

**SOMERSWORTH PLANNING BOARD
MINUTES OF MEETING
JUNE 20, 2012**

MEMBERS PRESENT: William Sweeney, Chairman, Anthony Delyani, Vice Chairman, David Witham, City Council Representative, Bob Belmore, City Manager, Ron LeHoullier, Dan Proulx, Ernie Gallant, Erwin Grant and Chris Cortez, Alternate.

MEMBERS ABSENT: Paul Robidas.

STAFF PRESENT: Dave Sharples, Director of Planning and Community Development and Tracy Gora, Planning Secretary.

The meeting was called to order at 6:43 p.m.

1) APPROVAL OF MINUTES

Motion: LeHoullier moved to accept the minutes of the site walk of May 16, 2012.

Seconded by Belmore. Motion carried with a 7-0-2 vote with Delyani and Witham abstained.

Motion: LeHoullier moved to accept the minutes of the meeting of May 16, 2012.

Seconded by Belmore. Motion carried with a 7-0-2 vote with Delyani and Witham abstained.

2) COMMITTEE REPORTS

A) ZBA Report

See attached.

B) City Council Report

Witham stated that City Council adopted the FY12/13 budget, which will have about a \$1.10 increase to the tax rate. Stated that the adopted budget was trimmed from the initial proposal and that adding a transportation section to the Master Plan was cut from the budget. Stated that the Council is entertaining the idea of having a bond to address infrastructure needs for the schools and for Market Street/High Street corridor improvements. Stated that the Council has discussed the Pine Street Park, which is located on Ash Street, and whether they are going to keep it a City park or put it up for sale. Stated that the Council decided to keep it with the City and to keep it a park.

C) Site Review Technical Committee Report

There was no meeting held, see attached report.

D) Minor Field Modification Report

None.

E) Strafford Regional Planning Commission Update

None.

F) Vision 2020 Report

Belmore stated that there is a meeting scheduled for this Monday where they will discuss a variety of issues such as goals from the Master Plan that the Committee could help with.

Stated that at the last meeting the Committee reviewed the City Council resolutions that created the Committee.

3) OLD BUSINESS

A) Any old business that may come before the Board.

None.

4) NEW BUSINESS

A) James & Carla St. Gelais and The Tri-City Covenant church are seeking subdivision approval for a lot line adjustment for properties located at 18 Baker Way and 150 West High Street, in the Residential Single Family (R1) District, Assessor's Map 32, Lots 12B & 07, SUB #02-2012.

Sharples reviewed his memo (see attached) and stated that the proposal is not creating any new lots but is just moving one property line. Stated that lot 12B will become larger and lot 07 will be reduced in size. Review the acreage of each lot. Stated that lot 12B is nonconforming because it doesn't meet the frontage requirements but that this proposal doesn't violate zoning. Stated that the proposal didn't go before the SRTC. Stated that he has one suggested condition of approval for an electronic copy of the plan.

Chris Berry, president of Berry Surveying & Engineering represented the application and addressed the Board. Stated that he doesn't have much more to review and that the monumentation for the site has been set. Stated that the existing side property line is close to his client's house and that he wants more privacy.

Public hearing opened 6:51 pm.

Public hearing closed 6:51 pm.

Motion: Proulx moved that the request of James & Carla St. Gelais and The Tri-City Covenant Church for subdivision approval for a lot line adjustment be **APPROVED WITH THE FOLLOWING CONDITION:**

1. An electronic plan of the subdivision, in dxf or dwg format and in NAD 1983 State Plane New Hampshire FIPS 2800 Feet coordinates, shall be submitted to the satisfaction of the City prior to recording the Mylar.

Seconded by Delyani. Motion carried with a 9-0 vote.

B) Any other new business that may come before the Board.

None.

5) WORKSHOP BUSINESS

A) Review and discuss the request from COAST Bus to allow advertising on their bus shelters.

Sharples reviewed his memo (see attached) and stated that at the last meeting the Board wanted him to contact COAST bus regarding this request. Stated that he has tried to contact them but hasn't heard back from them. Stated that he will try to contact them again for the next meeting.

B) Any other workshop business that may come before the Board.

