

Minutes

Planning Board Meeting

February 1, 2018

Members of the Planning Board in attendance were Charles Moreno, Chairman, Don Clifford, Terry Hyland, Steve Leighton, and Donald Coker, Alternate member. The Chairman opened the meeting at 7:30 PM and announced the members present. The closing date for applications to appear on the agenda for the March 2018 regular meeting is 5 p.m., Tuesday, February 6, 2018. The Chairman advised that the Board has a policy setting time limits for meetings and that the Board will not consider any new business after 10:30 PM and that the meeting will adjourn by 11:00 PM. It was agreed to postpone consideration of the minutes until after the formal business due to the large audience.

The first item of continuing business was the application of CECIL C. ABELS II for Non-Residential Site Plan Review for a Concert and Outdoor Event Venue to be located at his property at 664 First Crown Point Road (Tax Map 19, Lot 73A). Cecil Abels has contacted the Board by email and requested a continuation of the consideration of his application until the next regular meeting.

The first and only item of new business was the application of CLEAR CREEK PROPERTIES, LLC for Design Review for a Conservation Development subdivision of property located on Strafford Road/NH Route 202A and Second Crown Point Road (Tax Map 16, Lot 30). Bernard Cote of Geometres Blue Hills presented the application; he was accompanied by Ashley Rowe, also of Geometres Blue Hills and by Atty. Elizabeth Nolin from the Alfano Law Office in Concord. Alan Williams of Clear Creek Properties LLC was also present. There were a large number of abutters and interested parties present, including Jim Rousseau who had a recording device. The Chairman addressed the audience and explained the process of Conservation Development subdivision, which requires a Design Review meeting before the submission of a formal application. Design Review is a non-binding discussion in accordance with state statutes. During design review, one looks over the environmental features, proposed plans, layout, engineering, driveways, etc. The Chairman advised that the audience would be given the opportunity to ask questions and comment, and noted that with the large audience it would be helpful if people could identify themselves when they spoke. It was again noted that this is a non-binding discussion. Mr. Cote said that they hope to divide the 56 acre parcel south of the power lines into 9 building lots plus a conservation parcel of 41.99 acres. They would like to put all the lots on Second Crown Point Road; each lot would have 100 or more feet of frontage. They have located wetlands, ledge, interior walls and exterior bounds and these show on the various sheets of the plan set. The Chairman noted that the power lines are not part of the parcel. There is a corner of the original Froio parcel (Tax Map 16, Lot 30), recently purchased by Clear Creek Properties, LLC, that lies north of the power lines. Atty. Nolin addressed the group and suggested that they feel that the area north of the power lines already exists as a separate lot because PSNH purchased the power line area in 1967. They are calling the area north of the power lines "Lot 30A" and feel that it exists as a separate lot because the power line project pre-dates Strafford zoning. Steve Leighton advised that the Town needs an accurate description of the lot. Mr. Cote presented a boundary survey of the area north of the power lines. Mr. Williams has received a building permit for his first house on the Froio property, which is being built on this area north of the power lines.

Addressing the audience, Mr. Cote said that conservation development is encouraged for all lots over 20 acres to facilitate the goals of the Master Plan. He said that there is wildlife activity in the power lines area and that hunters and wildlife use this larger property. They are willing to donate the land and they would build a parking area for public access in one of the driveway access areas approved by NH DOT for the NH Route 202A frontage. Several Board members then spoke, noting sections of the Strafford Master Plan and goals for maintaining the agricultural and rural atmosphere of the town. Several Board members said that the Second Crown Point area is an agricultural area, and noted that the best soils on the parcel are those slated for development. Several expressed their sense that the most important resource to conserve on this parcel would be the field land along Second Crown Point Road. Atty. Nolin said that wetlands have natural resource value and those would be protected by this plan. There was concern expressed about the narrowness of the lots, which were characterized as "bowling alley" lots. Attention turned to the "yield plan" submitted by the applicants to demonstrate density. The yield plan would put 5 lots on Second Crown Point Road and 5 lots on NH Route 202A with shared driveways. It was noted that the applicants are proposing to develop along the Second Crown Point Road frontage under both plans.

