

**PLANNING BOARD
SEPTEMBER 10, 2015
MINUTES**

Chairman Perkins called the meeting to order at 7:30 PM at the Town Hall

Members present: Perkins, Barringer, Giger, Burke, Vega, and Wilson

Members absent: Svarczkopf

PUBLIC HEARING – SITE PLAN REVIEW, TARBELL SCHOOL RENOVATIONS

The Board held the continuation of the public hearing to consider the proposed conversion of the Tarbell School, 73 Pepperell Road, to three residential condominium units. At the request of the applicant, Kevin McGoniagle, the Board voted unanimously to continue the public hearing on October 1, 2015 at 7:30 PM.

PROPOSED ZONING AMENDMENTS

The Board reviewed the text of the proposed Zoning Amendments as revised by Town Counsel David Doneski. The articles include amendments to Section 218-9 Location of Districts, Section 218-23 Off-Street Parking and Loading, Section 218-25.1 Personal Wireless Services Facilities, and Section 218-26 Flexible Development. The Board will hold a public hearing on the proposed amendments on October 8, 2015 at 7:30 PM.

PUBLIC HEARING – SPECIAL PERMIT, STATION HOUSE, 14 & 20 STATION AVENUE

The Board held the continuation of the public hearing to consider the applications for special permits submitted by Dan and Lori McElroy for Town Center Overlay District and Site Plan Review to renovate the former center fire station located at 20 Station Avenue and to upgrade the shared parking lot on vacant land at 14 Station Avenue. Attorney Robert Collins and design engineer Stan Dillis represented the applicant at the hearing.

Attorney Collins said they met with the Design Review Committee (DRC) to discuss the proposed plans. The email from DRC Chairman Dan Barton recommended the following:

- 1) Increase the planting areas along Station Ave. at the parking lot, and as possible, the planting areas within the parking lot itself.
- 2) Optimize the quality of the pedestrian experience along Station Ave, perhaps changing the paving material between curb cuts
- 3) Consider a more natural shape for the rain garden
- 4) Further articulate the softscape area at the plaza in front of the building (e.g. provide pedestrian nodes or pathways, interesting plant material, etc.)
- 5) Create a dedicated area for the bike racks that does not impede use of the plaza (move them towards the grass area)
- 6) Ensure that the balustrade along the side roof is appropriately scaled and detailed
- 7) Consider architectural treatment/ details to make the façade facing the parking lot appear more welcoming
- 8) Remove the parking space in front of the side door to allow for an apron with alternative paving material

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Attorney Collins said the plans were revised to incorporate most of the DRC recommendations. The planting area in the front of the building was enlarged. The bicycle rack was moved back onto the paved area so the bicycles do not destroy the grass. A new walking aisle, constructed with pavers, will be installed in the center of the parking lot. A five-foot wide staircase will provide access from the 14 Station Avenue parking lot to the Town Hall parking lot. There will be two accessible parking spaces in the 14 Station Avenue parking lot and four accessible parking spaces in the Town Hall parking lot.

Member Barringer asked about lighting. Attorney Collins said gas lamps or replicated lamps will be installed as shown on the previously approved site plan for 20 Station Avenue. Lights will be over the doors and built into the soffit on the front façade. Member Barringer said the lighting must be appropriate and comply with Dark Sky standards.

Member Wilson suggested bringing out the balustrade over the bump out where the side door will be located to break up the lines on the side of the building. The Board and the applicant's representatives all agreed that change would improve the side façade.

Member Vega said the addition of the walkway in the parking lot is a good solution to breaking up the asphalt.

Member Burke asked about the dimensions of the parking spaces. Mr. Dillis said 9' x 18' with 24' wide aisles.

Member Burke asked if a retaining wall would be needed along the easterly side of the parking lot. Mr. Dillis said, "No," the side slope would be 4:1 with plantings.

Member Giger asked how the pedestrian crossing in the parking lot would be marked. Mr. Dillis said it would be marked with pavers.

Member Barringer asked if pervious pavement would be used. Mr. Dillis said, "No," standard asphalt will be used. There is an existing subsurface "StormTec" drainage infiltration system installed by the previous owner.

