



## Stratham Planning Board Meeting Minutes

April 17, 2024

Stratham Municipal Center

Time: 7:00 pm

**Members Present:** Thomas House, Chair  
David Canada, Vice Chair  
Mike Houghton, Select Board's Representative  
Chris Zaremba, Regular Member  
Nate Allison, Alternate Member

**Members Absent:** John Kunowski, Regular Member

**Staff Present:** Mark Connors, Director of Planning and Community Development

### 1. Call to Order/Roll Call

Mr. House called the meeting to order at 7:00 pm and took roll call. Mr. House appointed Mr. Allison as a voting member for the meeting.

### 2. Approval of Minutes

#### a. April 3, 2024

**Mr. Zaremba made a motion to approve the April 3, 2024 meeting minutes as amended. Mr. Canada seconded the motion. All voted in favor and the motion passed.**

### 3. Public Hearing:

- a. Chinburg Properties, Inc. (Applicant), Lanzillo Irrevocable Trust (Owner) - Request for approval of a proposed conventional subdivision of 189 Bunker Hill Avenue, Tax Map 6, Lot 167, into six buildable lots served by a new road. The parcel is Zoned Residential/Agricultural. Application submitted by Beals Associates, 70 Portsmouth Avenue, Stratham, NH 03885. This application was tabled from the April 3, 2024 meeting.

Mr. Connors stated that the third-party engineering comments have been submitted and the Applicant revised the plans based on those comments and additional comments from the Town of Stratham. A landscape plan has also been submitted. Mr. Connors recommends that the Board wait for the final engineering comments with a goal to vote on the application at the May 15<sup>th</sup> Planning Board meeting.

Christina Smith of Beals Associates spoke on behalf of the Applicant. He introduced Shawna Sammis from Chinburg Properties and Alex Monastiero from the Gove Group. Mr. Smith distributed updated plans based on comments received and asked the Board if there is anything

specific the Board would like to discuss.

Mr. Connors requested a presentation on the landscape plan. Mr. Smith stated that the landscape architect designed a fairly comprehensive plan for street tree plantings and infill plantings to the neighboring parcel, both along the 50 foot easement with Lot 1 and some additional plantings towards Bunker Hill Avenue. He stated the Applicant has agreed to maintain existing vegetation at a minimum within the building setback area except for where the pond on Lot 4 encroaches into the grading. The Applicant has agreed to maintain all existing vegetation within the 20 foot setbacks.

Mr. Allison asked if the 50-foot setback is an easement and if the cutting of trees is prohibited. Mr. Smith replied that the existing neighbor and the Applicant negotiated that there will be a granting of a 50-foot area as a formal easement or a deed restriction on that parcel where there can be no building and no septic systems. It is currently largely cut, but there will be infield planting as proposed by the landscape architects. Mr. Allison asked if it will be the responsibility of Lot 1 to maintain that. Mr. Smith replied yes.

Mr. Allison asked about the notes regarding areas of meadow grass or native grass and reseeding disturbed areas and asked if the areas will be turf or something else. Mr. Smith replied that it will be seed and directed Mr. Allison's attention to a note regarding loam and native meadow dry site seeding detail that specifies the grasses that will be planted.

Mr. Allison asked about a note regarding diseased trees along the existing driveway and asked if they will be removed as part of the removal of the driveway and utility line that currently serve the house. Mr. Smith replied yes, the landscape architect determined those trees are in serious decline. Mr. Smith added that the landscape architect has some tree plantings proposed at the entrance of the existing drive as well.

Mr. House asked about reseeded areas in the vicinity of the existing home. Mr. Smith replied that those areas will probably be reseeded in the loam and lawn seeding format as opposed to the loam and native dry meadow. Mr. House asked for that to be noted in the landscaping plan along with reseeding under the existing shed when removed.

Mr. House asked if an existing stone wall on Lots 4 and 5 will be kept. Mr. Smith replied that he doubts they will be kept but that they will try to reuse the stone if it is worth reusing.

Mr. Canada asked if a boundary stone wall is allowed to be removed. Mr. Smith replied that it is not a boundary, it is a decorative stone wall that lines the driveway. He added that the only stone wall that is boundary and proposed to be disturbed is located left of the new road.

Mr. Zaremba asked who is responsible for mowing the cul-de-sac. Mr. Smith assumes that it would be maintained by the Town because it will be part of the municipally owned right-of-way.

Mr. House asked for confirmation that there will be no sidewalks. Mr. Smith replied they would contemplate it if there was a sidewalk connection, but sidewalks to nowhere do not make sense.

Mr. House asked if some buildings that are covered on the plans by labels need to be visible for the final Mylars. Mr. Smith replied that it is on an abutting parcel and it demonstrates that there are no encroachments on the locus parcel, which he believes is all that is truly important to the

land surveyor. He is quite certain they can relocate the text if that is the concern. Mr. House replied that he wants to insure that the building is screened. Mr. Smith replied yes, that is the area where the heaviest of the proposed plantings are.

Mr. Houghton asked for the Applicant to consult with the DPW about the cul-de-sac so they can have input on what it looks like if it is proposed to be maintained by the Town. Mr. Smith agreed and added that there are no plantings proposed that will impeded sight distances around the cul-de-sac.

