

TOWN OF WESTFORD
DEVELOPMENT REVIEW BOARD MINUTES
Minutes for January 14, 2009 Meeting
Approved on February 11, 2009

Board Members Present: Tony Kitsos (Chair), Ray Belair, Gene Hallman, Jason Hoover, Eric Jacobsen, Don Maddocks and Dick Heaps (7:46 p.m.).

Board Members Absent: N/A

Also Present: Melissa Manka (Planning Coordinator), Geoff Kerr, Ginny Kolbenson, Paul Kolbenson, Ted Pelkey, Michelle Pelkey and Matt Wamsgamz.

The meeting began at approximately 7:17 p.m.

CONTINUED: Site Plan & Conditional Use Review – Westford School District property:

Matt Wamsgamz, project engineer, was present.

Matt began by stating the zoning files reveal that the school made a good faith effort to get the proper approvals for the playgrounds. The school received Selectboard and Administrative Officer approvals for the structures and their location, but it does not appear as though they were informed that Planning Commission approval was also necessary.

The DRB went through the staff report.

Matt said he spoke with the State Wastewater Division who informed him that playgrounds are not permitted on sand filtration systems. The State is aware of the school's problem, but will not issue a violation at this time. However, if the school wastewater permit needs amending in the future the playgrounds will need to be relocated. Matt said extra water is getting into the sand filtration system due to the mulch around the playgrounds but there is no known health issue at this time. Lastly, Matt said he didn't provide alternative playground sites as part of the application since the school received Selectboard and Administrative Officer approval for the playgrounds in 2000.

Matt said the proposal reduces the amount of impervious surface on the site by 1/200th of an acre.

Matt offered to show a silt fence containing the soil stock pile on the plans. However, there are already catch basin protections proposed and, after further consideration, it is unlikely soil will be stock piled on-site.

Jason suggested that the tree located in front of the sign near the school entrance be moved to the south to ensure proper site distances are maintained. Otherwise, he is fine with the landscaping plan.

Matt said the site plans now depict the actual building footprint.

Melissa explained that the school never received approvals for the snack shack and tennis courts. Therefore, the school needs DRB approval as well as zoning permits and certificate of occupancies for these structures. The DRB discussed whether the road accessing the playing fields, the drainage for said access road and the upper playing fields should be depicted on the site plans. Furthermore, the DRB discussed whether a site plan of the entire property should be submitted to the DRB for review.

Matt said he could show the entire property as well as the additional playing fields and access roads but drainage would be impossible to depict at this time due to snow cover. The DRB agreed that the upper fields and all access roads should be depicted on the plans. The hearing was opened to the public. Paul Kolbenson asked when construction would begin and Matt answered July of 2009, if funded. Funding will be voted on in March.

Gene MOVED to close the public hearing.
Ray SECONDED the motion.
The motion PASSED: 6 – 0.
Dick abstained

Sketch Plan Review for a 3-Lot, 2-Unit Subdivision & Planned Unit Development– Ted & Michelle Pelkey property:

Ted and Michelle Pelkey were present.
Ted began by explaining his proposal and the businesses he would like to locate on the site. The DRB went through the staff report.
Dick asked what the intended purpose of the open space was.
Melissa explained that the area currently houses farm animals in the summer months and abuts the Browns River. She added that the back of the lot could be developed but it would impact the Browns River corridor.
Ted said developing behind the existing house would require a significant amount of excavating and would ruin the neighbor's views.
Dick asked whether there are any structures located at the rear of the adjoining properties.
Ted said the land behind each home abutting his property is undeveloped.
Dick asked whether Mathieu's and Kerr's businesses were the only other commercial businesses in the area.
Ted said the Blair's have an automotive business on their property, which is located to the south of his property. He added that the structure he would like to construct on Lot 1 would be twice the size of Kerr's commercial structure.
Dick said he would like to see the rear of the abutting properties in that area converted into a communal open space, if the adjoining lots were subdivided in the future.
Ray suggested the Applicant receive subdivision approval prior to applying for site plan and conditional use approval. Otherwise, the Applicant could spend a lot of money on engineering and permit fees without having received the most important approval which is subdivision approval.
Ted said he wanted to apply for all the permits at once.
Ray said the Applicant could submit the final plat, site plan, and conditional use applications together, but there is a risk in doing so.
The meeting was opened to the public.
Geoff Kerr stated he was behind the project and the proposal was no less appropriate than any other development located within ½ mile of the area. He further stated that commercial development should be located along Rte 128 as opposed to other areas of town.
Paul and Ginny Kolbensen stated their support of the proposal.

Minutes of the December 10, 2008 Meeting.

Ray MOVED to approve the minutes as amended.
Dick SECONDED the motion.
The motion PASSED: 6 – 0.
Don abstained

Deliberations – Paquin Property

Ray MOVED to approve the decision as amended.
Dick SECONDED the motion.
The motion PASSED: 6 – 0.
Don abstained

Discussion: Stowe Highlands Club Criteria

The DRB discussed whether to implement the Stowe Highlands Club Criteria when reviewing amendment applications. Some Board Members thought the DRB should implement the criteria to bring finality to projects and to encourage developers to submit well thought out plans. Other Board Members were concerned that the criteria was too restrictive and did not allow for the flexibility typically found in small towns where the majority of subdivisions are carried out by residents as opposed to professional developers. They asked Melissa to get more information on use of the criteria from the Town Attorney.

Ray MOVED to adjourn. Eric SECONDED the motion.
The motion PASSED: 7 - 0.

The meeting adjourned at approximately 9:46 p.m.

Submitted by,
Melissa Manka, Planning Coordinator