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From: "Lynne Eckardt" <midfarm@bestweb.net>
Date: Wed Jan 12, 2005 5:58 pm
Subject: SE Planning Board Recap 1/10/05

Hi All,

On Monday night the Southeast Planning Board met. Although the meeting was a record breaking 45 minutes there was one item of note. And it was a beaut. I believe that we've finally hit rock bottom regarding Senior Housing in Southeast- maybe even the County. And that's really saying something.

As always these notes are unofficial. The real thing will be available in two weeks. And the comments are based solely on my observations and reflect no one's callous opinions but my own.

WORK SESSION:

1. Mt. Ebo, Lot #6- Presentation and discussion of proposed 168 unit Senior Housing development (no engineering review): According to the applicant, Harold Lepler, the original DEIS called for a 225,000 square ft. warehouse (permissible as this is an OP 2 zone). The new proposal calls for an 8 building 168 unit Senior Housing Complex. One building will be for a combination of Medical Offices/Clubhouse. Amenities consist of a clubhouse, fitness trail and gazebo. The buildings will be 3 story and have approximately 24 units in each (similar to Stonecrest which is the Senior Housing near the Post Office). There are wetlands on the property but the complex will not be located within the wetlands or their buffers. When asked, landscape Architect, Terri Hahn estimated the square footage of the buildings to be 150,000 square feet. One entrance will be on Old Route 22.

The clubhouse (in the same building as the medical offices) will have an atrium where classes can take place. There will be elevators and sprinkler systems in every building.

Planning Board member Dan Armstrong asked if this project was 'institutional'? The reply was no, the Medical Offices will be independent of the facility. That any residents could become patients but that this office would be open to the general public. There will not be around-the-clock care nor will there be a common dining area although meals can be requested and will be 'catered' to the residents.

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Chairman Rohrman also asked the applicant if 'Recreation Fees' are paid on Senior Units.

A special permit will be needed for this project. The apartments/condos will be sold at 'market rates'.

REGULAR SESSION:

1. DiPietro Subdivision: Guinea Road:

This project received a negative declaration and was referred to the ZBA and the ARB. All votes were 6-0.

2. Vita Subdivision: Brewster Hill Road

This project received preliminary approval. 6-0. The engineer, Mr. Lynch of Putnam Engineering, mentioned that although the Conservation Commission had voted not to hold a Public Hearing that one must be held.

3. Turk Hill East Subdivision, Turk Hill Road:

Due to ongoing litigation this was adjourned until the January 24th meeting. Theresa Ryan- Insite Engineering.

4. Back O'Beyond Subdivision, Federal Hill Road:

The Planning Board declared themselves Lead Agency by a vote of 6-0.

COMMENTS:

1. Mt Ebo, Lot 6

Good Heavens. And just when you thought things couldn't get any worse... We now have an entirely new breed of 'Senior Housing'- Drum roll please: 'Quasi Assisted Living' in other words not just 'Fake Senior Housing' but 'Faux Assisted Living'. How positively diabolical.

I believe that this facility will be situated on 25 +/- acres in Southeast. Although there is an addition portion (another 25+/- acres, I think) in Patterson. Patterson, however, has an extremely strict Senior Housing code so I believe that all 168 residences will be on our 25 +/- acres in Southeast.

Here's how the 'Faux Assisted Living' works: Real Assisted Living must be licensed. In it you have staff for round-the-clock care, a dining room where at least one meal a day is included in the monthly charges and usually many other amenities which may include: a swimming pool, library, fitness center, concierge, computer room, art room- well, you get the picture. Here we have a fitness trail, a gazebo and possibly a catered meal delivered to your door. Oh right, and Medical Offices which can be rented out to any doctors (who may or may not be your own) but will be serving the general public. Hey, sign me up.

On the plus side here one can walk to: The Post Office, nursing Home, Stonecrest Senior Housing (although beware the unfinished detention basins) and the Temple when built. I suppose one could also walk to the Hot Dog Vender on Mt. Ebo Drive North or Powers Fasteners. Well, it is, at least, a more diverse jaunt than those offered at the proposed Senior Housing at Terravest (Food Processing Plant, Sewage Treatment Plant (when built) and Town ball fields). Thank God for small favors.

I particularly loved the poster board shown to illustrate generic Atriums. Again akin to an 8th grade project (C+) as though Planning Board members would otherwise have had no idea what an atrium looked like.

The most clever (and insidious) part of this plan was the inclusion of the Medical Facility 'on campus'. I suppose that this was supposed to look like good will. To me it seemed gratuitous at best and very profitable for the applicant at worst- think rental \$\$\$\$. Lots of traffic in and out of the community as these offices will serve the general public with the added bonus of Route 22 traffic noise. Man, that fitness trail/gazebo can't be far enough away if anyone is after a little peace and

quiet. Hey, maybe because of their strict Senior code the Patterson portion of lot 6 will luck out with only the 'Fitness Trail' or gazebo.

The catering was yet another smoothly calculated move. The main point of a dining room in Assisted Care Facilities is to provide a social time for the many seniors who are single. Meals-on-wheels delivered to one's apartment does not exactly fit the bill.

Chairman Rohrman's question on whether or not Senior Housing pays Recreation Fees is a good one. But shouldn't we already know the answer? And if this swill gets a free pass my head's going to explode. And please, please don't tell me that the 'Fitness Trail' and Gazebo will be open to all residents of Southeast so that these fees will be waived.

Finally, it seems a little unusual (and perhaps unfair) that due to the limited availability of sewers in Southeast Mr. Lepler has almost cornered the market on Senior Housing. Although the village also has a WWTP, the remainder, I believe, are all in Mr. Lepler's competent hands.

Now more than ever the Town Board needs to institute a Moratorium on all Senior Housing and really evaluate and tighten up the Town Law. This latest in Senior 'care' made me want to open a vein. We all deserve better- including our Seniors.

As always feel free to e-mail me with any questions or comments that you may have.

With Best Regards,
Lynne Eckardt

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