



PLANNING BOARD

Town of Ayer

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Minutes of June 28, 2022 - Ayer Planning Board Meeting

Location: First Floor Meeting Room, Ayer Town Hall

Meeting was recorded and then broadcasted on APAC

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

Also Present: Mark Archambault, Town Planner

Chairman Kranz called the meeting of the Planning Board to order at 6:15 PM.

General Business

Approve the Agenda

At 6:16 PM Mr. Geof Tillotson made a motion to approve the agenda as presented. Ms. Julie Murray seconded. No discussion. Unanimous vote to approve. (5-0-0)

Covenant and Bond Releases – None

Continued Discussion, Pleasant Street Extension Guardrail

Present: Calvin Moore, Owner/ developer and area abutters

Mr. Calvin Moore stated the set of plans before the Board this evening are from the original plans. Mr. Dan Van Schalkwyk, Director of the Department of Public Works has approved them. Mr. Moore stated that there is a supply chain issue and they are still 3 to 4 weeks out in getting the guardrail to install. Mr. Moore also mentioned that they are trying to make the August deadline for Fall Town Meeting for street acceptance. There is a question wither or not the guardrail is needed on the north side as the slope is not there on the outside of the cul de sac, and are working to see if the guardrail is needed there or not. Mr. Moore stated that the entire circle will be completed.

There was one question from an abutter which Mr. Moore answered.

Town Planner, Mark Archambault suggested that the Board make a motion to accept the guardrail plan.

At 6:18 PM Mr. Geof Tillotson made a motion to accept the construction detail plan dated June 16, 2022, from GPR, Inc. plan number 111099B. Ms. Julie Murray seconded. No discussion. Vote to approve 4-0-1, Mr. Ken Diskin abstained.

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

Chairman Kranz went over the procedure and order of the meeting for the proposed Stratton Hill Subdivision.

Town Planner, Mark Archambault stated that in the Board members packet was a checklist showing that the submitted plans meet the requirements for submission and stated that since the submitted application is for a Preliminary Plan there is no requirement for abutter notification.

At 6:26 PM Mr. Ken Diskin made a motion to accept the plans for review as submitted. Ms. Julie Murray seconded. No discussion. Unanimous vote to approve. (5-0-0)

Attorney Bob Collins started his presentation by stating that the proposed Preliminary Plan is similar to the one that was submitted last year with comments from those meetings taken into consideration. Attorney Collins did give a brief background on the property and the abutting property in Groton which combined make the entire project between Ayer and Groton Over 700 acres of which 437 acres are currently protected in Groton by Mass Audubon.

Attorney Collins then gave the Board a brief overview of the proposed project which includes 35 building lots on 18.1 acres of land with 131.9 acres to be left in open space. There will be 2 duplexes on 2 of the lots that will be sold as affordable units, along parking area for the open space and trails. Attorney Collins mentioned that there are no house lots proposed on the Long Pond side of the property which is a change from the original plan along with a lower number of lots on the north side of the powerlines. These changes will minimize the impacts to the existing neighborhood with all the housing being constructed 200 feet down the road so that they will not be visible from Wright Road.

Attorney Collins stated that they conducted a full traffic analysis which showed no impact to the existing level of service. There was also a conservation analysis submitted as part of the application that will go to the Conservation Commission for review and a formal letter to the Planning Board per the Open Space Residential Subdivision Bylaw. Attorney Collins stated that there is also a MEPA permit from the state for the project.

Attorney Collins went over the waivers that will be requested when the project gets to the Definitive Subdivision stage, stating that there are 3 possibly 4 waivers that will be needed for the project. These include a waiver for a landscape plan, stripping the roadway, test hole data, and possibly for the single access roadway.

Town Planner, Mark Archambeault gave a brief presentation on the Planning Board's Preliminary Subdivision approval process for the abutters present. Mr. Archambault then went over the details within the request for proposal for the traffic analysis peer review as well as the need for an engineering peer review for the definitive plans.

Mr. Archambault then went over his initial review of the preliminary plans and the project. Mr. Archambault stated that he would like to see all the development stay south of the powerlines but did mention that the plan does do a better job of limiting the amount of disturbance north of the powerline than the plans from last year.

Mr. Archambault mentioned that there was no yield plan submitted as part of the preliminary plan submission.

There was a brief discussion on whether a yield plan is needed for this project since there is so little development on the overall site.

Mr. Stan Dillis, from Dillis and Roy, stated that he can submit a yield plan if the Board requires one.

Mr. Archambault agreed with all of Attorney Collins list of waivers that will need to be requested for the project, but also had one other for dead end road length.

Chairman Kranz opened the meeting to the Board members for comments.

Mr. Nathan King asked how long the Board had to make a discussion on the definitive plan.

Mr. Archambault stated that the Board has 90 days to make a decision once they open the hearing for the definitive plan when it is submitted.

Mr. King asked if the proposed plan fits what is stated in the Master Plan.

Mr. Archambault stated that the Master Plan lists Open Space Residential Subdivisions as the primary form of development. Mr. Archambault did mention that the Master Plan also states that the area is in an area of critical environmental concern (ACEC) and should be protected.

Mr. Ken Diskin had several questions for Attorney Collins regarding the project. First Mr. Diskin commented on the letter submitted by Attorney Collins describing the project and how it differs from the original plan and the plan submitted last year. Mr. Diskin commented on the shorter road length and the smaller and fewer lots in the new proposal. Mr. Diskin did ask Attorney Collins if this new proposal is a new project or an amendment to the 2005 plan and requested a letter stating how the Board should view this new plan.

