

Minutes Meeting of October 6, 2004 – SVE, Squannacook Hills

Members Present: Stuart Schulman, Robert Cadle, Cindy Maxwell, Chase Duffy, Jay Prager

The Chairman convened the SVE trailer hearing by reading the Legal Notice.

A motion was made, seconded and passed unanimously to grant a permit for 18 months for a temporary office trailer with the condition that a \$1500 bond be posted.

The Chairman reconvened the Squannacook Hills hearing.

Atty. Deschenes said that he wants Mr. Kelly, engineer, to go over further revised plans. He said that there are 2 types of units: 1 with a deck and 1 with a patio.

Discussion ensued regarding the differences between the two types of units.

Mr. Kelly said that they have changed the cul de sac to allow for a larger/largest fire truck to turn around. He said that the units have been jogged to provide a more pleasing look. He said that there are 4 visitor spaces in site and no parking is allowed around the cul de sac.

Mrs. Duffy asked where the existing house lies in relation to the buildings.

Mr. Kelly said the house is far down on the lot.

Discussion ensued regarding the parking situation and what is realistic for visitor parking down the driveway, away from the buildings.

Mr. Kelly said that the site distance is more than 300 ft in either direction from the entrance.

Mr. Prager asked about widening the driveway for better parking, egress, etc. and thus would avoid getting in the way of a truck turn around.

Mr. Kelly said he would take a look at it.

Mrs. Perkins asked about road width. The applicant said it is about 22 ft. She also asked about the proposed retaining wall around the drop off from the side of the curve in the road. The answer is that it drops 8 feet over a 50-foot distance. Mr. Kelly said that it is flatter than a 3 to 1 slope.

Mrs. Perkins then asked whether families there would be families in residence and for clarification about play areas, bus stops, sidewalks, etc. She said that this is far from anything and there is a need for areas for kids.

Mr. Kelly said that there are no sidewalks in the development.

Atty. Deschenes said that they would look into sidewalks.

Discussion ensued regarding screening and plantings. There will be no trees in the leach field area.

Discussion ensued regarding getting PB input, etc.

Savos Danos, interested party said that he wants an update of the requested waivers list and an agenda.

The Chairman said that the Board is looking at traffic tonight. He said that the most recent plan will be reviewed tonight and be submitted to JNEI.

Mr. Danos noted that the storm water management system is old and outdated. He said that there should be no parking lot runoff and stressed that this is one of the biggest concerns. He said that there needs to be a roof drainage system in place. He noted that the retention basin is a direct conduit from other drainage lines. He said that sediment will built up and be kicked up and there is no tiered system. He asked how the water is getting from the basin across the street to the Squannacook River and whether the basin can handle a 10, 15, or 100 year storm.

Mr. Page said that traffic is on the agenda and is paying for those engineers tonight.

An abutter asked how residents can find out what the agenda is..

Tom Sommers, abutter, noted concerned about the environment.

The Chairman noted that the Board has had two other 40bs before them for more than 18 months and this, too, will take as long as necessary.

Atty. Deschenes said that if anything is submitted in writing it can be addressed before the next meeting.

Mr. Sommers said that the plans should be ready in advance for review.

The applicant agreed that other plans will be ready in advance.

Atty. Deschenes suggested that the ZBA traffic engineer present first.

Doug Prentiss, JNEI, gave a history of how a review is performed. He said that they have fed GOY standards regarding visibility, etc. and said that they often have enough historical information to do traffic studies without an actual count. He said that they do the actual count if necessary and stressed that the paramount issue is safety. He said that there is a standard measure that a traffic

study should follow and noted some issues regarding networks and they had to generate more figures that shouldn't have been needed. He said that the traffic study done by the applicant didn't meet his control standards and red flags were raised by a nearby intersection that had higher accident standards. He said that this intersection had a below average accident standard. He said that stopping distance is gauged by how fast a deer runs across road, etc., and there are standards related to speeds traveled on the road. He said that the stopping distance is adequate and there should be within the right of way a certain level of clearing to maintain said site distance. He said that the study was done for 28 units and there is now 24 proposed, so there is somewhat of an overage. He said that the project is unlikely to see tractor trailers but likely to see UPS trucks. He stressed that the Fire Dept. should be in concert with the project. He said that the project does not need a separate lane on Townsend Road for a left hand turn. He said that there was no technical analysis for level of service done and this should have been included. He said that the project can't be rated without it. He said that certain safety issues, such as sidewalks and school bus access were not addressed in the report and need to be. He said that he does not know if in 15 years the driveway will be adopted as a road by the town but the project should have a sidewalk and a bus stop and/or shelter. He said that trash and snow removal will be addressed by other engineers at JNEI and noted that there is a stop sign at the end of the driveway.

The Chairman asked about tractor trailers used for moving in.

Mr. Prentiss noted that a house isn't designed for Thanksgiving dinner. He said that sometimes issues need to be addressed on an as needed basis, ie. smaller trucks could be used for moving, etc..

The Chairman asked whether the vegetation that needed trimming is on the project's property.

Mr. Prentiss said that a site easement can be asked for to be maintained by the applicant/condo association.

The Chairman said that this leads into drainage issues.

Atty. Deschenes said that they have 600 feet site distance either way. He said that they will add site distance easements into the deeds and there is not any trimming going on now. He said that they will make sure that no 16 inch trees grow in the site line.

An abutter asked whether the Con. Comm. will allow trimming in wetlands.

