

Montague Planning Board

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March 26, 2013 7:30 PM
Town Hall Downstairs Conference Room

MEETING MINUTES

Members Present: Ron Sicard – Chair, George Cook, Fred Bowman and Bob Obear (late)

Members Absent: Bruce Young

Staff Present: Walter Ramsey- Town Planner

Meeting was called to order at 7:30 PM by Ron Sicard.

Approval of February 26, 2013 Minutes: Not available.

PUBLIC HEARING: Definitive Subdivision Plan DS# 2013-01 filed by Pioneer Valley Habitat for Humanity.

The Planning Board will consider a Definitive Subdivision Plan filed by Pioneer Valley Habitat for Humanity for a one lot subdivision on a proposed 90 foot extension of the Warner Street right-of-way- in a Neighborhood Business District. The affected land is a portion of the property identified as assessors Map 13 Lot 1.

Guests: Aaron Walker – Interim Executive Director of Pioneer Valley Habitat for Humanity, Jane E. Percival, Donald and Rachel Momaney, and Mike Brown – Turners Falls Water Department.

This is a follow up to a request that was made in the fall to subdivide a parcel at the end of Warner Street where there is already one home built. PVHH wants to build another home on the end of Warner Street. PVHH wants to subdivide a parcel of land into 2 lots one with a 11/4 acre of land and another with 11/2 acres of land. As Aaron understands PVHH has the 75 foot of frontage on Warner Street, maintains a setback and a utility easement where required and the town has been asked to accept Warner Street extension (extend the road by 90 feet on the books (not constructing the road) as a right of way) as a paper street so that the town would not be required to maintain the road. At the current end of the pavement they would put in a gravel turnaround. Pioneer Valley Habitat for Humanity would be responsible for extending the water line 60 feet as a stipulation from the Planning Board's meeting in the fall. These requirements would provide the right of way and access for First Light out back. The proposed house is 25 feet from the right of way to ensure it would be in compliance if the road was built in the future.

Jane Percival – Is the building of the 2nd house going to impact the cutting down of more trees. Snow removal has been a real problem; how will this be dealt with?. A hammerhead on the plan will allow for some snow removal as long as it is not on private property. On the plan the DPW has 90 feet to push the snow out of the turnaround; but if it is a “paper street” then is the Town responsible? Currently where the road is proposed it is a path and more vegetation would have to be removed. There have been a lot of issues with the Beavers building dams and then the water backs up. The high tension wires are there and would be very close to the new home as well.

Kip and Sue Dresser – (7 Warner Street) have also had issues of sewage back up in their home and have concerns with the project as well.

Aaron Walker- If the new PVHH homeowner is responsible it will be quite an expense as the proposed driveway is very long and will have to be maintained. There will have to be some consideration of the driveway maintenance costs when figuring out the price of the home to the new homeowner. PVHH

goal is that the homeowner undertakes 30% of the housing costs which a portion includes the mortgage, taxes and sundries. The Town currently only plows to the end of the road and would probably not plow all the way back which would then force the future homeowner to deal with that issue and cost. A homeowners association might have to be formed so that access remains open to both homes and shared for sewer, emergency vehicles, deliveries as well as snow removal.

Donald Momamey – Has concerns regarding the capacity of the sewer as he has been having consistent problems of sewage back up in his cellar. Donald has had work done and a plumber snaked out 80 feet through the sewer line and his sewer line was clear. It was suggested that the problem is elsewhere in the main line and that it has a very low pitch. This also was quite an expense and inconvenience that is still not resolved and he is concerned about another house coming on the sewer line and what that will do to the capacity. At the last meeting it was brought up that the sewer is in need of an upgrade especially with the proposed new construction.

Walter Ramsey. - There has been a wetlands survey was done for the area. All the proposed work would be done outside of the jurisdictional wetlands areas.

Tom Bergeron – State that there will have to have a minimum of 2 sewer cleanouts on the new portion of Warner Street.

Mike Brown – The Water Department wants a detail design of the water line.

The storm drains on this portion of Warner Street do go into the sewer line and it is believed that there was a discussion of putting an auto flusher on the line at the last meeting. The auto flusher situation would have to be checked on with Tom Bergeron - DPW. All materials used would have to meet the requirements of the Turners Falls Water Department. The water line needs to be up to the regulations which include the placement of the water lines in front of the property lines. Normally the line should be extended all the way down to the end of the Warner Street.

George Cooke – Will the owner be able to maintain the frontage and the turnaround area. The frontage issue would set precedence as explained by Walter below.