Mr. Diskin went over the details of the project that meet the Boards expectations for an OSRD project including affordable units, sidewalks, reduced roadway width from 50 ft to 40 ft, and parking area for open space. Mr. Diskin had some questions regarding the locations of the detention basins.

Mr. Dillis stated that with the definitive plan they will conduct soil testing and hope to move some of the basins closer to the development area and away from the open space.

Mr. Diskin had a comment regarding the proposed parking area under the power lines and suggested moving the parking area due to the powerline easement. Mr. Diskin requested a copy of the agreement with the power company to allow the roadway to cross under their easement.

Mr. Tillotson commented that the proposed protects 90% of the overall project and follows the guidelines for development. Mr. Tillotson had a comment for Attorney Collins and Mr. Dillis regarding if street lights would be part of the project and to ensure they meet the Boards guidelines.

Mr. Diskin gave Attorney Collins a copy of his comments and questions for him to review and address. A few of the items listed in Mr. Diskin's comment letter included, the roadway length, easement for the power lines, roadway width, sidewalks, open space parking areas, along with other items. Mr. Diskin did also have some questions on the stormwater system for the proposed project.

Mr. Dillis stated that when the project goes into the definitive stage there will be more testing and design for the stormwater system with that application.

Mr. Geof Tillotson asked if the subdivision would have streetlights.

Attorney Collins stated that the plans will reflect whatever the Board requests.

Mr. Diskin stated that the DPW has a cutsheet showing the desired design for streetlighting.

Chairman Kranz opened the meeting for public comment and questions.

Ms. Sharon Slarsky, 1 Leadgeway, had a few concerns with traffic in the area and asked about the traffic study that was performed.

Chairman Kranz stated that the Board will have the traffic study peer reviewed to ensure that it covers all the concerns of the Board and residents area as stated when the project was before the Board last year.

Ms. Slarsky also mentioned that the Board of Health submitted a comment to the Board on the project and would like to have the letter read into the record.

At 7:22 PM Mr. Geof Tillotson read into the record the comment letter from the Ayer Board of Health dated June 28, 2022.

Chairman Kranz informed those present that as part of the definitive subdivision review the Board always checks with the Department of Public Works to ensure existing infrastructure, water and sewer, can handle the proposed housing.

Mr. Diskin stated that when the project was before the Board last year in 2021 that was one of the Boards concerns in regards to the current wastewater system.

Chairman Kranz opened the meeting to the public for comment.

Ms. Annie Reed from Wachusett Ave East, had several concerns and questions on the project including questions on the 2005 Conservation Management permit, the open space and who will hold it, traffic concerns, and concerns with the trees that may need to be removed from the property.

Attorney Collins stated that many of the questions and concerns will be answered by a peer review done by a consultant hired by the Board.

Ms. Jess Gugino, Mountain Ave, stated that she shares the concern with the Board of Health regarding the water and wastewater for the project as well as concerns with traffic. Ms. Gugino also asked about the need for emergency access to the project which was in the 2009 plan.

Mr. Diskin stated that he has similar questions regarding off site impacts and assured Ms. Gugino that those will be looked at.

Chairman Kranz asked for a brief recess.

Break 7:50 PM to 7:56 PM

Ms. Marrion Stoddard, Autumn Ridge, expressed her concern for the environmental impact of the proposed development on the area as well as asked if Mr. Moulton would consider selling the property to Fish and Game.

There were other concerns expressed by abutters regarding traffic and environmental.

Mr. Nathan King assured those present that the Board has reviewed three other Open Space Residential Subdivisions before this one that are all under construction and assured them that all concerns that were stated will be addressed throughout the process.

Chairman Kranz went through the items that will be reviewed at the next meeting which include a yield plan for the site and the details for the Request for Proposals for the traffic study peer review.

At 8:31 PM Mr. Geof Tillotson made a motion to have Mr. Archambault send out the RFP for review of the traffic study. Ms. Julie Murray seconded. Mr. Diskin requested that the RFP be reviewed by Mr. Tillotson before it is sent out for bid ensure all the Boards concerns are addressed. Unanimous vote to approve.

The Preliminary Subdivision review is continued to the next meeting on July 12th.

New Business/Old Business
Shaker Pond OSRD Project

Mr. Tillotson mentioned that there is a depression in Snake Hill Road over by where the directional drilling took place for Shaker Mill Pond. Mr. Tillotson asked Mr. Archambault to contact the developer to have him address the issue.

Town Planner Update

Ayer Solar II

(Mr. Ken Diskin recused himself from the discussion)

Mr. Archambault gave a brief update on the Ayer Solar II project stating that a site visit took place on June 23rd. Mr. Archambault stated that the project has not been built to the approved plan and the developer will need to come back to the Board with a revised plan.

Chairman Kranz informed the Board that the roadway has not been built to the plans and the infrastructure, road way and stormwater basins are not completed at this time.

Mr. Nathan King suggested sending a letter to the developer and engineer with the Boards concerns requesting revised plans.

Chairman Kranz asked Mr. Archambault to send a letter with the request.

(Mr. Ken Diskin returned to the meeting)

Meeting Adjournment

At 8:46 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)


