

ZBA Minutes June 16, 2008 – Squannacook Hills Review

Members Present: Robert Cadle, Cynthia Maxwell, Chase Duffy, Alison Manugian, Jay Prager

Chairman Cadle convened the meeting and asked to start with the developer.

Melissa Robbins, agent for applicant, noted that this is the final site plan for Squannacook Hills and to get a building permit from the Building Inspector, they need to get a sign off from the ZBA. She said that the Board's consulting engineer, Bill Maher, had comments and thus they asked for a continuation to address these issues. She said that two runoff trenches for roof runoff have been added and the Planning Board issues have been addressed. She said that the engineer from Landtech will address what has been changed since 2005.

Matt Waterman, Landtech engineer, noted that the project was reduced from 24 to 18 units, is located on Townsend Road across from Cutler Field, and is on a 3+ acre site. He said that the existing house sits on the front and center of the lot and is in bad condition. He noted that most of the development will be sited above and behind the existing dwelling, which will be razed. He said that all issues regarding parking and visitor parking have been addressed and there is an on-site septic system in the upper corner of the lot. He said that he has a septic permit from the BOH and is working on earth removal issues. He said that there is a lighting plan with photometrics, a landscape plan showing trees to provide screening from the road and abutters and noted that there are some slight differences between the approved septic system and what was shown on the original plan. He noted that the new plan shows all updates and that now there is a primary and reserve septic area with no fingering. He said that originally they had a dumpster but there may now be individual unit pickup, negating the need for a dumpster. He said that there were some concerns regarding drainage which have been addressed, noting that the footprint of the drainage basin is the same but with a different utilization of the interior space. He said that this makes a difference in how groundwater infiltrates in time of freezing, noting that the total solid infiltration and general groundwater infiltration has been increased. He said that there is a minor trench drain with a manhole cover to prevent water from crossing Townsend Road and freezing on the pavement. He said that a sidewalk has been added and there is parking on the right hand side of the drive, which would likely happen only in the event

of a party. He said that a school bus shelter has been added, noting that all plans were reviewed during the public hearing process, prior to the grant of the permit.

Chairman Cadle asked about a crosswalk, which he didn't see on the small plans.

Mr. Waterman said that it is on the plan.

Mrs. Duffy asked whether the project is for over age 55. Atty. Robbins said no.

Mrs. Duffy asked about the size of the school bus shelter. Mr. Waterman said that is 6 x 10.

Chairman Cadle asked for clarification of the trench drain, which seems to entail installing a sump pump to send the water into the wetlands. He asked whether this is acceptable.

Mr. Waterman said that his client wanted him to go into the Con. Comm. after final approval from the ZBA to make the final modifications on the Con. Comm. Order of Conditions. Mr. Waterman described some of the drainage hardware, noting that this should stop the sheeting from going across Townsend Road and freezing.

Mrs. Duffy said that she wanted to hear what Bill Maher wanted to say.

Bill Maher, consulting engineer for the Board, noted that he has reviewed three sets of plans since April of this year and that all concerns appear to have been addressed. He said that the operation and maintenance of the "SWIP" have been addressed and discussions about basic basin maintenance, relocation of the utility pole, the school bus shelter, etc., have been had.

Chairman Cadle asked for specific details regarding whether the drainage system will work.

Mr. Maher said that the plan has the stamp of a certified engineer that certifies that all calculations have been done and the design of the system is adequate.

Chairman Cadle asked whether Mr. Maher has reviewed the plan himself.

Mr. Maher said that he did review it and everything seems satisfactory.

Chairman Cadle said that Mr. Maher had asked for a perk test and they seemed to balk at that.

Mr. Maher said that the system has been designed to handle a 100 year storm, noting that there will be some recharge but it appears that the basin has been designed to more than handle a storm.

Chairman Cadle asked Mr. Maher if he is satisfied with the basin even if didn't get all information that was asked for.

Mr. Maher said yes, that the basin can handle the extra runoff.

Mr. Waterman said that he assumed that no there would be no absorption by the ground when he designed the system and that there will be some absorption because it is not all impervious cover. He said that therefore, the system works better and can handle all runoff. He said that there won't be any groundwater in the basin, that it will be near it but not in. He said that the basin is about ½ foot above the groundwater level.

Chairman Cadle said that it is his understanding that the problem with Groton Gardens was that the basin was too close to the groundwater level.