Sharples stated that there has been discussion about rezoning the Recreation (REC) District and passed out a fact sheet (see attached) that outlines the REC District. Stated that there are 12 areas that are zoned REC with 713 total acres, which is about ten percent of the City. Stated that the total City-owned property is 486 acres and the rest is privately-owned. Stated that there are 56 total parcels. Stated that most of the privately-owned parcels are just portions that are zoned REC. Reviewed the zoning map and pointed out the REC zones that are around Willand Pond, the Millennium Park and Sunningdale area, the Malley Farm site, the river walk area, Noble Pines and the Superfund site. Stated that most of the REC zoned properties are City-owned but that there are a couple that are privately-owned. Stated that the bulk of the area is at the Sunningdale property and the Superfund site. Stated that there are 56 total parcels in the REC District and only three are privately-owned and undeveloped. Stated that the district is unique in the sense that passive recreational uses are allowed and that residential uses are allowed if part of an overall development plan, which is not defined in the Zoning Ordinance. Stated that in the past there was an application for a property in the REC District for 66 residential units, which was approved but the conditions of approval were never met. Stated that there are no density or dimensional requirements and that the regulations for the REC District are not very well written. Stated that other communities only have REC Districts on City-owned property. Stated that they can examine rezoning the district, at least for the privately-owned properties.

Witham mentioned that the REC area around Willand Pond just extends 200 feet out from the pond and that given current regulations for wetland and buffer protection, most of that REC area couldn't be developed.

Sharples stated that the majority of it wouldn't be developed if it was rezoned something else. Stated that the City of Dover owns some of that and that there are easements over a lot of it.

Witham stated that much of the area on Blackwater Road is the Superfund site.

Sharples stated that there is a property where the rear of the property is in the REC District.

Witham asked why a district would be drawn through a property.

Sharples stated that he doesn't know what the intent was.

Witham stated that he assumes that there would be uses like a ball field, etc. with a REC district but that the term doesn't lend itself to residential uses.

Sweeney asked if the Board should rewrite the REC District.

Sharples replied yes and encouraged the Board to rezone the private REC areas to something else, like Residential Single Family (R1). Suggested removing the privately-owned properties and then rewriting the ordinance to City-owned properties.

Witham stated that aside from around Willand Pond and off of Blackwater Road, the City owns almost the rest of it.

Proulx stated that he thinks changing the zoning for privately-owned property is the right thing to do and asked what the tax implications of that are.

Sharples stated that it is his understanding that assessments are based on what is there, not what could be there. Stated that he doesn't think that it would affect much, if anything. Stated that he can check with the Office of Assessing.

Proulx stated that he doesn't want to hurt people like the Lion's Club.

Sharples stated that he could talk with them.

Witham stated that he wonders also if it would be the opposite and could make a property more profitable.

Sharples stated that it could work that way if someone was looking at a parcel and needed that extra developable land.

LeHoullier stated that, regarding the Sunningdale property, some of the use was in Somersworth and some was in Rollinsford. Stated that it couldn't really be sold as a golf course.

Sharples stated that it would have to be reconfigured because part of the land is in Rollinsford, which is privately owned. Stated that a variance would be needed since part of the land is zoned R1. Stated that about 75 acres is zoned REC and the rest is R1.

Proulx asked how the portion of land in Rollinsford is zoned.

Sharples stated that he doesn't know.

Proulx stated that he would be worried about affecting the adjacent property.

Sharples stated that he thinks Rollinsford has rural residential zoning.

LeHoullier mentioned that there are condominiums on that property in Rollinsford.

Sharples stated that he can look into the zoning in Rollinsford.

Sweeney stated that the Board should look at adjusting the privately-owned REC parcels and rezoning them R1.

Sharples stated that they could rezoned them R1 or something comparable. Stated that the focus will be on rezoning the privately-owned REC areas and then it isn't a critical rush to do the rest because they are owned by the City.

Sweeney asked Sharples if he can prepare something for the next meeting.

Belmore suggested having a proposed ordinance change for the next meeting.

Sharples replied yes and stated that he will have a map and recommendations.

Witham stated that taking care of the privately-owned REC areas first makes sense but asked what they are going to do with REC zoning after that and that he doesn't know why they should just sit on it.

Sharples clarified and stated that they will just do one thing at a time.

Sweeney asked Sharples to look into the tax implications of changing the zone.

Proulx suggested contacting the owners of those properties.

Sweeney stated that the Board should discuss proposed changes first.

Belmore asked if the Sunningdale parcel would be included.

Sharples replied yes and stated that they could treat it as privately owned.

Belmore stated that, regarding the tax implication issue, he is not sure worrying about how a property is taxed is for the Planning Board to consider. Stated that it is good to think about but it is good for the City to tax property at its full potential.

Witham asked if this aligns with the goals in the Master Plan.

Sharples stated that he doesn't recall off the top of his head.

6) COMMUNICATION AND MISCELLANEOUS

None.

Motion: Belmore moved to adjourn the meeting.

Seconded by Delyani. Motion carried with a 9-0 vote.

Meeting adjourned at 7:30 pm.

Respectfully submitted:



Tracy Gora, Planning Secretary
Somersworth Planning Board