



PLANNING BOARD

Town of Ayer

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Minutes of July 26, 2022 - Ayer Planning Board Meeting

Location: First Floor Meeting Room, Ayer Town Hall

Meeting was recorded and then broadcasted on APAC

Members Present: Ken Diskin, Vice Chairman; and Geof Tillotson, Clerk, Julie Murray and Nathan King

Also Present: Mark Archambault, Town Planner and Robert Pontbriand, Town Manager

Absent: Jonathan Kranz, Chairman

Vice-Chairman Diskin called the meeting of the Planning Board to order at 6:15 PM.

General Business

Approve the Agenda

At 6:15 PM Mr. Geof Tillotson made a motion to approve the agenda as presented. Ms. Julie Murray seconded. No discussion. Unanimous vote to approve. (4-0-0)

Covenant and Bond Releases – None

Vice-Chairman Diskin recused himself from the meeting

Discussion, Ayer Solar IIb Update

Present: Cal Goldsmith, GPR, Inc. and Rohit Garg, Prometheus Power Group

Mr. Mark Archambault stated that he drafted a one-page memo that summarizes the site inspection that the Board had with the applicant's representative on June 23rd and the items needed to move forward with the project. Mr. Archambault stated that while on site it was observed and explained that the roadway had not been constructed 100% to the approved site plans. Mr. Archambault suggested that the Board request a set of revised site plans showing all the changes made on site, as well as any changes to the stormwater systems on site. Mr. Archambault recommended that along with revised site plans a revised Stormwater Plan be submitted and new Operations and Maintenance plan.

Mr. Tillotson stated that he was out on the site walk on the 23rd and would like Mr. Goldsmith to review the changes made to the entrance road, retaining wall, culvert and stormwater systems.

Mr. Cal Goldsmith stated that during construction the contractor found a lot of ledge on site which lead to some on site construction changes to the roadway. Mr. Goldsmith stated that the biggest change was the removal of the retaining wall. The slope of the roadway has been changed and the slope has been stabilized without the need for the retaining wall being installed. The solar panels have been installed so the wall is not needed to get the heavy equipment into the site.

Mr. Rohit Garg stated that a gate at the top of the entrance road still needs to be installed per the Department of Public Works permit.

Mr. Goldsmith stated that with the changes in the entrance road there is no longer a need for a "no left turn" sign and the DPW is ok with the changes.

Mr. Tillotson asked if there was a discussion with public safety departments regarding the changes on site.

Mr. Goldsmith stated that he met with Chief Johnston on site to review the changes in the roadway and he had no concern with the roadway as it sits now, same with DPW.

Mr. Tillotson asked about the tree box filters.

Mr. Goldsmith stated that they have not been constructed at this time but will be soon and there will be less of them than on the plan. Mr. Goldsmith did state that the four-foot pipe had been installed but not the 20 foot long channel due to ledge. Mr. Goldsmith stated that the tree box filters are not installed yet but will be soon.

Mr. Tillotson asked if there were any changes to the stormwater calculations due to the changes on site.

Mr. Goldsmith stated that there will be a change in the stormwater calculation due to the reduction in pavement.

Mr. Archambault asked if the velocity of the stormwater changed due to the driveway being steeper.

Mr. Goldsmith stated that the stormwater is being collected down the entrance way in steps so the steepness of the road will not affect the stormwater velocity.

Mr. Garg also mentioned that there are a series of check dams on the side of the roadway.

Mr. Tillotson asked if there will be a new operations and management plan to include all the changes on site.

Mr. Goldsmith stated that they are working on the revised plans and will also have new stormwater calculations and new operations and management plan.

Mr. Nathan King asked if there was a time frame for the completion of the project.

Mr. Garg stated that he understands the project is taking longer than expected and is hoping to get a timeline from the contractor about completion.

Mr. Diskin return to the meeting at 6:45PM

Public Meeting, Stratton Hill Preliminary Subdivision Plan, 35 lots off of Wright Road

Present: Attorney Robert Collins, Stan Dillis, Engineer, Dillis and Roy, and several area abutters

At 6:46 PM Mr. Geof Tillotson made a motion to continue the public meeting for the Preliminary Subdivision plan known as Stratton Hill. Ms. Julie Murray seconded. No discussion. Unanimous vote to approve. (4-0-0)

Mr. Archambault went over the three items he would like to discuss this evening which included, the minor change to the plans moving the roadway more to the west, second, an update on the RFP process for the traffic study and lastly an update on proposed waiver requests and Town Council opinion.

Vice Chairman Diskin asked if the applicant owes the Board an extension on the deadline for decision.

Mr. Archambault stated that currently the Board has a letter from the applicant allowing for an extension till the end of August.

Revised Plans

Attorney Collins mentioned that there has been a slight change to the preliminary plan to move the road further away from the resource areas.

Mr. Stan Dillis mentioned that after the last meeting there was a lot of discussion on the road and stormwater locations. On the revised plans the road has been moved to use the first entrance where the trailer is currently sitting and not the second. This will allow for some stormwater basins to be moved further away from the wetlands. Mr. Dillis stated that with these changes the only work that is currently proposed in the buffer would be restoration work on previously disturbed areas in the front of the proposed subdivision.

Vice Chairman Diskin mentioned to those present that the traffic study the Board will have conducted will use the newly proposed entrance.

Mr. Dillis stated that using the first entrance rather than the previously suggested second will provide better site lines.

Vice Chairman Diskin stated that there was still some concern with the location of the first stormwater basin at the front of the subdivision.

Mr. Dillis stated that the first basin is existing and was partially constructed when the project was first approved and will need some upgrades with the new plans for the property.

