determined that the best one would be to put curve warning signs at each end of the reverse curve. Signs for an advisory speed limit of 10 mph and a center line along the roadway through the curve are designed to encourage people to stay on the correct side of the road. This would provide good balance between safety and traffic movement.

Access for fire vehicles and large trucks was discussed. Mr. Spear explained that the fire trucks would have access to the full road in cases of emergency, as their lights and horns would alert other motorists. Normal delivery trucks could make it through the curves, but longer trucks may have some difficulty maneuvering along the inside of the curve lines. However, he noted that the lightness of traffic in the area

would serve as an advantage for motorists.

Mr. Pellissier asked about pedestrian safety, given that there is no sidewalk and the subdivision is located within walking distance to several local facilities. Project Engineer, John Martucci, explained that the layout of the curves are designed to be rather flat and slow. There is adequate site distance from the approach of each curve, both horizontally and vertically, which will help motorists see pedestrians. He also commented that school busses would have no difficulty moving along the curves.

Mr. Walton asked about the number of expected trips that will come out of the subdivision and take Bailey Lane. Mr. Martucci stated that in the morning peak hour there would be 11 cars exiting and 3 cars entering Bailey Lane, and in the afternoon there were 6 cars exiting and 10 cars entering. The Battle Street figures were similar.

Mr. Strauss noted that he has addressed these reports in his recent written comments, stating that the situation is similar to one in West Hartford intersecting into Main Street. The traffic numbers in that instance are much higher, however. He has used the West Hartford route for many years and it is fine. He has no problems with the proposal.

**Don Tisdale, 23 Bailey Lane**, commented that he worked in the architectural field for many years and he has never seen anything as dangerous looking as the proposed “S” curve. If people do not follow the speed limit, there will be accidents. He feels that this situation would never pass in most towns, even though it meets the legal requirements. There are many trees that will block views and this will open up the town to potential litigation. He recommends that it be handled with a cul-de-sac.

**Eric Young, 15 Rye Hill Circle**, stated that he currently works for the Metropolitan District in Hartford and is a member of their Mapping Division and has much experience and this sort of road configuration is not something that he would normally see.

He explained that the design speed for a continuous road is 20 mph and the proposed speed is a clear deviation from the minimum standard. He disagrees with Mr. Martucci’s belief that the signage will result in a decrease in speed for motorists.

He also noticed that the 30-foot triangle does not meet the design standards, particularly with any vegetation above 3 feet tall. There currently are oak trees which will prevent visibility.

Mr. Young also stated that he believes that the situation in West Hartford which Mr. Strauss used as an example is completely different from the current application. He appealed to the Commission to disregard Mr. Strauss’ comparison.

He also commented that the right of way was not originally intended to be used in this manner.

**Nancy Cook, 16 Bailey Lane**, addressed the elevation of Bailey Lane from Route 190. When she backs out of her driveway, she cannot see what is happening at the cul-de-sac. She is concerned about what will happen when someone comes around the “S” turn at a rate of speed higher than 10 mph. She noted that in

the past a cul-de-sac was considered, and she thinks that this would be a much better situation. She finds the current road situation difficult, and can't imagine what it would be like with an "S" turn. She questioned if a line of sight study had been done for the driveways on Bailey Lane.

**Norma Skiliman, 15 Bailey Lane**, stated that each day about 20 people turn around thinking that the road is a through road. She commented that this application is not well presented to the public at the meetings.

Mr. Aeschliman stated that a line of site study had not been done for each driveway on Bailey Lane and Nancy Cook stated that she would like to see such a study completed. She stated that there are alternatives that could work.

Mr. Martucci stated that the safe stopping site distance was evaluated and federal tables show what it takes to stop at different speeds. Bailey Road from Route 190 to the curve has the safe stopping distance adequate for 30 mph. The roads were designed according to regulated standards. He added that if a car backing out of a driveway is over 3 feet tall, it can be seen by an approaching motorist, who will be given adequate time to stop while her car is exiting. Mrs. Skillman commented that if anything happened to her because of a motorist not seeing her, she would take recourse with the town.

