

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

**PLANNING MINUTES
REGULAR MEETING
Thursday, January 25, 2006
7:00 p.m. Town Hall**

I. PUBLIC HEARING

a. Continuation Subdivision Application #397, 23 lots (Gillette's Crossing), 180 Battle Street & 7 Eleanor Lane, KRL Builders (02/08)

Chairman Karl Walton called the public hearing to order at 7:20 p.m. and the legal notice was read. Mr. Aeschliman of Aeschliman Land Surveying, John Martucci (Engineer), and David Spears (Traffic Engineer) represented Ric Leno and KRL Builders. They discussed the latest design plans on this application with the Commission. Mr. Aeschliman responded to the Town Attorney's opinion letter and his thoughts on the clearance triangle. Mr. Aeschliman agreed that there needed to be no modifications made to this area because neither the applicant nor the town itself has control over that property. However, if the property owner gave permission, the applicant would be willing to remove any trees in question. He also noted that the minimum 20 MPH speed around the curve has been adjusted and the plans now reflect a 130-foot radius which is in excess of 20 MPH.

Mr. Martucci explained that the plans had been changed to address the traffic flow issue between the existing Bailey Lane and the new portion of the road. He explained that if you now proceed North on Bailey Lane the motorist would see a stop sign, come to a stop and then take the right turn. At the curve there would be small chevron curve signs. On the South bound side, from new Bailey Lane, there would be a curve warning sign illustrating a right hand curve and below that an advisory sign of 15 MPH.

He went on in detail to explain that there are three types of Traffic Speeds:

1. Engineer Design Speed – which is designed for wet roadways, night driving, and site distance calculations etc.
2. Speed Limit – which is the legal limit suggested to drive under optimal speed conditions.
3. Advisory Speed – which notifies the motorist that there is a suggestion that they change their speed to X amount.

Mr. Martucci also stated that there is adequate site distance from both directions for 30 MPH.

Mr. Strauss expressed that he had limited time in which to review the plans since they were presented to him at 4:00 p.m. that afternoon, but did have some comments on what he was able to review. Mr. Strauss informed Mr. Martucci that there is a discrepancy in one of the cross sections where the plans show 28 feet instead of 24. In addition, the plans still show an advisory sign which had previously been removed.

This advisory sign would need to be deleted.

Mr. Strauss questioned the “root protection”. Would that be left for construction? Should the property owner be involved in that? Mr. Strauss also asked if there will be numbers added to the internal/external radius on the plans for the contractor to follow? Mr. Martucci responded that there would be. In addition a new revised bond figure would need to be presented due to there being changes to the pavement and increased signage on the latest plans as well as contour lines and pavement illustrations would need to be altered.

Mr. Strauss requested a more detailed description of traffic calming be given. Mr. Martucci stated that with the warning signs (terminology defined in the DOT handbook) there are yellow diamond shaped signs in conjunction with the advisory sign which slow down a motorist. The signage alone increases the driver’s awareness and decreases the reaction time.

Mr. Strauss expressed that he needs more time to review the latest plans and the bond figure; he may after those reviews have additional comments/questions. Chairman Walton acknowledged his request.

Ms. Carson then read the Town Attorney’s letter dated January 24, 2007 into the record. Mr. Strauss then read his letter dated January 25, 2007 addressed to the Town Planner, Ms. Carson into the record as well. Note both the before mentioned letters referred to the latest plans the Commission had in possession prior to those received on January 25, 2007. Some of the comments made in these letters are now addressed.

Chairman Walton then asked for comments from the public. There were none in favor.

Eric Young, 15 Rye Hill Circle inquired if the public would have time to review the latest changes. Mr. Walton noted that at no time was it stated that the public would not have time in which to respond to the changes. He stated that he appreciated that the town attorney’s letter was read into the record. He had some concerns over the use of stop signs being utilized to regulate speed on a continuous road, stating that stop signs would not work for traffic calming or safety and noted that both Mr. Spears and Mr. Aeschliman previously shared this belief.

He referenced Mr. Strauss’ example in West Hartford CT, which has the same traffic design and how it works well for that area but not for this applicant’s design and he thought the comment and example should be withdrawn. To clarify, he presented various maps and pictures of this example, noting that sidewalks are present on Arden Road but not Mr. Leno’s current plans for public safety. Also West Hartford has extra pavement and these roads were designed between the years of 1938-1951. These streets were constructed prior to current regulations and to utilize these examples is not an adequate comparison.

John Rush, 22 Bailey Lane wished to discuss the discontinuance of Eleanor Road, asking if the markers were exactly in contrast to the new road?

Eric Young, 15 Rye Hill Circle inquired about the fee in lieu of open space. It was explained that this was agreed to by the applicant at the beginning of the application process.

Nancy Cook, 16 Bailey Lane asked why there was going to be a cul-de-sac on the other end of this subdivision. If the town is so opposed to them, why is one being allowed in this application? The Commission explained that this was reviewed to be a through road in the beginning and it was found that no easement was left for the connection on to Deerfield Road and the property in question was now owned by another individual and there was a house on it.

