

**Meeting of the Planning Board
Thursday, March 16, 2023**

The 19th meeting of the Milton Planning Board for FY2023 was called to order at 7:07 p.m. in the Blute Conference Room of Milton Town Hall.

Present: Planning Board Members Meredith Hall (Chair), Cheryl Tougias (Secretary), Richard Boehler, Sean Fahy (remote) and Maggie Oldfield; Director of Planning and Community Development Tim Czerwienski, Assistant Town Planner Josh Eckert-Lee (remote), Senior Administrative Clerk Julia Getman.

1. Administrative Items: On a motion by Ms. Tougias, seconded by Ms. Oldfield, the 1/31 and 2/9 meeting minutes were approved 5/0/0 as amended. The 2/23 minutes were deferred. An upcoming meeting was confirmed for March 30th.

2. Citizen's Speak: There were no speakers.

3. Public Hearing: 1200 Brush Hill Rd. Scenic Road Permit:

Attorney Edward Corcoran, representing the medical facility owner, requested that the hearing be continued to March 30th to allow time for the redesign of a stone wall. The motion passed 5/0/0 on a motion by Ms. Tougias, seconded by Ms. Oldfield.

4. Staff Update:

Mr. Czerwienski discussed BSC engineering's calculation of the General Land Area Minimum land count to be used as a means for achieving "safe harbor" from further 40B development. He said that 1.5% of developable land needs to be occupied by affordable housing in order to achieve safe harbor, and that the town sits at 1.025%. He said that if all the existing units on the subsidized housing inventory are counted and the nine proposed 40Bs are built, safe harbor may be achieved.

5. Public Hearing: 111 Highland St. Special Permit, Memory Care Facility

Mr. Corcoran, representing Northbridge development, stated that a hearing was underway with the Conservation Commission (Con Comm) to address the notice of intent. An engineering peer review was being conducted by Tetra Tech and a site walk was scheduled for April 1st. He addressed the history of the property, rezoned for memory care in 2022, and discussed existing conditions, wetlands, vernal pools, retaining walls, buffers, open space and utilities, noting that all dimensional requirements had been met. He said that sewer plans would require a reassessment due to the lack of agreeable easement terms with Winter Valley. Revisions to the plan included a wider, straightened driveway with a sidewalk and the addition of a storage shed adjacent to the lower parking lot. He said that attempts to meet with the abutter at 137 Highland St. to discuss buffer options had been unsuccessful.

Site Engineer Paul Avery discussed the site plan, existing conditions, plans for tree removal and the demolition of a barn and a shed. He outlined the boundaries of work and plans for minimizing the disturbance to wetlands. The stormwater management plan, grading, drainage, utilities, emergency vehicle and delivery truck access were discussed.

Landscape Architect Sashie Misner discussed how the natural contours of the site allow the building to be "nestled" into the landscape. She addressed tree species and varieties to be planted for the benefit of mental health and wildlife. Buffer plantings, courtyard design, lighting and footpaths were discussed.

Architect Rebecca Dillon presented plans and elevations of the 70- unit building of one and two stories. She discussed how the building would be separated into three "neighborhoods," with activity and dining rooms, employee workspaces, patios and a courtyard. Site lines, building materials, and the roof design were addressed.

Additional information on site sections, an existing tree plan, protections for stone walls, snow storage, fencing, access road dimensions, cut and fill analysis, lighting plans and design standards were requested.

It was suggested that the barn and shed be repurposed and that additional photographs of the site be provided. The sensitivity of the residential neighborhood and scenic road and the impacts of the immediate abutter at 137 Highland St. were discussed. Saving and planting additional trees and implementing sustainable features for the building were considered.

Public Comment:

Bard Haurizaj of 11 Spafford Rd. asked about the 232 trees and Japanese knot weed to be removed. The clearing area within a 25-foot setback was addressed. Mr. Corcoran stated that a significant amount of money would be allocated to the town tree fund. It was requested that tree replacements benefit the neighborhood as a whole and that “no touch” zones and significant trees get tagged. Northbridge Principal Mike Waleryszak discussed a commitment to saving trees and the enforcement of tree protections.

Traffic Engineer Scott Thornton of Vanasse & Associates discussed the scope of the traffic study, which was conducted in accordance with industry standards. Peak hours, surrounding intersections and traffic patterns of similar facilities were taken into account. He said that facility operations could be adjusted to accommodate traffic and discussed traffic calming measures, speed averages, trip generation calculations and level service. A Site Access and Egress Acknowledgement form would be signed by employees.

Renderings of the facility’s street entrance and sign were discussed and it was agreed that the sign should be downsized. Additional information on the lighting of the sign was requested.

Public Speak:

Mr. Haurizaj stated that the facility will be larger than the Fruit Center complex and is surrounded by wetlands. He discussed the vulnerability of the residential neighborhood and said the traffic analysis presented at the May 2022 town meeting was underestimated, which may have had an impact on the rezoning of the site. He discussed existing problems with groundwater and how the removal of 232 trees would exacerbate problems with flooding. He did not believe the infrastructure of the neighborhood could sustain the project and noted that a petition opposing the project had been signed by 250 residents.

Groundwater levels and stormwater runoff were discussed. It was noted that Tetra Tech engineers will conduct a peer review and that Con Comm had studied and produced data on the area.

Nadine Hanna of 11 Spafford Rd. discussed the impacts the facility will have on the children of the neighborhood. She expressed concerns about commercial traffic, deforestation, wetland displacement, noise, and air quality. She said it sets a precedent and instills a lack of respect for nature.

Fred McFadden of 12 Spafford Rd. asked if articles that were misrepresented at Town Meeting get revisited. Processes for proposing and approving zoning changes were discussed.

Katie Spinello of 21 Spafford Rd. discussed the issues with ground water in the neighborhood and the narrowness of Spafford Rd., which often gets blocked by trucks.

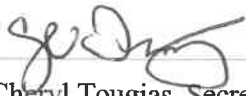
Gene Irwin of 120 Highland St. said that he believed the application should be “struck down immediately.” He said a Swept Path Analysis had been requested years earlier which would determine if the project is feasible. He said there were no snow removal or emergency access plans, discussed the agricultural history of the property and its antiquated drainage system, and believed the knotweed keeps wetland embankments intact. He believed the land, a flood plain with a perennial stream, to be unbuildable and said that the hospital never researched the land before its purchase. He read a statement asking that the application be withdrawn due to a lack of compliance with the Clean Water Act and believed underground oil tanks have polluted the vernal pools and vegetation. He discussed the penalties for negligence and its effects on health and the environment.

Theresa O’Brien of 42 Spafford Rd. requested that trash pickup and deliveries occur at the back of the building, away from the wetlands, and discussed issues with stormwater runoff in the neighborhood.

Manette Donovan of 16 Spafford Rd. said that many people agree with Mr. Haurizaj's comments about traffic and stormwater and the inappropriateness of the site for such a project. She said that Spafford Rd. is taxed enough as it is.

Mr. Corcoran expressed frustration with the delay of the peer review. Topics for discussion at upcoming meetings and allowing time for resident feedback were discussed. Additional site sections, a construction management plan and a tree protection plan drawing were requested. On a motion by Ms. Tougias, seconded by Ms. Oldfield, the hearing was continued to March 23rd for the discussion of the construction management plan and tree preservation plan, 5/0/0.

On a motion by Mr. Boehler, seconded by Ms. Oldfield, the meeting was adjourned at 11:20 p.m.



Cheryl Tougias, Secretary

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