The discussion was then opened up to the audience. There was a question about the number of lots and the proposed configuration of lots under conservation development. Conservation development was explained, noting that relief is given regarding frontage and lot size in return for protection of a larger parcel. It was noted that there was an old cellar hole on the area north of the power lines. Mr. Williams said that there is nothing there now. Questions were asked about screening and whether the homes could be put back behind the tree line beyond the field on Second Crown Point Road. There was discussion about the trees that have been cut along the edge of the road. Mr. Williams submitted a letter from the Road Agent regarding 10 to 12 trees of concern that he requested be cut. It was noted that many more than 12 trees have been removed. Questions were asked about the percent of buildable land on the parcel, and it was noted that prime agricultural farmland is high ranked at the state level. It was also noted that the wetlands along the power lines are home to Blandings Turtles and perhaps other species of concern. Audience members asked Alan Williams, the developer, what kind of homes he planned to build. He said that they plan on building either 9 building starter homes off Second Crown Point Road or 10 larger home on the 10 conventional lots—larger homes for larger lots. The smaller homes would market in the 200s, he said, while the larger homes he would build on the conventional lots would market at 3-400K. Mr. Williams said that they are trying for the lowest impact, and suggested deed restrictions might be part of the package. There was some discussion of building style. Mr. Williams said that his homes are stick built. Board members noted that the general location of this development, on or near NH Route 202A, makes sense, and urged Mr. Williams to consider a conservation option that either worked off a small cul-de-sac built off Second Crown Point Road or putting some homes off Second Crown Point Road and some off Route 202A. It was asked if more homes could be built on this land later if either of these projects are approved, and it was noted that there would be no further subdivision of this land either way. Several audience members asked Mr. Williams why not both conventional subdivision and affordable homes. Mr. Williams said that it will cost more to develop the conventional subdivision so the homes will need to be larger and more expensive. He spoke about the need to recoup his investment in the land and said that he wants to begin building rather than working for months on gaining subdivision approval. The Board was asked about Paragraph 2.6.1 D of the Subdivision Regulations, which requires consistency with the Master Plan. Steve Leighton noted the goal of protecting the good land, and making development affordable. Time frames were discussed. The provisions of Article 1.15 of Zoning regarding phasing of large developments were noted. The applicants agreed that they are aware of this requirement.

Board members continued to encourage clustering of homes away from the road and tucked behind the tree line. The apparent inevitability of development of the field was noted, with the Chairman continuing to advocate for a conservation approach. Board members continued to suggest various possible options and noted the provision in conservation development for allowing bonus lots for good design. Setbacks were noted; Mr. Williams said that he had already cut trees and does not want to cut more, so he prefers to develop homes where the field drops off so that he can build homes with walk-out basements. Discussion continued along similar lines. The Chairman suggested a site walk. Mr. Williams said that he does not want to delay, and the applicants suggested a non-binding straw poll of Board members regarding the applicant's proposed conservation development layout. Board members spoke in turn, and most agreed that the plan presented, which would put all of the homes in the field off Second Crown Point Road, did not make sense. Some Board members said that they would be willing to work toward a redesign, and the Chairman advised that he would like to see some open space protected. The audience and applicant were again advised that this evening's discussion was non-binding.

Board members then turned to the minutes of the January meeting. Donald Coker then made a motion to accept the minutes of the January meeting as presented. Don Clifford seconded the motion. There was no further discussion and the vote was unanimous in the affirmative.

Board members then briefly reviewed applications received for the March meeting agenda. There being no other business before the Board, a motion to adjourn the meeting was made and seconded. The vote was unanimous in the affirmative and the meeting adjourned at 10:00 PM.