John Rush, 22 Bailey Lane asked what matrixes were being used to calculate safety. There would be no safety issues if the cul-de-sac was to be left as is. Ms. Carson stated that there are multiple reasons why a town would favor thru roads as opposed to cul-de-sacs; easier access from two or more directions, easier school bus route access, easier and less road maintenance especially for snow plowing, less vehicle miles traveled, optional points of entry during an emergency for fire trucks and ambulances, and a reduction in response time during a fire or medical emergency.

Ric Leno, applicant, 68 Eaglebrook Drive stated that the proposed sub-division has been going on for almost 2 years. He explained that it starts with an idea and two “wish lists”, one from the applicant and one from the town. Once these lists are received, there is a great deal of discussion and plan changes that are made to meet town requirements. Revisions need to be made throughout the process and some wishes need to be abandoned to meet current regulations.

Mr. Strauss wished to clarify that his reference to the West Hartford traffic design was to illustrate similarity in the maneuvering of vehicles when making a right and left hand turn and that no engineering report was ever done. It was only presented as a comparison to comparison example. In addition, studies suggest that stop signs are suitable and common in navigating vehicles in a 90% intersection and they are not a good means of traffic control or speed control as explained in the Pleasant Valley Road example in South Windsor.

David Spears, the applicant’s traffic engineer, stated that originally, there were to be four stop signs, but now that there are only two intersecting roads, there will only be two stop signs. Stop signs are not recommended if there is no opposing traffic. People get in the habit of simply rolling through them. But in the current plans, the individuals are forced to come to complete stops due to the design of the road.

Mr. Aeschliman stated that he did make an adjustment to the lot line between Lot 1 and Lot 2, but that the septic systems and their location remain the same and there are other revisions needed as well as presentation of a revised bond.

At 8:40 p.m., a motion was made by Mr. Genlot, seconded by Mr. 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 February 8, 2007 beginning at 7:00 p.m. to allow for staff review of the new plans.

II. CALL TO ORDER

Chairman Karl Walton called the regular meeting to order at 8:45 p.m. Members Karl Walton, Greg

Genlot and Brad Pellissier were present and constituted a quorum. Town Planner Patrice Carson and Engineering Consultant Mervyn Strauss were also present.

Ms. Carson began the meeting by informing the Commission that Mr. Genlot has been appointed as a full member. Ms. Georgeanne Kuzman and Mr. Michael Collins' terms have expired and they have asked not to be reappointed. Mr. Collins has chosen to retire and Ms. Kuzman will be moving.

III. OLD BUSINESS

a. Discussion/Possible Decision: Subdivision Application #397 , 23 lots (Gillette's Crossing), 180 Battle Street & 7 Eleanor Lane, KRL Builders (02/08)

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

b. Subdivision Application #398, 10 Lots (Stone Crossing), 185 Stafford Road, Mink Farm Associates, LLC (02/08) – Set Public Hearing Date

Ms. Carson explained that the original hearing was never advertised because the applicants were not ready. The Commission needs to reschedule the hearing date. A motion was made by Mr. Pellissier, seconded by Mr. Genot, and unanimously voted to re-set the public hearing to Thursday, February 8, 2007 in the town hall beginning at 7:00 p.m.

c. Other – There was no other Old Business.

IV. NEW BUSINESS:

a. Subdivision Application #399, 2 Lots (Kasacek Subdivision), 87 Billings Road, Buck Builders LLC (03/22)

Mr. Buck, the applicant, presented the plans for a two-lot subdivision on the northerly side of Billings Road. The two lots include an existing home on one of the proposed lots. The applicant proposed the Commission take a fee in lieu of open space. It was the consensus of the Commission that a public hearing was not needed and a fee in lieu of open space would be accepted. Ms. Carson was asked to have the Open Space Committee look at this and also get the appraisal process started. The Commission accepted the plans and the application will be further discussed at the next Planning meeting. Mr. Strauss has reviewed the plans and his comments are already on file.

b. Special Use Permit Application for Age Restricted Housing, Eleanor Rod, Eleanor Road, LLC (03/22)

Becky Myers, an associate at Design Professionals, presented for the above-mentioned application. In December 2006 the Wetlands Commission approved the application. It consists of 17 units; one bedroom units are 1,260 square feet and the two bedroom units are 1,780 with a two car garage and full basement. There is a 24-foot private drive leading to a cul-de-sac and this road will retain the Eleanor Road name.

The town does not need to maintain this road nor do they need to address the drainage. Only the Fire Department would need to be directly involved with their fire service and they will review the plans as well.

Ms. Meyers spoke of drainage and pond filtering. The drainage pipes are designed for the 100-year storm and there currently is a very effective vegetative buffer.

The housing will have private water and septic systems. All utilities will be underground. Steve Jacobs has reviewed the plans and there are some changes that need to be made due to his comments.

Mr. Strauss requested that the Eleanor Lane portion of the road which had been discontinued by the Town be omitted from the design.