Vice Chairman Diskin asked if there will be any street lighting for the subdivision and if so, to ensure that it meets the Board's lighting standards.

Mr. Tillotson mentioned that the infrastructure for the streetlights can be installed and if it is decided later to install streetlights all the infrastructure is in place.

Mr. Nathan King asked if there were utilities currently installed in the existing roadway.

Mr. Dillis stated that there was and there would need to be a deeded easement on the decommissioned old road that will not be used in order to access the utilities.

Mr. King had a question regarding the trail entrance and parking proposed near the powerline easement and if there will be lighting provided for the parking area.

Mr. Dillis stated that parking area will be large enough for four cars and there will be lighting provided.

Vice Chairman Diskin requested that the revised plans be posted to the Town Website for everyone to review.

Traffic Peer Review

Mr. Archambault went over the details of the traffic study, stating that he had sent the proposal out to five or six companies to request bids. He has heard back from a few of them that stated that they are unable to bid on the project due to project load and has sent out the proposal to more firms in order to receive at least two or three quotes. Mr. Archambault stated that the only proposal received so far was from Nitsch Engineering who also conducted the traffic peer review for Global Montello for the Board. Mr. Archambault mentioned that he is hoping to get at least one more bid and would like to extend the deadline to the end of the week in hopes of getting three bids to review. Mr. Archambault asked if a Board member or two could help next week review the proposals in order to pick a peer reviewer at the next meeting in order to keep the process moving forward.

Vice Chairman Diskin opened the meeting for public comment on the traffic peer review.

There was one question regarding if the traffic study will look at both weekday and weekend traffic.

Mr. Archambault stated that the study will look at both peak and off-peak times during the weekday and weekend.

Vice Chairman Diskin requested that the request for proposals and the applicant's traffic study be posted website for the public to review.

Town Council / Waiver Requests

Mr. Archambault stated that the applicant has identified several waivers that will be needed for the proposed plan. Mr. Archambault mentioned that he feels that a road length waiver is needed and has requested Town Council to review and will hopefully have an answer before the end of the preliminary review. Mr. Archambault stated that waivers do not need to be reviewed till the definitive stage but would like to ensure the applicant has a full list of waivers needed for the definitive plan.

Attorney Collins stated that the road length waiver request can be added to the list of already noted waivers that will be requested.

Vice Chairman Diskin suggested to Attorney Collins that they wait to see what Town Council's opinion is on the matter. Vice Chairman Diskin suggested that the Board review the requested waivers at the next meeting.

Misc. items

Vice Chairman Diskin went over some outstanding items from the last few meetings including the submission of a yield plan, questions on work only in previously disturbed areas except for stormwater and the question on the amended Conservation Management Permit (CMP).

Mr. Archambault stated that the yield plan was submitted to the Planning Office.

Attorney Collins stated that all work with the exemption of stormwater, will be in the previously disturbed areas and mentioned that there will be no materials leaving the site all fill and/or rock will be reused on site.

Attorney Collins mentioned that after the Preliminary Plan is approved then the process on amending the Conservation Management Permit will begin.

Vice Chairman Diskin asked if National Grid had been contacted regarding the roadway in the easement.

Attorney Collins stated that National Grid is fine with the roadway under the easement as it is not changing from what is already in place.

Vice Chairman Diskin asked if Ms. Anne Gagnon would be able to answer a few questions regarding the possibility of being the owner of the open space for this project and explain Article 97 land to the Board.

Ms. Anne Gagnon, Fish and Game, gave the Board a brief explanation of Article 97 land which is state protected land that requires a vote of legislation in order to remove the land from protection.

Vice Chairman Diskin suggested that a joint meeting with the Conservation Commission and the Planning Board with Ms. Gagnon maybe helpful when deciding the holder of the open space.

Attorney Collins was in favor of such meeting.

Vice Chairman Diskin stated that there maybe the need for a Site Plan Review for land clearing and a Special Permit for allowing the duplexes as part of the housing proposed on site.

Attorney Collins mentioned that those application will be part of the definitive stage of the project.

The Board had no further questions.

At 7:50 PM Mr. Geof Tillotson made a motion to continue the public meeting to the next meeting on August 9th. Ms. Julie Murray seconded. No discussion. Unanimous vote to approve. (4-0-0)

Town Planner Update

Mr. Archambault mentioned that he was not able to reach Mr. Joe Cataldo regarding a site visit to 66 Westford Road and the high school field project. Mr. Archambault will try to reach Mr. Cataldo again to finalize a date for the Board to go to both sites.

Mr. Archambault stated that he spoke to Building Commissioner, Charlie Shultz, regarding the subdivisions in town under construction. Mr. Archambault mentioned that the project off Littleton Road is nearing completion and the subdivision off Shaker Road has received at least one occupancy permit.

Mr. Archambault informed the Board that he received an email from Ms. Hebb from Central Ave regarding the ongoing project at 60 Central Ave. Ms. Hebb is having some issue with the subcontractors and parking at her facility across the street.

New Business

40b Comprehensive Permit Fitchburg Road

Mr. Diskin mentioned that he and Mr. Archambault will be working in a subcommittee on the 40b project that has been before the Zoning Board.

Mr. Archambault mentioned that the first meeting of the subcommittee will be Friday the 27th to discuss the outline of the Request for Proposals for the outside consultants needed to review the project.

Meeting Adjournment

At 8:12 PM Mr. Geof Tillotson made a motion to adjourn. Ms. Julie Murray seconded. No discussion. Unanimous vote to approve.

Minutes recorded and submitted by Heather Hampson, Administrative Coordinator

Planning Board Approval _____
Date

Planning Board Chairman (Jonathan Kranz)


