

Somersville Planning Committee - Public Hearing Notes March 7, 2007 at the Grammar School, Somersville, CT

Committee Members Present: David Reed, Barry Moynihan, Karl Walton, Ron Elliott, Everett Morrill, Jill Conklin and Ann Levesque; also present Aris Stalis, Patrice Carson, Town Planner and David Pinney, First Selectman

Members Absent: Pat Kennedy and Robert Lapadula

Meeting began at 7:05 with approximately 35 people present.

Chairman Reed introduced committee and the presenter, Aris Stalis of BSC Group.

Aris made his presentation to those in attendance and then asked for questions and comments from the audience. The following lists the comments made during the audience participation portion of this meeting:

1) Two points of view:

a) Start from the Mill and radiate out - look at this redevelopment with the Mill as the pivotal area for the triangle's redevelopment; save some of the Mill to renovate as an historical building or for recreational or cultural purposes or as housing (but not low income or high density) and demolish the rest to make room for some other use; utilize the mill as a business to bring more opportunities to the area; suggest that Mill Pond area be improved for recreation, family access area, for more fishing and walking opportunities; idea expressed that what will happen with the Mill will reflect what will happen with this entire area.

b) Rather look at making the entire triangle inviting, family, pedestrian and business friendly, with streetscape, plantings, and signage that begin and end and welcome and slow down passers-by. And the rest of the redevelopment will slowly follow suit.

2) There is a lot of concern about the blighted two old buildings near the mill and across from the Mill Pond..... suggestions made to tear it down, to turn them into a dinner theatre for the Somers Village Players, to renovate the old buildings (but these are privately owned). Need for a Blight Ordinance for the triangle area buildings that are in need of repair.

3) Because of the fast traffic coming through Maple Street and the narrowness of this road, propose making Maple Street a one-way street from 190 south (down) to the end of Maple Street near the Mill Pond; same suggestion made also for School Street due to amount of traffic, including trucks, and its high speed.

4) Need for more parking space for Somersville Congregational Church because residents during the church service times have difficulty getting out of their driveways; add parking to some of the Town Green (which is owned by Somersville Congregational Church), and keep the rest a green area.

5) Need for crosswalks and walking signals at the intersections of Shaker/Maple and Hall Hill/School.

6) Goodwin Road residents having a difficult time getting onto Main Street.

- 7) Inadequate parking for Frankie's Restaurant/photographer and the Italian Restaurant who all share the same parking area; need to create a plan to make it work for all 3 businesses.
- 8) Concern for the open hole around the bend at the dam construction site of the Mill Pond....an accident waiting to happen.
- 9) Need to remove the School Street telephone poles; also to add a cross walk rise and different pavement as part of the streetscape in front of the school and church in order to slow down traffic and to help give the appearance that the church and school are opening out to the street.
- 10) Rec. Dept. suggests finding more athletic fields in the green area because the Recreational Dept. is always looking for more athletic fields for our sports playing youths and adults.
- 11) Problem with high volume of traffic, speeding and unsavory people who prevent local residents from safely and fearlessly walking down the Maple Street area; also problem with sidewalks which are not cleaned of snow and ice in this area.
- 12) Need for a macroplan - mill is a big issue; need for macrolandscaping for the entire triangle; tennis courts and an outlet for youth but not for hanging out.
- 13) Renovate buildings and have an ordinance in place to reflect area's vision with high standards; another expressed concern with individual resident's problem with funding such costly renovations.
- 14) Attention to the kinds of businesses that will be allowed in this area - not to be seedy, but to elevate the area; where will the cars be parked when the businesses in this area start to improve and draw in more customers; can we buy and use the large green area in the middle of triangle from its private owners; those private owners present said no! Also, town staff needs to stay receptive to businesses coming into the area and to try to stay away from town regulations; better that the businesses make the improvements themselves.
- 15) State realignment of Shaker/Main/Maple Streets mentioned which could include funding for street enhancements.

Meeting adjourned at approximately 8:45 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Ann Levesque, Secretary,
Somersville Planning Committee