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Town of North Reading
Massachusetts

Community Planning

TOWN CLERK
NORTH READING, MA

MINUTES

Tuesday, May 1, 2018

Mr. William Bellavance, Chairperson called the Tuesday, May 1, 2018 meeting of the Community Planning Commission to order at 7:30p.m. in Room 14 of the North Reading Town Hall, 235 North Street, North Reading, MA.

MEMBERS

PRESENT: William Bellavance, Chairperson
Warren Pearce, Vice Chairperson
Christopher Hayden
Joseph Veno

STAFF

PRESENT: Danielle McKnight, AICP
Town Planner/Community Planning Administrator
Debra Savarese, Administrator Assistant

Mr. Bellavance informed all present that the meeting was being recorded.

Minutes

Mr. Pearce moved, seconded by Mr. Hayden and voted 4-0: (Mr. Cody absent)

that the Community Planning Commission vote to approve the minutes of April 17, 2018 as written.

113 Haverhill Street – Inspection funds release

Mr. Pearce moved, seconded by Mr. Hayden and voted 4-0: (Mr. Cody absent)

That the Community Planning Commission vote to release the remaining inspection funds in the amount of \$1,530.75 for 113 Haverhill Street/Ipswich River Townhouses.

Planning Administrator Updates

Swan Pond Road – Citizens Petition for pavement of road

Mrs. McKnight stated that a Citizens Petition has been placed on the warrant to have the town pave Swan Pond Road. The town is trying to decide what the best response would be to this because it will be very expensive, has no layout, is not really a road and goes through a number of private properties. If this is done through the Betterment Policy the town could pay 50% of the construction costs. But, it's not an obligation, if the Board of Selectmen doesn't make the decision to lay it out as a public way.

Mr. Pearce stated that the town currently maintains this dirt road and the maintenance of this road is very expensive.

Mrs. McKnight stated that it's not only the cost to pave the road; it would also need special drainage because of the drinking water supply and other issues.

Mr. Pearce stated that it qualifies as country drainage and does not think that it would be have to changed that much. The issue of the road crossing over private properties is a concern to him, because you may get only 8 of the 11 residences to agree to have the road paved over their property.

Mrs. McKnight stated that if the road was improved it would need to be accepted and this would divide these properties into two which would create zoning issues and devaluations.

Mr. Pearce stated that he would suggest that the residents on this road get together and form an H.O.A. The town may not have to accept the road if all members of the H.O.A. donate their land to the association that would maintain the road.

Mrs. McKnight stated that the way the bylaw is written is that the town can only commit the town funds to it, if it becomes a public way. The town does not have to own the fee, but would need an easement, and it would need to be accepted.

Mr. Pearce stated that he would need to see how the betterment properties were done in the past.

Mr. Veno stated that he agreed with an H.O.A. being done.

Mr. Pearce stated that he does not think that the town should accept it.

Master Plan - Scheduled meetings

The consensus is to combine the meetings with the regularly scheduled Tuesday meetings, starting at 6:30PM.

Board of Selectmen meeting

May 7, 2018 – CPC asked to attend for the re-appointment of some EDC members. Also, the EDC will make a negative recommendation on the bid recieved for 102 Lowell Road.

Haverhill Street sidewalk

The construction of the sidewalk was supposed to start on May 7th, but there is a wire attached to a tree that needs to be moved to a utility pole. This might trigger a hearing, so the construction might be delayed for a couple of weeks.

Municipal Vulnerability Preparedness Grant

Mrs. McKnight is overseeing this project because the town engineer retired. This grant is to supplement the town's hazard mitigation plan with items particular to climate change and particular areas of weakness that the town wanted to focus on which would make the town more eligible for grant funding from the State, in the future. A presentation will be held on May 10th to discuss what would be good things to focus on. (Flooding, Martin's Pond, anticipated new calculations for new snow loading on the flat roofs of the schools, new analysis for the Ipswich River floodplain because the FEMA data is decades old.)

Zoning Amendment – Board of Selectmen name change – P.H. 7:45PM

Mr. Pearce read the public hearing notice into the record.

Mr. Bellavance stated that he is concerned with the costs to make this change.

Mr. Veno stated that he is opposed to this change.

Mr. Pearce stated that this will be an expensive cost to the town and does not support it.

Mr. Hayden stated that the name change should be "Select Person", not "Select Board".

Mr. Pearce moved, seconded by Mr. Veno and voted 4-0: (Mr. Cody absent)

that the Community Planning Commission vote to continue the public hearing for the zoning amendment to June 4, 2018 @ 6:30PM.

265-271 Main Street – SPR – P.H. 8:00PM

Mr. Pearce read the public hearing notice into the record.

Mr. Bill Dufresne of Merrimack Engineering Services stated that there are three proposals to this Site Plan Review. 1) Build out the vacant space at the south end of the existing building, formerly used as Sears Garden Center. A fitness center will occupy the 2997 sq. ft. site. In order to get a safe site distance around the corner of the building, a 10' section of the corner will be removed. This will provide three additional parking spaces on the side of the building, but two spaces will be eliminated at the far right of the parking lot to allow a straighter line to the rear of the building. 2) A new freestanding pylon sign to accommodate new tenants. 3) Reconfigure entrance at the southerly end of the site by creating a 90° angle and this will allow three more parking spaces in this area.