The Board voted unanimously to close the public hearing and will vote on the special permit decisions on October 1, 2015.

PUBLIC HEARING – SPECIAL PERMITS, MICHAEL DERMODY, 530 OLD DUNSTABLE ROAD

The Board held the continuation of the public hearing to consider the application submitted by Michael Dermody to utilize the provisions of Groton Zoning By-law Section 218-26 Flexible Development and Section 218-23D Shared Driveways. Mr. Dermody, Attorney Robert Collins, design engineer Stan Dillis, and several abutters were present.

Attorney Collins submitted a modified plan showing three, rather than four, lots on a shared driveway. The existing house will be razed. Two acres of protected open space will provide a buffer to the adjoining lots. The three proposed house sites will be tucked into the rear of the site.

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Member Burke asked that the limit of clearing be shown on the plan. He said the revised plan is better than the previous plan. He said he likes the open space buffer around the new homes. The shared driveway will result in one driveway cut on Old Dunstable Road rather than three driveways with an ANR plan.

Member Burke asked if the houses would be built on speculation or custom homes. Mr. Dillis said the footprints on the final plan can be altered. There is some flexibility.

Member Wilson said he agreed that this is a better plan than the previous version. He asked why the curb cut on Old Dunstable Road was moved. Mr. Dillis said for better sight distance.

Member Barringer asked about the grades on the shared driveway. Mr. Dillis said 3-4%.

Member Giger stated, for the record, that the Planning Board is not opposed to affordable housing. This area on Old Dunstable Road is not the right location. He asked the applicant to add house numbers and provision for house number signs for emergency vehicle access to the plan. Mr. Dillis agreed to do so.

Member Perkins asked about drainage. Mr. Dillis said the soils are good sand and gravel. No material will be removed from the site. Member Perkins asked about the trench shown on the plan. Mr. Dillis said the infiltration trench and rain gardens will be used for stormwater management.

Member Perkins expressed concern that the open space around the perimeter of the lots would be connected with other open space. She said the Conservation Commission does not like isolated parcels. The proposed open space benefits the homeowners, not the public. She said the open space must be clearly marked to be protected in the future. Attorney Collins said the lot corners would be marked and conservation markers would be installed.

Member Burke said there is intrinsic value to the open space on the Flexible Development plan including less disturbance to the land. The shared driveway on Old Dunstable Road is also a benefit. Lots created by an ANR plan could be completely clear cut and accessed by three separate driveways.

Member Giger asked what would happen if the Conservation Commission did not accept the open space parcels. Attorney Collins said a homeowners association would own the land subject to a conservation restriction.

Member Giger stressed the importance of marking the open space in addition to the granite bounds at the lot corners. Attorney Collins said they would install 4" x 4" posts with signs to mark the open space parcels.

Abutter John Garside, 566 Old Dunstable Road, said the revised plan is much better. He asked if the open space would be protected with no cutting and no disturbance. Attorney Collins said, "Yes."

Mr. Garside asked about the swale and natural drainage in the low area. Mr. Dillis said there is only a 20% increase in impervious area. Rain gardens will be used to treat runoff from the driveways.

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Abutter Lisa Sandoe, 2 Wildflower Lane, asked about the size of the homes. Attorney Collis said they would be around 3000 SF. Paul Sandoe asked about protection of the open space. Attorney Collins said the Conservation Restriction would be in perpetuity.

The Board voted unanimously to continue the public hearing on October 1, 2015 at 7:45 PM.

MEETING WITH THE SELECTMEN AND ZONING BOARD OF APPEALS

The Board will meet with the representatives from the Board of Selectmen, the Zoning Board of Appeals, and Town Counsel to discuss the non-use provisions of the Zoning By-law. Such provisions have been in the by-law since 1963. The current non-use provision was adopted in 1978 when the Zoning By-law was recodified based upon the 1975 amendment to the Zoning Enabling Act, Chapter 40A.

Meeting adjourned at 9:30 PM

Respectfully submitted,

Michelle Collette
Land Use Director/Town Planner