

W. T. PLANNING BOARD MEETING, DECEMBER 10, 2007, 7:30 P.M.

PRESENT: David Douglas, Ginny Jones, Susan Silva, Mark Yale, Erik Hammarlund

ABSENT: Leah Smith

ALSO PRESENT FOR ALL OR PART OF THE MEETING: Todd Stempien, Emma Kennedy, Michelle Brescia, Craig Miner, Patricia Linn, Robert Holt, Dan Larkosh, Trip Barnes, Paul Schultz, Glenn Hearn, Ernest Mendenhall, Michael Colaneri, Simone DeSorcy

MINUTES

Minutes of the 12/03/07 meeting were approved as written.

CORRESPONDENCE

In: Dan Larkosh re. Williams Proposal;
Board of Health re. Barnes Proposal;
Building Inspector, Permit/Violation History of Barnes Property

Public Hearing: Clarence “Trip” Barnes, Special Permit Application, Multi-Family Housing, M16 L68: David read the public hearing notice and opened the hearing for a proposal to create 4 affordable apartments and one main residence within existing buildings on the property. Trip Barnes said that when he purchased the 1.9-acre property last year he found out that he needed to rectify some existing zoning violations. He said a previous tenant had drawn up the plans for the multi-family housing which he had submitted. He said he was not proposing to have a duplex in the main house, as the previous applicant had proposed. He said he is renovating the main house for his own use; the affordable apartments would be in the two other existing buildings on the property. He is using building materials recycled from the Rattner house tear-down. He said that there is an illegal apartment on-site which he inherited and is working to correct. He said he is looking to have local people do some sweat equity on the apartments while saving up to put a down payment on a property of their own. Mark said he is more interested in the physical plan Trip Barnes is proposing. David said he liked the concept, but it needs to conform to the rules. Trip Barnes presented the plans, noting that the driveway location shown is not the one he is currently proposing. The main house would have two bedrooms

David read a letter from the Board of Health discussing septic issues. Trip Barnes said the property has an 8 bedroom septic system. The main concern stated “is that 5 households with 5 kitchens is not the equivalent of an 8 or 9 bedroom house.” Susan wondered whether the project could be built incrementally to see whether the existing septic system is adequate.

Parking was discussed. Mark asked whether 2 to 3 cars per household should be assumed; David said probably 2 for each one-bedroom apartment. Mark said this would mean 10 to 12 cars; he asked how many spaces were being proposed. Trip Barnes said there is a lot of space for parking so this should not be an issue.

Mark said that personally he found the proposal too dense for the size of the lot; 5 households on 1.9 acres is burdensome to the neighborhood. The Town's Homesite bylaw allows a maximum of one unit per acre. This situation is somewhat different in that the structures already exist, but he still finds 5 units on less than 2 acres very burdensome.

Michael Colaneri said that the Affordable Housing Committee supports the general concept as long as Board of Health requirements are met. He said this is a unique opportunity to increase affordable housing stock without increasing the number of buildings on the lot, while legalizing the illegal apartments. David said that the Board cannot address past illegal use; density is the issue.

Mark said that the location is good for affordable housing – within walking distance of the business center, along the bus route, across from walking paths – but the density sets a dangerous precedent for the rest of Town. He said that perhaps a single apartment should be proposed in each of the outbuildings. Michael Colaneri said that Tommy Thomas, original developer of the property, also owned the property across State Road which he sold to the Land Bank.

Trip Barnes said that the tenants will be sharing his lot with him; this project will have more oversight than most affordable properties.

Mark said the tenants would need to meet Affordable Housing Committee requirements. Ernie Mendenhall said that the landlord can choose amongst qualified tenants. He would like to see reasonable use be made of these existing structures.

Ginny said that she liked the proposed use, but was not thrilled about the proposed road to the back of the property. She said she would like to see a resident manager. She said she is concerned about the traffic and number of cars parked. She would be more enthusiastic about a less intense proposal. Also, the property should be cleaned up to be in compliance with zoning. Susan said a site visit was necessary. David agreed, noting that he feels the proposal is too dense. Mark asked if Trip Barnes would be willing to reduce the number of units; Trip Barnes said he would. Susan said that she liked the efficiency apartments. Ernie Mendenhall said that the State assumes two residents per bedroom.

Bob Holt, abutter, said that previously there were 24 vehicles parked on the lot. This remains a concern. There are currently tractor trailer boxes stored there. The property needs maintenance and there are a lot of rats. Affordable housing is needed, but the neighborhood is worried. The existing garage is right next to his property. There are piles of sheet rock everywhere.

Emma Kennedy, abutter, said she is concerned about the proposed road near her property line, as she has children. Her current view is of tractor trailers and piles of trash; it looks

like an employee property. Ginny said the zoning bylaw allows for employee dormitories, and said the applicant could modify his proposal if this is what he wants. Mark said that the Board will make a site visit, and that the Zoning Inspector is working on violations, cleaning up the property. The Town will continue to monitor it. The Planning Board will address roads and screening. The applicant will need a certificate of occupancy from the Zoning Inspector before tenants can move in.

Abutter Craig Miner said that the proposed road is a detriment to his property and disruptive to his children. He asked whether there was a landscaping plan. David said that there wasn't, and that more plans were needed.

Mark made a motion to continue the public hearing until after a site visit is made; all in favor.

OLD BUSINESS

Land Bank/Bennett Driveway Access: Matthew Dix from the Land Bank brought a covenant for the Board's signature which would allow the Land Bank property to also be accessed from the approved shared curb cut off State Road. Mark asked whether the Land Bank was waiving its right to have its own, separate curb cut. Glenn Hearn and Susan both agreed that they are not waiving their rights for their own cut. David said he had no problem with the concept, but wanted Town Counsel to take a look. Mark made a motion to sign the covenant pending Counsel's approval; all in favor.

Peter Williams, Fulton K&E LLC, 90 Dr. Fisher Road, Map 21 Lot 12, LI District: David read a letter from Dan Larkosh, abutter to the Williams property. Dan Larkosh, in attendance, said he feels the property loses its residential use grandfathering now that the owner is proposing commercial uses. He wants to make sure that no one lives in the parked vehicles, and that the site should be used for storage only, not for conducting business. Susan said that if in the future more use of the lot is proposed, the Board could require that it be located away from existing residences. Dan Larkosh said that the priority should be for storage of trucks and equipment, not business activities and composting. He wants to avoid a nuisance in the neighborhood.

The meeting was adjourned at 9:45 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,
Simone DeSorcy, assistant

Approved 01/07/08