Mr. Pearce stated that he is concerned that if the right angle is changed to 90°, vehicles coming off of Rte. 28 are going to be forced to make a hard left turn. If they don't make the turn they are going to straight up towards Cowabunga with all of the traffic and people in that area.

Mr. Dufresne stated that as a design engineer he does not see any issues with this. It conforms way more with a typical driveway than the way it exists today.

Mr. Pearce stated that when Cowabunga is in full swing the parking lot is fully jammed and there are many people/children entering and exiting in this area.

Mr. Veno stated that he believes this will make the flow easier, but adding more parking spaces near this entrance is not a good for sight distance. He doesn't think that there are a lot of vehicles going in the southerly direction while in the parking lot because you can't exit from that area. He also wanted to know if there was any accident history for this site.

Mr. Dufresne stated that he spoke to the safety officer and he was ecstatic about this idea.

Mr. Pearce stated that this will definitely slow vehicles down when entering the site.

Mr. Dufresne stated that they can put landscaping in this area instead of the parking spaces.

Mr. Hayden stated that this could also be used for snow storage. He understands that people entering the site may not be able to see, but people do not slow down as much as they should when entering. Making hard right and then a left will slow them down and eliminating the parking spaces will give better site distance.

Mr. Pearce asked if the proposed fitness center will have showers.

Mr. David Webster of Federal Realty Investment Trust stated that there will be two showers and two lavatories.

Mr. Bellavance asked what the hours would be.

Mr. Webster stated that the mornings should be the busiest. The starting hours are Monday thru Friday 5:00am and 7:00am on Saturdays and Sundays.

Mr. Dufresne stated that relative to waste disposal. This site prior to the waste water treatment approval was 13,000 gallons per day with 4 septic systems. They applied for and received a groundwater discharge permit for 25,000 gallons per day.

Mr. Pearce stated that he believes that there should be designated parking spaces for the new fitness center.

Mr. Webster stated that they will be working with the tenants to manage the parking. The highest demand periods are going to be on Saturdays between 10:00am and 1:00pm.

Mr. Pearce stated that he is looking for encouragement for them to continue the pattern as it is now, but at a slower pace. Putting arrows on the ground may give options.

Mr. Bellavance stated that he manages a building and he constantly has to tell people to move their vehicles. Creating pathways is a good way to go because people don't always read the signs.

Mr. Hayden stated that he agrees that painting arrows on the ground is a good way to go.

Mr. Dan Mills of 5 Green Meadow Drive stated that the traffic flow for this site has been looked at a lot. It's a sight distance issue, it's a flat area and several parking spaces should be eliminated. It's also a Mass DOT roadway and he's unsure if it impacts their right-of-way and probably need their approval for this change. It's a one way in, and vehicles should not be coming southbound should not be using this entrance; this is why it's angled the way it is. A parking study should be done to see what the time periods are for the current businesses. There was a standard set up for the pylon sign and currently one of the retail signs is not consistent.

Mr. Veno stated that double-headed arrows should be painted on the ground.

Mrs. McKnight stated that she would check with Mass. DOT to see if a left turn is allowed on the southbound lane of Rte. 28.

Mr. Hayden asked if they requested signs be put up at the time Cowabunga come in for the SPR. If not, "Caution Children" signs should be added to this SPR request.

Mrs. McKnight stated that there is a sign stating this on the site.

Mrs. McKnight stated that the new town engineer didn't have time to do a memo for this project, but will have one for the next meeting.

Mr. Bellavance stated that the current sign is very large.

Mr. Webster stated that they don't have enough room to add the new tenant's signage.

Mr. Hayden stated that there are currently 15 spaces and you only need 13 spaces. If you split the Stop & Shop sign it will make room for another space.

Mr. Webster stated that he cannot split the Stop & Shop sign because of their lease. There are currently 13 occupants, 1 vacant and 1 new be added.

Mr. Bellavance asked what the dimensions of the sign base from the grade are.

Mrs. McKnight stated that the signage plan shows 4'.

Mr. Bellavance stated that the sign is a monstrosity and would like to have the sign reduced, not enlarge.

Mr. Veno stated that he does not have any issues with the signage.

Mr. Bellavance asked if the sign could be moved 15' back from the road to be in compliance.


Mr. Dufresne stated that if they make the sign smaller it will look very busy, but they will review the requests made this evening.

Mr. Pearce moved, seconded by Mr. Veno and voted 4-0: (Mr. Cody absent)

that the Community Planning Commission vote to grant the requested continuance of the public hearing for 265-271 Main Street until Tuesday, May 15, 2018 at 7:45pm.

Adjournment at 9:15PM

Respectfully submitted,


Jonathan Cody, Clerk