She asked why a cul-de-sac option was ever being considered when they are being discontinued. Mr. Strauss noted that cul-de-sacs are not being discontinued, but they are being discouraged. In some cases they serve as a function to access land that can be reached no other way. This proposed cul-de-sac would serve 8 lots.

**Laney Mancussi, 9 Mountain Road**, expressed concerns about potential future flooding of property downstream. She asked who would have to pay for any cleanup.

Mr. Aeschliman showed the 100-year flood zone, and explained that the subdivision is located outside of this zone.

**Sue Peck**, expressed concern about how the development would change the look of the small town.

Mr. Strauss asked Mr. Spear about his letter of September 8, 2006, which stated that signage will resolve the substandard speed issues by alerting approaching drivers. Mr. Spear stated that the signs will alert the driver to the upcoming curve. The geometry of the road will also serve to slow down the driver because a standard passenger vehicle would automatically have to slow down just to make the turn. He also stated that other towns are using the same sort of roadways and traffic circles calling them "traffic calming features".

**Nancy Cook, 16 Bailey Lane**, stated that she doesn't understand why stop signs are not being put in on both sides of the turn. She suggested perhaps having speed bumps.

David Spear stated that stop signs in such situations tend to be ignored and the geometry of the road will control the speed of motorists. Speed bumps usually are difficult in inclement weather.

Mr. Strauss explained that his primary interest was the Rush driveway, because it is the first driveway motorists will encounter when driving along the road. He has calculated that, based upon his accident reconstruction experience, it is likely that a vehicle would stop before it reaches the Rush driveway if it is traveling at a speed of 20 mph.

**Eric Young, 15 Rye Hill Circle**, commented that when people back out of driveways, they move their vehicle to a position beyond the exact location of the driveway, so the distance in question is actually going to be closer to the end of Bailey Lane.

Mr. Strauss explained that in this case whenever a vehicle moves onto the southbound lane, the object coming toward it must be able to stop under wet conditions when traveling at the speed limit. He also noted that stop signs need to be used with extreme care for attempting to calm traffic flow due to the fact that they are often not seen in time to fully stop by motorists.

**Nancy Cook, 16 Bailey Lane**, asked about the public hearing from last summer and the alternative option that was presented and wondered if the alternative given at that time was pursued. Mr. Strauss looked at that proposal but the town regulation and policy are to have through roads where possible to create an orderly pattern of road travel. The point is that through roads are desirable for emergency purposes, for snowplowing and for traffic circulation. Therefore, it is the policy of the commission is to discourage cul-de-sacs.

She commented that even though there has been a lot said about safety, why is the town so upset about cul-de-sacs here when this should be a safety issue.

Mr. Martucci commented that he designed the intersections and laid out WB-50, the wheelbase of a tractor trailer, and it easily went through the area. It is the same diameter as a full-sized cul-de-sac. There is plenty of room for them to go through those curves. Two tractor trailer trucks may not be able to speed through there at the same time, but it is very close to allowing them to do so.

**Nancy Cook, 16 Bailey Lane**, commented that she still thinks the road will have a higher volume of traffic than what the traffic study engineer is suggesting.

Mr. Walton noted that perhaps Ms. Cook would be willing to conduct and present her own traffic study.

Mr. Strauss asked for a review of the traffic flow numbers, specifically regarding which of the cars noted in the report are current versus which are proposed. Mr. Spear explained that 11 cars were new traffic. The current number was 5 in the am and 3 in the afternoon. The total coming down Battle Street in the morning is 103.

**Mike Bidmead, 111 Battle Street**, asked if the road can be driven continuously at 20 mph. Mr. Walton explained that this is one of the things that will be verified when checking the design standard.