Mr. House asked if the fire department commented on the cul-de-sac radius. Mr. Connors replied the fire department reviewed the plans. He added that they commented that there is not an adequate water source in the vicinity. The subdivision regulations required either the installation of sprinklers in homes or a central fire cistern but does not require both. The fire department would like to have both, but they understand the limitations of the subdivision requirements. The fire department is happy with sprinklers but they would also like to have a water source because the sprinklers only give the occupants time to evacuate and do not guarantee that a fire won't spread. Mr. Allison asked if the size of a tank would be 30,000 gallons. Mr. Smith replied that is what he believes Stratham requests. He added that they will have a follow-up discussion with the fire chief as the Applicant discussed this previously prior to full design and the fire chief commented that the regulations say they can do one or the other. Mr. Smith believes that the new comment is a big change in opinion. Mr. Allison asked if it could be located in the middle of the cul-de-sac. Mr. Smith replied he assumes it would be on the high point of the road.

Mr. Canada asked if the Applicant has agreed to no cut areas along the borders. Mr. Smith replied yes, within the 20-foot setback except for the area of grading for the berm of the stormwater pond. Mr. Canada noted it does not appear on the plans.

Mr. Allison asked if an analysis has been completed regarding if there will be sufficient material from the road excavation to be used around the houses and septic systems. Mr. Smith replied they have not yet completed a cut and fill analysis on the roadway, but there will also be some cut from the foundations that will supplement it. Mr. Allison asked if the basements will be constructed a foot above the seasonal high water table. Mr. Smith replied more or less. Mr. Allison stated that there seems like there will be a lot of fill required and he recommends they complete the calculations. Mr. Smith agreed.

Mr. House asked Mr. Smith to describe the neighborhood entry sign. Ms. Sammis replied they are proposing a one sided unlit subdivision sign with northeast field stone veneer and cement caps. The sign will be mounted between two pillars and there will be some stone detailing beneath as well. Mr. House asked about the sign detail showing a continuous wall. Ms. Sammis replied that is the new, Chinburg-brand stone wall that they intend to construct and the detail was taken from another recent project. She believes the intention was to see what could reasonably fit in the space once the road is cut in. Mr. House asked if it is located in the right-of-way. Mr. Smith replied it is right on the edge and they can push it back. Ms. Sammis added that the dimensions shown are much larger than they would do for a six-lot subdivision and that is just an example. Mr. House suggested making edits for the final Mylar. Ms. Sammis asked if the sign detail can be removed from the plan as they have not committed to sizing yet. Mr. Smith asked if they could include maximum dimensions so that a smaller sign could be installed. The Board wants to insure that the sign complies with the sign ordinance. Mr. Smith stated the size does comply. Mr. House asked that it be moved farther away from the right-of-way. Mr. Smith agreed. Mr. House commented

that the size of the sign should not impede sightlines. Mr. Smith replied that if it is outside the Bunker Hill Avenue right-of-way then it will be outside sightlines.

Mr. Canada asked for clarification if the houses will have sprinklers. Mr. Smith replied they will discuss it with the fire chief and that was their original proposal. He added that he thought the fire chief was okay with that but has now commented that he would like to see a cistern as well. Mr. Canada asked if the preference for sprinklers is from cost. Mr. Smith replied it is a better look for the subdivision to not have the cistern infrastructure and it will also add pavement cost for additional fire truck pull off. He added that the cost is probably the same, but the cistern might be more expensive. Mr. House asked if there is enough pressure from the wells. Mr. Smith replied that there will be a sprinkler pressure tank in the basement and when the heads melt off, the system gets triggered and will send water to the highest floor.

Mr. Allison asked if there will be signage or some other provision to notify the owner of the lot that contains wetlands that they are subject to a buffer. Mr. Smith replied they can install placards on trees every 50 feet or so. Mr. Canada asked if it could be added to the deed. Mr. Smith replied it is a municipal setback that shouldn't be disturbed anyway so he doesn't see the need for that. Mr. Canada clarified he is referring to the 20-foot no cut zone that is specific to this subdivision and asked who is going to enforce that. Mr. Smith stated it could be added as a deed restriction on the lots.

**Mr. Canada made a motion to table the application to April 17, 2024. Mr. Zaremba seconded the motion. All voted in favor and the motion passed.**

#### **4. Public Meeting:**

##### **a. Other Business:**

##### **1. Legislative Updates and Discussion**

Mr. Connors reported that the Select Board voted in favor to send comments on the two bills that the Planning Board has concerns with.

##### **2. Third-Party Engineering Review Requests**

Mr. Connors requested approval for a third-party engineer to review the stormwater work proposed at 200 Domain Drive particularly with regards to MS4 requirements. Mr. House asked if they are changing the use. Mr. Connors replied, no, it will remain industrial.

Mr. Connors requested approval for a third-party engineer to review a driveway for a proposed house at Rear Lovell Road with regards to public safety and wetlands.

**Mr. Zaremba made a motion to have Mr. Connors request third-party engineering reviews for 200 Domain Drive and Rear Lovell Road. Mr. Allison seconded the motion. All voted in favor and the motion passed.**

##### **3. Miscellaneous Community Planning Issues**

Mr. Connors stated the Town has received some complaints at a particular farm regarding parking,

trespassing, and loose farm animals. He would like feedback from the Planning Board as to when a site plan review is required for farms, specifically with regards to those operating as agritourism as opposed to traditional farming. He described the operations at the property that are the subject of complaints and asked the Planning Board if they agree that the operations have grown to the point of needing site plan approval. The Board agreed.

## **5. Adjournment**

**Mr. Canada made a motion to adjourn the meeting at 7:56 pm. Mr. Zaremba seconded the motion. All voted in favor and the motion passed.**