

Minutes Meeting of October 15, 2003 – Groton Garden, Oak Ridge

Members Present: Chase Duffy, Mark Mulligan, Stuart Schulman, David Gandle, Shaun Sullivan

Chairman reconvened Groton Residential Gardens. The applicant requested a continuation and a withdrawal of the 60-unit amendment to the plan. The Board moved, seconded and voted unanimously to accept the withdrawal. The hearing is continued to 12/3/03 @8:00 pm. The applicant asked for JNEI to continue review of the original 48-unit plan.

Of note: email Sandy regarding the status of the vernal pool on the Oak Ridge site.

Matthew Waterman, LandTech, engineer for Oak Ridge presented large plans that address most of JNEI concerns.

The Con.Comm. submitted a memo dated 9/19/03.

Discussion ensued regarding the status of the vernal pool. The applicant is still waiting for the Natural Heritage ruling.

Chris Corwin said that she has filed maps with Natural Heritage and is willing to show the Board the maps.

The Board noted the need to hear from Sandy Brock re: the large vernal pool possibly located at the top of the site.

Ms. McEvoy, abutter, said that many years ago she walked the parcel and found salamander egg masses along the entire parcel in question.

Ms. Corwin said that the Conservation Assistant would contact Natural Heritage.

Of note: the small area at the bottom of the map is a vernal pool.

Further discussion ensued regarding the scope of the vernal pool.

Mr. Waterman noted that he has added the tree line on the edge and said that the center will remain natural woodland. He said that snow storage is shown. He said that the ripwrap is drawn to scale showing the contours going in and out of the ripwrap. He said that the height of the walls is seven to ten feet behind the houses. He said that the ripwrap slope is designed to minimize impact to the existing habitat. He said that in answer to #7, there are two retaining walls each with a maximum height of two feet. He said that there will be drainage to provide relief from runoff. He said that in answer to #8 the guardrail has been redesigned using wood and reinforcement materials, which makes make for a more attractive look. He noted in #9 that no easement is required because the

footing is on the property.

Discussion ensued regarding the size of the blocks used in the wall.

The Chairman asked about a traffic study.

Mattbob has hired TAP LLC to do a traffic study, which will be submitted for review by JNEI.

Mr Waterman noted that the project is now for age 55 and over.

Discussion ensued regarding whether the project can limit affordable units to over 55. Of note: the Board will ask Mr. Bobrowski about that.

Mr. Waterman said that the sidewalk starts where the roadway splits.

Discussion ensued regarding where the school bus can turn around because a bus cannot go onto private property.

Mr. Degen asked about the over 55 age limit. He said that when the applicant was before the BOS he had stated that he would come before the PB with a proposal under the over 55 by-law.

Mattbob said that they withdrew from that area because of limits on cut and fill. They stressed that they do not want to have to wait two years to build if a cut and fill permit is denied. They noted that they are moving forward under 40b for an over 5 project.

Mr. Degen noted that he likes the idea of an over 55 project and thinks the PB should have a concurrent application before them, and that maybe the ZBA could continue this until the PB sees it. Mr. Degen said that waivers issued by the PB cannot be appealed.

Discussion ensued regarding whether the applicants should pursue the PB route. Mattbob said that their attorney recommended the 40b route.

McEvoy asked about age restrictions within 40b and what would happen if the project cannot be restrict to over 55.

Mattbob said that the project can be restricted.

Mr. Waterman said that goal is to provide affordable housing without hurting tax payers.

Mr. Gandle asked whether a family project would be restricted to first-time home-buyers.

The Chairman asked for a written proposal regarding the over 55 proponent.

Waterman said that they shall contact the Fire Department for input.

Chase asked about #14 and noted parking spaces for possible teenagers, etc. should be provided for.

Ms. Lathrop asked why an over 55 project needs less parking.

Mr. Waterman said that over 55 two-bedroom units will generate less cars.

Mattbob noted that less parking area means more trees.

The Board asked for some alternatives to more parking.

Of note: no handicapped spaces will be provided unless units are sold as handicapped, and currently there are no plans for such.

Mr. Degen said that the applicant may find over 55 occupants needing handicapped services and suggested that the project might need some to comply with ADA.

Of note: There will be no dumpster on-site. Each unit is responsible for trash pickup/disposal.

Snow removal/storage was discussed and shown on the plan.

Mr. Sullivan asked whether the area is a low salt area b/c of the Littleton water supply near by.

Mr. Waterman said that only areas within the buffer zone would be low salt.

Mr. Degen asked whether there is an infrastructure in place for water from snow storage meltage going into a retention basin for reinfiltration. He noted that JNEI hasn't seen plan, nor has the Con. Comm.

Ms. McEvoy asked for plans in advance if possible.

Mr. Waterman said that the source of water has not been finalized yet. He said that hydrants have been added and will be confirmed with the Fire Chief. He said that no Title V has yet been submitted. He said that all electrical wires will be underground, and noted that there will be no site lighting. He said that there will be utility poles at the entrance and pole lamps in each yard.

Ms. Lathrop asked for clarification regarding school bus pulloff. She felt that the area shown is on Mattbob property.

Of note: the two big issues are traffic safety and vernal pool locations.

Mr. Degen asked for clarification re: site lines and speed limits. He said that 300 feet should be acceptable for a 55 and over project. He said that the speed limit is about 35 and suggested for safety purposes that the Board/applicant should look at the subdivision regs.

Ms. McEvoy said that the Board is dancing around major issues such as the size of the vernal pool. She said that the entire project could be eliminated or substantially changed. She said that there is the fire safety issue because there are no nearby stations, and the distance to the town center, etc. which could also effect the project. She asked for a list of variance waivers wanted, such as the cut and fill issue, etc. She said that the parcel would likely be un-developable under local by-laws.

Chairman said that the issues need to be resolved and nothing will be built until they are resolved and noted that it may take a year or more to do so.

Ms. McEvoy said that parcel should be preserved and stressed that the more money spent by developer, the harder it will be to preserve.

Discussion ensued regarding the vernal pool certification process and how to define the parameters.

Jennifer of Sunset Rd. asked whether the change to over 55 could affect the original permit filed with state.

The applicant said that it will unlikley effect that part of the permit.

Discussion ensued regarding abutters concern that the State would care about the age of the population of the project..

The hearing is continued to 12/3/03 at 8:05 pm.

Ms. McEvoy said that the vernal pool is the major issue (10 acre site). She said that the traffic study will be based on access being created by filling in the vernal pool. She said that this could be part of the proforma and said that that is not fair.

The Board said that the applicant will need to redo the traffic study if the vernal pool is onsite and comprised of 10 acres. The Board also felt that much of the traffic study will still be relevant if the road needs to be moved.

Mr.Degen said that the vernal pool is relevant. He also said that it could be added into the proforma and should maybe be excluded. He suggested that Mr. Bobrowski be consulted about this issue.

The Chairman said that if the vernal pool issue isn't resolved by 12/3 then the applicant may need to change the plan of operation.

Meeting adjourned 9:45 pm.