Walter R. The first habitat for humanity house got a frontage variance and is located in the zone neighborhood business which is required to have 75 feet of frontage. They built with 60 feet of frontage, due to the variance from the ZBA. The new house frontage would change to 75 feet and the proposed house would also have 75 feet under the proposed plan. The ZBA did not want to reassign frontage to the houses without going to a public hearing which is the correct procedure to follow. It was brought up that going around a corner to gain square footage for frontage does that really make 75 feet of frontage? Regarding the road the board normally recommends to continue the pavement and the turnaround which would be maintained by the owners not the town. Who would replace all the gravel and fix the ruts etc...maintenance would be a costly venture for the homeowners.

Comments:

- Gina McNeely/BOH– ok due to the connection to town water and sewer
- Bob Trombley/WWTP – capacity exists to handle the sewage. The gravity and capacity and connection fall under Tom Bergeron/DPW.
- Jamie, Linda, & Walter Rodovich 6 Warner Street – object
- Laurence Klein/Connecticut River Internists – does not object
- Carole Conway 244 Montague City Road– does not object
- William Doyle 232 Montague City Road – does not object
- Joan C. Schacht 236 Montague City Road – does not object
- Jane Percival 268 Montague City – comments above with the addition of the road being in very poor condition especially given the added traffic of large construction vehicles and a three year time frame to build the PVHH.

Walter R – the property was a “bargain sale” to PVHH and they try to do as much density as they can. The original plan was to have 3 homes on the site. They have a partnership with the FCTHS and would like to keep that relationship up.

Fred Bowman – The landscaping and grading are a concern and needs to be addressed going forward.

Walter R. There were some conditions given during a preliminary meeting, these are as follows:

- The water line needs to be extended 60 feet with a hydrant.
- A minimum of 2 sewer clean outs have to be installed.
- The new house has to be 25 feet out of the right of way and utility lines.
- The definitive plan needs to clearly indicate the 90 foot extension won't meet the Montague regulations for acceptance standards under number 5 in the subdivision regulations.

Motion by, Fred Bowman to continue the public hearing to 6:30 PM on April 23, 2013 Due to the following issues: the capacity and age of the sewer line, the road condition in regards to paving and upkeep, the proposed hammer head and/or turn around on Warner Street. Seconded by, Bob Obear.

CORRESPONDANCE

- **Invitation to participate in Montague Community Television's Government Access Video Program.**

They would like local boards to go to the studio and talk about what is going on with the Planning Board. Walter R. will be doing a piece on the Turners Falls Livability Plan. Those that are interested should contact Cindy Tarail at MCTV.

- **Follow-up letter from Peter Golrick of 9-11 West Main Street Millers Falls regarding open meeting law complaint relating to posting meetings on the Town website.**

The letter received is from February 19, 2013 and we are waiting a response from the Attorney General. The Counsel sent a rebuttal to Peter Golrick and the Planning Board and the advice is not to respond at this point. The Counsel noted that The Planning Board meeting was posted on time on the Town Hall board as that is the determined posting site. The electronic posting that week was posted on time on line but did not go out those individuals that requested the agendas electronically.

- **Turners Falls Livability Plan.**

We had a public workshop last week with 25 attendees where the planning team presented streetscape improvements using the existing infrastructure including streetlights, raising the planters so they could be used as benches along with a vision statement for Turners Falls was discussed.

The vision statement will guide policy for the downtown. Turners Falls is a vibrant diverse livable community we value the beauty of the Connecticut River surrounding the village and honor her long history providing us with food, power, transportation and recreational opportunity. We are proud of the industrial foundations that have given rise to both the distinctive architecture and the hard working creative ethic of our community. Our residents all have access to quality affordable housing and the ability to walk safely to school, work, shops, and entertainment services and recreational opportunities. We have a variety of centrally located community centers to support all of our citizens including youth, senior, English language learners and disadvantaged populations through creative programming and accessible resources. A mixed of locally owned businesses thriving store fronts along a beautiful active pedestrian friendly Avenue A. Key vacant properties are reenergized with new uses that bring more people and businesses in downtown. A unique character and lively street culture draws visitors from around the region both on a daily basis and for special festivals and events. Turners Falls has been a gathering spot for more than 10,000 years and today is recognized both as a welcoming live/work community as well as recreational and cultural destination. Walter R. had a map that he shared with the group including shopping corridors, enjoyment of the river and entrance/arrival areas.

Motion by, George Cooke to close the March 26, 2013 Planning Board meeting. Seconded by, Bob Obear. Meeting adjourned at 7:58 PM

Approved by: _____ Date: _____