Ms. Carson mentioned that it would be a good idea to meet with Everett Morrill and Kenny Anderson from Public Works to discuss snow plowing of the existing town road and how that would impact the entrance to the private road. A traffic report was done and it noted that there would be no negative effects. A public hearing is required on this application. Since there are still some reviews and comments that need to be addressed from Steve Jacobs, Merv Strauss, Patrice Carson and the state, it was suggested that the applicant and the Commission see where all parties stand at the next Planning meeting. The Commission accepted the permit application for Special Use Permit Application for Age Restricted Housing, Eleanor Rod, Eleanor Road, LLC (03/22)

c. Reconfiguration of Lots, 785 Springfield Road (Somers MAP 11 Block 64) & 907 Somers Road (Hampden Map 1501 Lot 5), Punderson & Hobbs

The Commission reviewed the plans which include a two properties, both in Somers and East Longmeadow. A motion was made by Mr. Pellissier, seconded by Mr. Genlot, and unanimously voted to approve the reconfiguration of property of Richard H. Punderson at 907 Somers Road (Hampden Map 1501 Lot 5) & 785 Springfield Road (Somers Map 11 Block 64), as shown on map entitled, "Lot Line Revision Plan Prepared For Richard H. Punderson, Somers, CT & East Longmeadow, MA", dated: 01-22-07, 1 sheet. This reconfiguration does not constitute a subdivision because no new lot is created.

d. 2007/2008 Budget

Chairman Walton requested that the Commission review Ms. Carson's email in regards to the 2007/2008 budget noting the provision in regards to the Engineer's fee and be ready to discuss at the next meeting.

e. Other – There was no other New Business.

V. DISCUSSION: PLAN OF CONSERVATION & DEVELOPMENT

Mrs. Carson mentioned that she received a letter from the Deputy Chief of the Somers Fire Department which stipulates that the required cistern size in subdivisions should be 10,000 gallons when installed.

Chairman Walton asked if any Commission members were aware that the town of Suffield had passed a moratorium on permits involving long driveways for 6 months until the town Committee's have time to review their regulations for this. It is the town's opinion that it is a way for new builders/land owners to "get around" the current regulations for cul-de-sacs. He will forward the article to Ms. Carson. In addition he did voice his opinion that he feels the town of Somers should review this situation as well.

VI. STAFF/COMMISSIONER REPORTS

Ms. Carson informed the Commission that she and Mr. Strauss are working on a number of items one of which was an STP Urban Grant for state money to fix the Route 190/83 intersection.

VII. AUDIENCE PATICIPATION – There was none.

VIII. CORRESPONDENCE AND BILLS

There was an email sent by Mr. Pinney to Ms. Carson on January 22, 2007. The email discussed a Regional Workshop - Conservation Options for CT Farmland to be held on January 30th in Somers from 6:30 to 8:30 p.m. This Workshop is being co-hosted by the Town of Somers and the Northern CT Land Trust at the Somers Town Hall.

A bill was presented for Ms. Carson's yearly American Planning Association dues. A motion was made by Mr. Pellissier, seconded by Mr. Genlot and unanimously voted to pay the American Planning Association dues for Ms. Carson in the amount of \$309.00.

Ms. Carson explained to the Commission that every three years she is required to obtain 60 CEUs – Continuing Education Units. In order to do that, she must attend various Conferences. She requested that it be possible for her to attend the National Planning Conference this year in Philadelphia. The total cost of the Conference registration is \$660 plus travel; Ms. Carson would pay for her meals and hotel. After some discussion, it was the consensus of the Commission that both the Planning and Zoning Committees would work together in order to obtain the funds necessary to send Ms. Carson, with the Planning Commission paying 2/3rds of the cost.

A motion was made by Mr. Pellissier, seconded by Mr. Genlot and unanimously voted that in accordance with the 2006/07 Training and Conference Plan that was submitted from the Planning Commission to the Board of Selectman with last year's budget, that the Commission agree to pay the registration fee and travel fee for Ms. Carson to attend the National Planning Conference in Philadelphia while Ms. Carson would absorb the lodging and meal fees. The Commission will make a transfer of \$150 from the Publications account and \$50 from the Copier account to the Dues and Seminars account which would cover the Planning Commission's portion of the cost to send Ms. Carson to the Conference. The remaining \$260 needed to reach the total \$660 cost would be paid by the Zoning Commission.

IX. MINUTES APPROVAL: November 16, 2006, December 7, 2006, & January 11, 2007

Chairman Walton requested that Ms. Carson please resend via email all of the above dated minutes to the

Planning Commission. The minutes approval will be deferred to the next planning meeting.

X. ADJOURNMENT

A motion was made by Mr. Genlot, seconded by Mr. Pellissier and unanimously voted to adjourn the January 25, 2007 Planning Commission meeting at 9:37 p.m

Respectfully submitted,

Jennifer Boudreau, Recording Secretary
Commission Secretary

Bradley Pellissier,

MINUTES ARE NOT OFFICIAL UNTIL APPROVAL AT A SUBSEQUENT MEETING.