



Stratham Planning Board
Meeting Minutes
August 16, 2017
Municipal Center, Selectmen's Meeting Room
10 Bunker Hill Avenue
Time: 7:00 PM

Members Present: Bob Baskerville, Chairman
 Tom House, Secretary
 David Canada, Member
 Nancy Ober, Alternate
 Robert Roseen, Alternate

Members Absent: Jameson Paine, Vice Chairman
 Mike Houghton, Selectmen's Representative

Staff Present: Tavis Austin, Town Planner

1. Call to Order/Roll Call

The Chairman took roll call.

2. Review/Approval of Meeting Minutes

a. July 19, 2017

The Chairman explained that due to Ms. Cutler being unable to hear parts of 2 motions made at the July 19 meeting, the minutes should be tabled until the next meeting on September 6, 2017.

Mr. House made a motion to postpone the approval of the meeting minutes of July 19, 2017. Motion seconded by Ms. Ober. Motion carried unanimously.

3. Public Meeting—

b. Planning Board Workshop to review Site Plan and Subdivision Regulations

Mr. Lavery, Highway Agent referred to the handouts provided by him.

Mr. Baskerville started by discussing pork chop lots and how developers can use the regulations to their advantage to create lots at a later date. He said he is sure the original intention was to allow a pork chop lot so that a family can live close by provided the lot was big enough. Mr. Deschaine added that back then the lot size requirement was an acre and the frontage 150', but of course today 250' frontage is required and 2 acres minimum. Mr. Baskerville suggested adding a note "g" which states if the lot existed

pre this regulation change in dimension, the old dimensions apply to the lot. Mr. Baskerville commented that in most towns a pork chop lot has to be a minimum of 5 acres.

Mr. Austin talked about how to consider frontage around a cul-de-sac or hammerhead and should more lots be encouraged at the end of dead end roads or minimizing the number of lots. He asked if changes should be made to pork chop regulations. Mr. Baskerville suggested revisiting the pork chop regulations. The pork chop lot at 8 Oxbow was discussed where the frontage came off a turnaround and Mr. Deschaine, Town Administrator felt that should be explored.

Mr. Lavery said should the regulations be updated it should cut down on the number of waivers being requested and the regulations should be more black and white to the applicant.

Mr. Lavery said he looked at other towns' regulations to help sculpt new ones for Stratham. Mr. Austin commented that these changes are being suggested from a Public Works standpoint and so the Board needs to be cognizant that some changes might conflict with other regulations.

Mr. Lavery discussed reducing dead end streets and if there are rights of way in place to connect those roads; if possible, applicants should be submitting for through roads that promote connectivity in the future. From a maintenance stand point in terms of snow removal and to a degree paving, it is much more cost effective than a hammerhead. Mr. Lavery asked that the minimum radii be dealt with, for a cul-de-sac or a teardrop so all Town personnel whether highway or emergency vehicles could use it safely. He feels that 22' of pavement is adequate for dead end streets and he did carry a 60' right of way and centered the right of way on the road. He does approve a 24' width and 60' right of way on a through road or a road with connection potential in the future.

Mr. Canada said there is an arrangement that public roads are not accepted until there is a through road. He feels they need a maximum as well as a minimum size because people might decide to stick with a cul-de-sac because they can make that bigger which creates extra frontage for the lot. Mr. Austin read that the regulations do say if topographical conditions make such continuance or conformity impractical, the Board may permit dead end streets.

Mr. Baskerville said he talked to Mr. Lavery and he volunteered one of his drafters to help Mr. Lavery so he has seen these suggested changes ahead of time. These suggestions reduce the width of a cul-de-sac by 50' in diameter. Mr. Austin said currently the outside edge of the right of way for a cul-de-sac is 113' radius and the outside of the road radius is 100'. Currently, applicants could choose a cul-de-sac which is big and creates useful frontage or they can choose a hammerhead which is much smaller. Mr. Baskerville said they should aim for something in the middle of the two and then waivers go away. Mr. Austin said that Mr. Lavery was amenable to the idea of a horseshoe design which would have a 24' width and a 60' right of way.

Ms. Bettina Kersten, resident said she lives on a hammerhead and she would prefer a cul-de-sac as she thinks it is more fun for kids and she likes the 20' because it gives more space for kids to get out of the way of cars. You can also use the open space in the middle for neighborhood get-togethers and you don't have to ask permission to close the road.

Ms. Melissa Gahr, resident asked if there is a saturation rate of cul-de-sacs in the Master Plan. Mr. Austin answered that typically the Planning Board would view it in terms of what a new subdivision is proposing to do and how the traffic may affect the neighborhood. Mr. Deschaine added that in terms of saturation you could be talking to the offset in the regulations. Mr. Deschaine asked about sight distance. Mr. Austin said the Board voted in December to move it to 400' which is the minimum stopping sight distance. There is a proviso that if the State Highway regulations AASHTO trumps the 400' requirement, that can be presented to the Board who can modify the 400' if they wish to. Mr. Deschaine said you could have a

situation where there are 2 driveways 125' apart sharing the same 400'. Mr. Baskerville said that overall the Board prefers through roads.