Atty. Deschenes said that the Con. Comm. won't prevent trimming if it creates a safety issue in the future. Also has one question re: 1st comment: the report is lacking but they then did it (JNEI). He asked whether there is anything that they didn't supply and JNEI didn't do that should be provided.

Mr. Prentiss said that he wants verification of the written verbage.

Atty. Deschenes said that they didn't provide an accident analysis so this will need to be done.

Mr. Prentiss said that wants back up for a technical analysis.

Mrs. Perkins, PB, asked about the rate of accidents at certain intersections, ie. Rt. 225 and the Shirley bridge. She noted that 90 more houses are going in and suggested that this number of houses could affect the accident rate.

Discussion ensued regarding how intersections are studied and what matrix, if any, is used.

Mr. Prentiss said that this is not enough to generate a full blown study.

Mrs. Perkins asked how much is estimated as going into the traffic flow.

Mr. Prentiss said that 19 or 20 cars during peak hours, going in or out. He said that 220 is the number of trips estimated per day for this project.

An abutter asked about whether the study takes into effect the impact on W. Groton center because of the 88 unit assisted living building, as well as Rt. 119 traffic.

The applicant engineer said that he looked at Rt. 225/Townsend Rd. and noted that a somewhat limited study is acceptable. He said that extending the study won't serve any purpose.

The Chairman said that no matter where a 40b is, it creates more traffic and this project, in conjunction with a 90 unit subdivision, will have a significant traffic impact. He said that it always seems that single projects don't have any measurable impact, but in conjunction with everything else, they do.

Fran Dillon, selectmen and abutter, noted that this is more than a 4 way intersection because the engineers need to include Rivercourt and the parking area for the new park, all of which will generate considerable additional traffic. He also noted the need to consider a minimum of 90 or a maximum of 200 units on the Throne, as well as 10 to 12 other houses going in in the area, as part of the overall traffic picture.

The Chairman noted a drip, drip, drip of ever more traffic.

The applicant engineer said that he didn't count specific numbers from the park but felt they were likely included in the June traffic count.

Discussion ensued regarding the location of park and the 150 ft. of offset.

Of note: Traffic studies were done: 6/21st and 22nd of 2004.

Both PB and ZBA asked whether the study was done when school was in session.

The traffic engineer said that June is typically a busy month.

An abutter who is also teacher said school was in session until 6/24.

Of note: traffic counts were done for 2 24-hour periods.

Tom Sommer, abutter, said that the field is used for many different events during the spring, summer and fall and is typically used during peak evening hours.

Discussion ensued regarding when the counts were actually performed.

Mr. Sommer felt that one 24-hour period is not enough to determine what actually happens there.

The Chairman asked whether another traffic count is reasonable.

Atty. Deschenes and the applicant both felt it was unreasonable to ask.

Mr. Sommer, abutter, said that he parked at the end of the driveway of the site and couldn't see any more than 60 feet in either direction.

Atty. Deschenes said that both traffic engineers agreed with the site line distances.

Discussion ensued regarding whether the site line distances could be maintained if they are in wetlands.

The Chairman said that it is duly noted that there is substantial weed growth that needs to be addressed with the Con. Comm.

Of note: send a note to the Con. Comm. about growth cutting in big ponds.

An abutter said that there is a lot of traffic from Rivercourt and this needs to be addressed.

Salvos Danos asked about fire truck accessibility.

The Board noted that Chief Joe was present at the last meeting.

An abutter asked whether the traffic study dealt with nearby side streets.

Discussion ensued regarding how the traffic studies were handled, etc.

The developer's engineer said that this project is small and thus the traffic study is small.

An abutter said that this is not a small project compared to the size of the neighborhood as a whole.

The traffic engineer said out of 2500 trips in the neighborhood, 220 trips is a small percentage.

Mr. Degen asked whether all developments that are in the works were considered for the traffic study.

The traffic engineer for the applicant said that they only look at approved subdivisions.

Mrs. Perkins said that only the Academy Hill subdivision is approved.

Mr. Degen said that all are approved and need to be considered.

Discussion ensued regarding what developments are relevant.

Mr. Degen said that the PB will be reviewing the FST plan for Academy Hill, which has two accesses onto Townsend Rd. and contains 94 units.

Atty. Deschenes asked whether the change in the traffic plan for Academy Hill, is part of the approved plan.

Mr. Degen said yes and Atty. Deschenes felt not.

Mrs. Perkins said that it is approved with access onto Rt.119. She said that part of the access is related to an emergency access. The current subdivision access has changed since the time the applicant's traffic engineer looked at it.

The Chairman suggested seeing what happens at the PB meeting.

Mrs. Perkins asked how the count is actually done at intersections.

The applicant's engineer said that there is a physical counting of people as well as a cord across the road.

An abutter asked whether real situations are taken into account, ie checking mail, etc.

The applicant's engineer said that a level of service analysis accounts for that.

Discussion ensued re: what will entail further review.

Next meeting: drainage and additional traffic with possible PB input from the Academy Hill revisions.

Discussion ensued regarding whether Con. Comm. issues have been addressed.

The Chairman said that the Board needs to get Con. Comm. and PB commentary.

Of note: the applicant will submit the newest plan to PB and Con. Comm.

Atty. Deschenes said that he will file with the Con. Comm. and work with the 20 foot buffer zone.

An abutter asked whether this is the final plan.

Atty. Deschenes said for now it is, but the plan will need to be changed based on recommendations from other boards.

The hearing was continued to 11/3/04 at 8:30 pm.

The meeting adjourned at 9:45 pm.