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From: "Lynne Eckardt" <midfarm@bestweb.net>
Date: Wed Dec 15, 2004 4:33 pm
Subject: SE Planning Board Recap 12/13/04

Hi All,

Here's my take on Monday night's Planning Board meeting. During the Work Session the Board was really on task- especially on Penella. Gosh, almost like being in Northern Westchester.

The 'Fisher Subdivision' brought out the troops once again. These neighbors are fiercely devoted to their neighborhood. Best backpedaling goes to Landscape Architect Terry Hahn re. the now-in-use easement to access the property.

The meeting's true highlight was when the Planning Board totally blew off a letter from Supervisor Dunford asking that the Public Hearing on Fisher be held open. Ooooooo, and you know how I love a good town power struggle. Yahoo!

Here's the drill, these are all unofficial observations, petty and sometimes vindictive. Official draft minutes will be available on December 28th.

WORK SESSION:

1. Pennella, 261 Fields Lane

This was a site plan review. The engineer was with Bibbo Associates. The building will be a 6000 sq. ft warehouse/office on 6.9 acres in the OP1 zone. The wetlands and watercourses have been flagged. This is a one story building with 6 parking spaces. There will be a long retaining wall as well as 6000 to 10,000 square feet of buffer disturbance. Parts of the driveway and septic fields will be inside the buffer.

The Planning Board asked the applicant to consider moving the septic up hill and outside of the buffer. Chairman Rohrman asked that the same be done with the driveway and mentioned that the EAF needed fixing.

2. Galt Automotive, 3874 Danbury Road

This property has multiple zoning volitions. Retail business operating illegally. Will need a 'change of

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use' variance. Installations being done on site which would also require a variance. Property is still under a moratorium.

PUBLIC HEARINGS:

1. DiPietro Subdivision, Guinea Road:

Paul Lynch from Putnam Engineering was the engineer. This proposed subdivision is 6000 square feet short of the new 4 acre (160,000 sq. ft) lots. Frontage and setbacks are fine. No ridge line or wetlands issues. Will have to go before the ZBA.

2. Fisher Subdivision, Nelson Blvd:

Neighbors (almost 30 showed up) asked Terry Hahn if the applicant would consider access from Nelson Blvd rather than breaking through the fence at the end of Reed Road. Because the old farm road from Nelson is not a 'recognized road' and goes through wetlands the DEP has said no. The town attorney, Tom Jacobellis, said that the town was doing a title search to determine if Reed Road could be extended or if it was on adjoining neighbors property.

There was concern voiced over the property becoming a commercial horse farm (equestrian center) but Ms. Hahn assured the audience that the applicant would agree to just private operation. This would be reflected in the approvals but not deed restricted. There would be no further subdivision so that there will be no more than two lots.

Engineer, John Folchetti, retained by the neighborhood, spoke about the inadequacy of the road should the new owners have up to the 21 horses allowed by zoning. Feed trucks, horse trailers et al would have to use Reed Road for access. He also suggested well tests as houses in Drewville Heights share wells. Also, the fact that neighboring property names were not reflected on the map Ms. Hahn provided.

I asked if the easement currently in use to access the property could be used rather than open up Reed Road. Ms. Hahn replies that it could only serve one house and that now there would be two. I asked that if that were the case and the Reed Road access was not permitted if the subdivision would then become only one lot serviced by the easement. Ms. Hahn replied 'no' that it might be possible to further research the easement so that it might be useable for the two proposed houses. Chairman Rohman suggested that she research the easement access further.

Supervisor Dunford asked that the Public Hearing be held open until the Town could ascertain title to Reed Road. Chairman Rohrman felt that this was unnecessary and immaterial. The Board voted 6-0 to close the Public Hearing.

REGULAR SESSION:

1. Prospect Hill Office Park:

The Board voted 6-0 to refer this to the Town Board for the release of the performance bond.

2. Alcon, Fields Lane:

There was a letter from the Town Engineer that was likened to a 'Peder Scott' letter. A lot of questions in said letter need to be addressed. The applicant here is Alfredo Landscaping. Insite is the engineer (Theresa Ryan)

COMMENTS:

1. Penella:

Oh goody. Another landscaping/supply concern on Fields Lane. So we now have: Arborcape (existing), Palazetti (final stages of approval), Northwater Group (nearing the end of process), and Alcon (new kid on the block). Hello, hello? OP 1- O-f-f-i-c-e P-a-r-k. Hey, I know, why don't we just rewrite the definitions of 'office' and 'park.' So much easier. Of course 'office' will now read: Office> noun: A building consisting of 80% warehouse and 20% professional working space. And the definition for 'park' will from henceforth be: Park> noun: A setting in which huge, unattractive, possibly polluting mounds of gravel, topsoil and mulch are stored; preferably within the wetland or its buffer.

Please, please make this go away. Oh right, because of all the Town Board sponsored 'Special Permitting for 'other allowed uses' along Fields Lane we can't.

By the way, the architectural drawing shown was ghastly. I love that Southeast takes such pride in not allowing Butler buildings when, in point of fact, what we're actually getting are Butler buildings encased in masonry. Hideous.

1. DiPietro:

This will have to go to the ZBA and will be a good test case of the R-160 new zoning regulation.

2. Fisher Subdivision:

Imagine. 47 acres for a two lot subdivision and still one house will have to be built within the wetland buffer. Oh right, and access is kinda a problem too. Then there's that pesky little question of a 'horse farm' which will allow 21 horses even if it's not a 'commercial' Equestrian Center.

I can understand why neighbors are upset with this access. Even a non-commercial horse venture will add an unprecedented increase in traffic for Drewville Heights. It's the feed trucks, horse trailers et al that will affect safety on Reed Road.

In my not-at-all humble opinion I'd suggest that the easement be pursued. And are we really supposed to care if this limits the applicant to one house that could be built outside the wetland buffer. I'd call this

win/win for the environment and the neighborhood. And I'll just bet that after some more 'research' by Ms. Hahn that this easement will work for two houses. Either that or use the easement for the one house and horse farm and the Reed Road access to the other house without equestrian facilities or through road. Problem solved. Except for that darn buffer incursion.

From the 'take your suggestion and shove it' department high marks go to Mr. Rohrman who was not about to let Supervisor Dunford grandstand or dictate from on high. Mr. Dunford had asked that the Hearing remain open until title searches reveal who really owns the road bed. Mr. Rorhman felt that this ownership was unrelated to any continuation- So endeth the Public Hearing. There is a 10 day comment period.

3. Alcon, Fields Lane:

See Penella (1) tirade above. I really enjoyed the allusion to a 'Peder Scott' letter. I felt like I was either throwing my voice or that someone on the Planning Board had read one too many of my snippy recaps.

This comment was taken with good humor by Ms. Ryan but it did sting and knock Insite Engineering down a few pegs. See, now we know they're not infallible- probably overextended and overworked as Putnam County's latest 'Engineer du jour'.

For some odd reason the Board seemed to have more patience with this project than Penella and actually Alcon is even worse.

That's it from here. As always feel free to e-mail me with any comments or questions that you may have.

With best regards,
Lynne Eckardt

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