

Town of Longmeadow
Planning Board
MINUTES
Of Public Hearing
October 12, 2004

PRESENT: Chairman Bruce Colton, Richard Curran, Walter Gunn,
Louis Kornet, and Roy Johansen

A Public Hearing was held at the Longmeadow Community House on October 12, 2004 for a continuation of the Public Hearing for 154 Williams Street, Longmeadow, MA. Among guests at the Public Hearing were: Steven Letko, Baystate Environmental Consultants, Inc., Harry Jones, Joseph Pacella, Jim Rossling, and Mr. & Mrs. Steven Danalis. There were also members from abutting properties to the proposed subdivision. Attorney Bruce Colton introduced members of the Planning Board and explained how the Public Hearing would be run. Presentation and comments from the applicant would be heard, comments and questions from the Planning Board, and finally comments from the residents.

The applicant indicated that they took into consideration previous comments from Town officials, residents, and Planning Board members to revise their plans. They have included a 5' sidewalk on the west side of the proposed street. They have included a lighting plan with masthead lighting on the west side of the property. The lighting plans also shows the foot-candles readings; and the applicant feels that the lighting would not have an adverse impact on the residents on Falmouth Road. The petitioner also stated their proposal is much less dense than other developments in the surrounding area. There was a concern about the raising of the water table and basement flooding. The proposal calls for directing water from the road and houses to trenches to infiltrate to the ground to the existing wetland. They indicated that they have followed MA DEP regulations and have addressed each MA DEP guideline. In regard to frontage, on Lot #4 they have 598' of frontage. In regard to privacy issues in the landscaping plan, they will provide a 6' high stockade fence and maintain existing evergreen trees. In regard to traffic, a study was done during a.m. and p.m. peak hours, with 2-3 additional cars, which would come through this development. Traffic is felt to be a minor issue. Storm water analysis findings were flawed. An independent analysis was issued and comments were made. Walter Gunn stated that the Town Engineer asked for an independent study not the Planning Board. The Planning Board was not aware of this study until the first Public Hearing. The proposed roadway would have to be raised above existing grade between 3 and 3 ½' above grade. There should not be any visual or safety concerns.

The Fire Department officials suggested relocating the fire hydrant from Lot #1. The Board of Health had one issue on the state plumbing code. Attorney Joseph Pacella, Counsel for Mr. & Mrs. Danalis indicated that he and his client feels that they are in

compliance with Chapter 40A of the subdivision control law. He feels that the petitioner has developed as good a project as possible. Attorney Pacella went over each of the review criteria/design guidelines as written in **ARTICLE XI SITE AND DESIGN REVIEW**.

The Planning Board members commented on the proposal. Mr. Colton stated that an independent study was done of the proposal. The Planning Board requests that the Board retains the expert, not the petitioner. He stated that Doucette and Company was working for the petitioner, not the Town. Mr. Colton stated that Planning Board members walked the property and they have many questions about the entire subdivision. He stated that there is no subdivision in town like this proposal. The street would run behind the Falmouth Road properties. Mr. Colton stated that he is very concerned about this, the effect on the existing houses and the street being raised. He thinks that this project would significantly change the character of the neighborhood to its detriment.

Richard Curran gave his comments on the proposal. Mr. Curran commented on each of the seven items in Section F of the Zoning By-laws: Conformance of all appropriate provisions of the Zoning By-laws. Mr. Curran stated that predominantly all other subdivisions that have been built over time are non-offensive and thoughtful in design. This plan is not. He felt that this plan is offensive in design (4-lot subdivision) and layout as it relates to the abutting neighborhood. Mr. Curran also had concerns about the necessary utility requirements, i.e., elevating the road bed, how does the infill of the property affect the area's water table, what impact will houses built above road grade have on ground water run off and infiltration as well as surrounding properties. Mr. Curran also mentioned concerns about a part of the plan proposing a 6' high, 700 foot long stockade fence. Mr. Curran felt that the elevated roadway would result in a lack of privacy on individual abutters, clearing of most all tree cover, water table levels, and fencing would be completely out of character with this neighborhood or any neighborhood in Longmeadow. Mr. Curran also felt that there is no provision for preservation of open space within the unprotected area of the proposed subdivision. Only the wetlands area is untouched.

There were no other comments from the Planning Board. Mr. Colton opened up the hearing to members of the public.

Ronald Hastie: Mr. Hastie questioned how much will "super saturate" blacktop, homes, etc. on a 549' road. He feels that the road would be too large. He also questioned the fencing by-laws with respect to front and side yards and lot lines.

Jerry Plumb: Attorney Plumb represents many of the abutters to the proposed subdivision. Why is the property undeveloped? It cannot be buildable and should not be built.

Don Rogers: The subdivision gets 300' of sidewalk. Put it on the east side. He has more than others do!

Harry O'Connor, 85 Mill Road: He is hoping to become neighbors in this area. He urged Planning Board members to base their decision on what the law says and what is right.

_____ : He stated that these types of developments have ruined sections of other towns like Long Island. Neighborhoods are not neighborhoods; it impacts the entire community.

Vicki Shotland: Ms. Shotland directed her comments to Richard Curran. Thank you for your kind words.

Michael Caronna: Mr. Caronna made a comment on the infiltration groundwater system. He stated that these systems do clog up and the taxpayer will have to maintain it in the future. He suggested that the MA DEP might have a recommendation for a better system for the subdivision.

Larry Eagan, Storrs Library: The Storrs Board of Trustees has not taken a position on the subdivision, as neighbors have not embraced the proposed project.

There were no other comments from the public. The Public Hearing closed at 8:40 p.m. Mr. Colton explained the next steps. The Planning Board could do the following: (1) vote tonight on the plan; (2) delay vote on the plan; (3) Mr. Colton asked if any Planning Board member would need any more time or information to make a decision. The Planning Board members expressed their opinions on the proposal. There was much discussion on how to proceed and take a vote on the issue. Mr. Kornet asked other Planning Board members to consider putting off a decision to the next meeting for further review and to consider all thoughts and opinions.

Bruce Colton asked the Planning Board members if they wanted to vote on the Site and Design Review; it would require a super majority vote. Attorney Joseph Pacella respectfully requested that the Planning Board take two votes both on the Site and Design Review and the subdivision, which would require three out of five Planning Board majority votes. He feels that these are two very different issues.

After discussion from Planning Board members, Walter Gunn made a motion to rescind the decision to take a vote on Site and Design Review tonight. Bruce Colton seconded the motion; it was approved 5-0. The Planning Board members decided to send the question to Town Counsel regarding voting on subdivision and Site and Design Review. The question is should two separate votes be taken or one vote on the two issues combined. There will be further discussion of the issues on November 9, 2004, 7:00 p.m. with a location to be determined.

APPROVAL OF MEETING MINUTES: The minutes of the September 14, 2004 Planning Board meeting were reviewed. After review, Bruce Colton made a motion to accept the minutes as written. Walter Gunn seconded the motion; the minutes were approved 5-0.

ADJOURNMENT: There being no further business, Bruce Colton made a motion to adjourn the meeting. Walter Gunn seconded the motion; it was approved 5-0. The meeting adjourned at 10:10 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Judy Downie, Secretary.
Longmeadow Planning Board