At 9:15 p.m., a motion was made by Cliff Bordeaux, seconded by Brad Pellissier, and unanimously voted to continue the public hearing for KRL Builders' Subdivision Application #397 for 23 lots (Gillette's

Crossing) at 180 Battle Street & 7 Eleanor Lane to January 25, 2007 beginning at 7:00 p.m.

## **II. CALL TO ORDER**

Chairman Karl Walton called the regular meeting to order at 9:30 p.m. Members Cliff Bordeaux, Brad Pellissier and Karl Walton, and Alternates Greg Genlot (seated for Michael Collins) and Dan Fraro (seated for Michelle Hayward) were present and constituted a quorum. Town Engineer Merv Strauss was also present.

## **III. OLD BUSINESS**

### **a. Discussion/Possible Decision: Subdivision Application #397, 23 Lots (Gillette's Crossing), 180 Battle Street & 7 Eleanor Lane, KRL Builders**

No action at this time since public hearing has been continued.

### **b. Other** – No other Old Business was presented.

## **IV. NEW BUSINESS**

### **a. 8-24 Referral: Substantial Improvement of Town Property, Expansion and Renovation of Somers Public Library, 51 Ninth District Road, Town of Somers**

Ed Burns, the Chairman of the Expansion Study Committee, introduced Shirley Warner who presented a report showing the artist rendering of what the final library would look like as well as the proposed floor plan. She also presented a report from a meeting with the Town Sanitarian, as well as information showing the financial issues involved.

The plan is in the preliminary design stages. She explained the map showing where new construction is proposed and where proposed renovations would be.

A floor plan and elevations were presented. A full color rendering is forthcoming.

Discussion followed about the parking lot layout and accommodation of those using the facility once it is completed. Mr. Strauss commented that the sidewalks need to be clearly defined from the parking and driving areas. He also commented that adequate lighting is also necessary.

A motion was made by Brad Pellissier, seconded by Joe Iadarola, and unanimously voted to accept the improvements to town property at 51 Ninth District Road for the expansion and renovation of the Somers Public Library and recommend the same to the Board of Selectmen for their approval and Town Meeting, in accordance with the recommendations of the town staff and Section 8-24 of the Connecticut General Statutes. This recommendation is conditioned upon conformance with the comments from the Town Engineer and his review of the plans presented at the meeting.

**b. Other** – No other New Business was presented.

## **V. DISCUSSION: PLAN OF CONSERVATION AND DEVELOPMENT**

Mr. Walton reported that they are awaiting finalization of information on the cistern portion of the regulations and as well as information on the farms. The Somersville Study Committee is moving forward at this point. They have selected a consultant and the contract is being reviewed by the Town Attorney.

## **VI. STAFF/COMMISSIONER REPORTS**

Mr. Strauss explained that he has been working on Gillette's Crossing, Shady Lake, Eleanor Road and the Roulier property.

Discussion followed about the dilemma caused by working to meet policy, procedure, and regulations while at the same time applying these to fit the needs and desires of the community.

## **VII. AUDIENCE PARTICIPATION**

An audience member commented that it seems as if there is a perception by the community that the Planning Commission is planning the developments. A brief discussion followed about this between the audience member and the Commission.

## **VIII. CORRESPONDENCE AND BILLS**

A bill was presented from Merv Strauss for \$7,313.75 for the second quarter. A motion was made by Cliff Bordeaux, seconded by Joe Iadarola, and unanimously voted to pay the bill as presented.

## **IX. MINUTES APPROVAL**

This item was deferred until the next meeting.

## **X. ADJOURNMENT**

A motion was made by Joe Iadarola, seconded by Brad Pellissier, and unanimously voted to adjourn the January 11, 2007 Planning Commission meeting at 10:20 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Brad Pellissier, Secretary

Robin Timmons, Recording Secretary

***MINUTES ARE NOT OFFICIAL UNTIL APPROVAL AT A SUBSEQUENT MEETING.***