Mr. Waterman said that that was a retention basin and this is a detention basin and thus it doesn't need the separation. He said that GRG was changed from a retention basin to a detention basin to fix the problem. He said that there was testing done, but just not perk testing.

Mr. Maher said that the drainage calculations show that the basin is 20 inches above peak flood elevation. He said that they are adding drywall construction inside the detention basin and a trench drain was added between Townsend Road and the detention basins.

Mrs. Manugian said that she has a whole variety of questions and asked whether the wetlands delineations from 2003 are still valid.

Mr. Waterman said that yes, they are valid for three years from issuance of the order of conditions.

Mrs. Manugian said that she wants details of the crosswalk that was just added.

Atty. Robbins said that there are only painted lines so no detailed plans are needed.

Mrs. Manugian asked whether both the fire and water departments have okayed a one inch connection.

Mr. Trahan said that he was told by the Fire Chief that he would send something directly to the ZBA regarding his acceptance of the plans/connection. Of note: nothing has been received to date.

Mrs. Manugian said that there is a conflict the between catch basin and the water lines.

Mr. Maher said that the copper pipes can be bent to go around things and would thus solve this issue.

Mrs. Manugian asked about the volume calculations and whether an engineering stamp on the retaining wall plan would be submitted.

Discussion ensued regarding what the Board would get from the Earth Removal Committee.

Discussion ensued regarding when an architectural stamp is received, ie before, during or after construction.

The Building Inspector asked about the height of the wall. Atty. Robbins said that it would be four feet. Mr. Waterman said that if the wall is four feet or less, the plan can have a lesser stamp of approval. He noted that they can make the front pretty unobtrusive, noting that he will submit a formal design if the Board wants but with a wall this size it is generally not required.

Mrs. Manugian said that she had several drainage questions, noting concern that snow piled up between the upper rear buildings could cause a drainage problem in the spring.

Mr. Waterman said that he does not have a good answer off hand.

Atty. Robbins said that they should just move the snow storage area.

Mr. Traham said that that would be a maintenance issue.

Atty. Robbins said that the condo association is responsible for snow removal.

Mrs. Manugian said that she has more drainage questions.

Chairman Cadle asked what will be the impact on the abutter to the south.

Mr. Waterman said that roof drains are out of the equation and they only have the back yard of the lower two buildings. He said that they have a grass swale and are trying to prevent any additional runoff. He said that there is now some but when constructed, all runoff should go down the hill and not off site.

The Building Inspector noted concern about the property to the left, off the corner of the page, as well as the wetlands by the road, because of all of the impervious surface.

Mr. Waterman said that they have gone to great lengths with the big basin to keep runoff in the basin and only to let out it in small intervals. He said that they are still adjusting and tweaking the outlet structure and are trying to make the outlet structures as big as possible to prevent clogging.

The Building Inspector stressed that he doesn't want to have another Mill Run, noting that houses on Anthony Drive flood now that didn't before because of all of the impervious cover.

Atty. Robbins said that they have worked hard to make sure that doesn't happen.

Mrs. Duffy noted that the site was bad before any building went on.

Atty. Robbins said that the project can't make things worse but she thinks that the runoff situation will be much better.

Discussion ensued regarding the 593 escrow account.

Chairman Cadle asked whether the photometrics plan most recently submitted was less detailed than the last plan.

Mr. Waterman said that they focused more on street lighting on the new plan than on the site.

Mrs. Manugian asked whether there is a storm water management plan available.

Mr. Waterman said not yet but if one goes to "SWIP" on line a basic outline is available.

Discussion ensued regarding tree plans, trees vs. shrubs, etc.

Atty. Robbins said that the Board's expert was pretty specific regarding what trees are wanted, noting that any trees planted within the buffer zone need Con. Comm. approval.

Chairman Cadle asked what they needed from the ZBA.

Atty. Robbins said that a vote that all the site plans are in conformance with Bill Maher's letter and the drainage updates.

The Board moved to approve the site plan as of 6/11/08 and including the condition as set forth in the letter from Bill Maher of Nitch engineering dated 6/5/08, receipt of the retaining wall design stamp, receipt of the Fire Chief's letter in respect to fire truck access and sprinkler design, and the updated and corrected drainage calculations delivered to the Board. The motion was seconded and passed unanimously.

The meeting adjourned at 9:35 pm.

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