The next topic concerned driveways and sidewalks. Mr. Lavery talked through cross sections which included changes in pavement thicknesses and the addition of using non-woven fabrics. Mr. Baskerville asked about drains being included in the cross section. He suggested a note that underdrains will be decided by DPW Director to avoid waivers. Mr. Roseen said waivers should be reserved for elements of significance in case that regulations may not specify every element. He continued that if an underdrain isn't shown as standard he doesn't think that would require a waiver. Mr. Austin said he doesn't disagree but it puts a bigger burden on various department heads to make sure they get their specific comments in otherwise if it is not in the regulations, the Board won't know to look for it.

Mr. Baskerville asked about underground electric. Mr. Lavery said he likes it to be beyond the edge of the gravel shoulder so it doesn't get in the way of any maintenance work.

Mr. Lavery addressed walkability and bikeability in the Town and connecting roads without having to incur major costs on infrastructure and maintenance. He proposes keeping the same right of way and paving the road 28' wide that will allow for 2 10' lanes divided by 2 double yellow lines and 2 combination bike and pedestrian lanes which would be paved divided by a white, fog line from traffic. There would be 2' gravel shoulders to bank the pavement so if a pedestrian and bike rider were to pass each other, the pedestrian could use the gravel shoulder. He has changed sidewalks from 3' to 4' because of this idea. He said for the sidewalks along the car dealerships or the Town Center, it would be preferable for them to be 6' wide and concrete which helps with storm water issues. Mr. Baskerville shared some findings from Federal regulations for highways which allow for narrower roadways. The Board discussed the possibility of selecting an existing road and piloting Mr. Lavery's suggestion. Mr. Austin said the idea of a 28' wide road is nice, but he is not sure there are many roads left in Town to do that. Mr. Baskerville suggested doing it for internal streets to help promote the idea of walkability. Mr. Austin asked the Board if they would like to leave the section on sidewalks as it is currently. Mr. Baskerville said they don't have an answer to that yet.

Mr. Lavery said the Town has never had a driveway grade or grading plan. He suggested putting a maximum slope on driveways. The State of NH has a maximum driveway slope of 10%. In his opinion a driveway should not exceed that especially in a climate like New England's.

Mr. Deschaine said he agreed with Mr. Lavery wanting to have standards, but asked for what outcome. He said so far he has heard about visibility so people can stop before entering a road, fire access and a third which he hasn't seen anything about yet, is drainage. Some driveways just flush the water right back out onto the street and it doesn't go into a ditch as it is supposed to. Mr. Austin suggested adding an extra paragraph to get around water on driveways sheet flowing onto the street.

Mr. Lavery moved to the next suggested amendment. He said that depending on the scope of the project, it has never been in the regulations to specify there is to be a pre-construction meeting with Town officials before construction begins. He would like to change that.

Mr. Lavery talked about pavement and sidewalk construction, using concrete and having a 6' width.

Mr. Lavery said there is only a brief mention in the regulations for inspections. He would like more detail on that along with an inspection form. He changed the language concerning guard rails.

Mr. Austin addressed the topics of cisterns and explained that Section 4.5.3 Fire Protection Structures refers to Addendum A of the Site Plan regulations. In his opinion something should be in the subdivision regulations also. Mr. Lavery said for circular loop drives he has changed that to a 20' pavement width from 18'. He talked about piping under the road being a minimum diameter of 12' and a minimum of 3' deep. He also added a regulation about acceptance of roads including a line which states that snow

plowing will not occur by the Highway Department on a publicly maintained road until the road has been accepted by the Town.

Roadway type and criteria was discussed next.

Mr. Austin raised the topic of irregular shaped lots for discussion and suggested having a definition for what is considered a regular shaped lot. The Board discussed how they would define a regular shaped lot. Mr. Roseen observed that the land that is left in Town for development purposes is the non-standard land. Mr. Baskerville referred to open space bonuses which were intended to encourage developers to build open space cluster subdivisions. In one instance, a developer took down an existing house in order to qualify for 2 more lots and Mr. Baskerville asked if that was the true intent of the regulations. Mr. Austin suggested that the Board remove the requirement of a 20 acre property as a minimum for an open space cluster subdivision.

Mr. House reminded the Board that they would have to address the issue of definitions.

The Board decided to continue these discussions at the next Planning Board meeting.

Mr. Baskerville raised the issue of social media. Mr. Austin suggested that the Planning Board should not have a Planning page as nobody gets to control the content on the public page.

4. Miscellaneous

Mr. Austin said he would like the Board's permission to coordinate with Mr. Roseen about wetland buffers. At the last Town meeting, the vote was affirmative to enable the Planning Board to develop regulations that would allow wetland buffer reductions in open space cluster subdivisions if certain criteria were met. He added that he had some draft storm water management regulations which he would share next time.

The Board discussed cell towers briefly. Mr. Austin asked the Board if they would support him getting a price from a third party cell tower engineer to get recommendations.

The Board agreed that Mr. Roseen should work with Mr. Austin on buffers.

5. Adjournment.

Mr. House made a motion to adjourn the meeting at 10:07 pm. Motion seconded by Ms. Ober. Motion carried unanimously.