

Town of Longmeadow
Planning Board
MINUTES
Of Meeting Held
July 6, 2006

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

A meeting was held at the Longmeadow Police Community Room, Williams Street, Longmeadow, MA. Walter Gunn opened the meeting at 7:04 p.m. Mr. Gunn introduced Planning Board members and their secretary to everyone in attendance.

MIKE WRABEL, DPW DIRECTOR, RE: DANALIS SUBDIVISION – Mike Wrabel was asked to attend tonight’s Planning Board meeting to go over and express his opinion and expertise on an “old business” issue regarding the Danalis subdivision and screenings on the future street, if it is approved. Walter Gunn explained some of the project’s details. The subdivision was approved, but the site and design was denied by the Planning Board. Screenings would be 12’ from the tree belt on either side of the curb. The utilities are underground; the street lights are on the west side. The road would be a private way until it is approved at town meeting. The town would maintain the road. Mr. Curran stated that one of the major issues is the height of a proposed fence or screenings. Mr. Wrabel suggested plantings, put back as far as possible; and he suggested an arbor vitae hedge or more mature trees. He suggested breaking up the species, i.e., hedges, arbor vitae, mature trees. He also suggested kwanza cherries and dogwood trees. These species don’t grow too high; they are not hard to maintain. Walter Gunn indicated that a home owner’s association may require a maintenance policy and plan for screenings for each property owner. There was no further discussion on this issue.

STEVEN WALKER, LONGMEADOW SHOPS, RE: FUTURE DEVELOPMENTS – Steven Walker, Longmeadow Shops and John McMillan, Reinhardt Associates developers, came before the Planning Board. They wanted to present an informal concept to develop a two acre parcel of land east of the existing Longmeadow Shops between Bank of America and the First Church of Christ Scientist. They are in the development stages of a small, high quality active adult retirement community for people 55+. The apartments would be 1-2 bedrooms, 2 ½ story building; they are developing a plan for 28 units. Mr. McMillan explained that this presentation is just in the concept phase. Mr. Walker explained that the very back of the lot line is residential, approximately 15,000 square feet is zoned business. There would be an unobstructed fire lane around the building with 83 parking spaces. The shopping center would not lose any parking spaces. The project would be upscale in nature, colonial in style. The units would be market value, three floors inside. The outside view would look like 2 ½ stories. The size of the units would be 800-900 square feet for one bedroom and 1,000-1,100 square feet for two bedrooms. The Longmeadow Shops would be the agent for this project. Roy Johansen suggested a mixed-use, business and residential village center.

Bruce Colton noted **ARTICLE IV – USE REGULATIONS, SECTION J. – USES IN THE ELDERLY CONGREGATE RESIDENTIAL ZONE** as problematic for this proposal. Some of the current by-laws would not allow this proposal. It was suggested that a creation of a “new zone” by way of writing a new by-law for these types of developments is needed. After the “new zone” exists, the existing property (i.e., Longmeadow Shops proposal) would have to be re-zoned. After that process, the usual site and design review process would come before the Planning Board. Bruce Colton suggested creating a by-law which might have some overlay for other areas in town. Walter Gunn indicated that he would talk to the town manager and town counsel about creating an overlay zone. Any new by-law or zone change would have to be approved at a town meeting.

PETER GRACZYKOWSKI, 67 FERNCROFT STREET, LONGMEADOW, RE: REQUEST FOR SUBDIVISION

– Mr. Graczykowski presented a preliminary subdivision proposal for his lot at 67 Ferncroft Street, Longmeadow. The existing lot is .75 acres; he wants to create a “flag lot”. The Zoning Board of Appeals (ZBA) would have to approve a variance. The Planning Board indicated that the ZBA would unlikely approve this proposal. Walter Gunn stated that if Mr. Graczykowski could not get a variance for frontage on the old lot, this proposal would not fall under an ANR plan. Mr. Graczykowski stated that he will go to the ZBA to see if they might consider and grant his proposal.

CELL TOWER PROPOSALS – Walter Gunn reported that Omni-Point Holdings, Inc. would like to build a cell tower by the water tower in the Frank Smith Road area of town. Walter Gunn passed out the proposal and requested that Planning Board members read the proposal and comment on it at the next meeting. The proposal is in addition to Meadow Road, not in place of it. The Planning Board has 90 days to render a decision on the Meadow Road application. Attorney Brighenti has not contacted the town in regard to using public land for building a cell tower.

BILL LAMONTAGNE, RE: DEVELOPMENTS AT ARMATA’S PLAZA, 901 SHAKER ROAD, LONGMEADOW

– Bill LaMontagne, new owner of Armata’s Plaza, d/b/a White Mountain Longmeadow, LLC, Great Northern Realty Partners and his attorney, Norm Michaels, came before the Planning Board for an informal presentation. Mr. LaMontagne explained that there is a 100 X 200’ wooded area at the end of the plaza. This parcel is zoned residential; the rest of the shopping center is zoned business. Hampden Bank would like to open a branch on this property. The project would include a drive-through lane. The bank would be 1,500 square feet or smaller. They have not retained an architect but they have retained a civil engineer for the project. There would be six parking spaces in the front, three spaces in the back with one drive-up window. The bank would be “free-standing” from Armata’s because Armata’s loading dock is on the side and the expense would preclude moving the dock. The front of the building would face Shaker Road. Mr. LaMontagne showed pictures of a building in New Britain, CT which is similar to the proposed new branch bank. He indicated that the building would be much smaller than the photo presented. Landscaping would be done to shield the residential area next door. Roy Johansen made a suggestion to revise the plans to

make the bank an “appendage” to Armata’s Market as opposed to a separate building as well as creating another traffic “island” at the shopping plaza. Mr. LaMontagne and Attorney Michaels stated that they would look into revising the plans with the suggestions that were made. Attorney Michaels will also work on zoning changes. Mr. LaMontagne also stated that renovation of the entire shopping plaza is also planned.

OTHER:

Next Meeting: The next meeting will be held on August 1, 2006 at 7:00 p.m. with a location to be determined.

Approval of Meeting Minutes: After review, Walter Gunn made a motion to accept the minutes of May 3, 2006 as amended. Roy Johansen seconded the motion. They were approved 5-0. After review of the minutes of June 6, 2006, Bruce Colton made a motion to accept the meeting minutes as amended. Walter Gunn seconded the motion; they were approved 4-0. Richard Curran was not present at the June 6th meeting. After review of the June 15, 2006 meeting minutes, Walter Gunn made a motion to accept the minutes as amended. Richard Curran seconded the motion; it was approved 5-0.

Public Hearing: A public hearing date to change Article XI, SITE AND DESIGN REVIEW, SECTION C. APPLICABILITY of the Town By-Laws will be held on September 12th with a location to be determined.

Louis Kornet stated that the Planning Board has received a contract with the Pioneer Valley Planning Commission. It has been approved and Eric Twarog can meet with the Planning Board as soon as possible. Mr. Kornet will set up some possible dates to meet with Mr. Twarog.

There being no further business, Roy Johansen made a motion to adjourn the meeting. Walter Gunn seconded the motion; it was approved 5-0. The meeting adjourned at 9:15 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Judy Downie, Secretary
Longmeadow Planning Board