Meeting of the Planning Board
Thursday, October 29, 2020

The sixth meeting of the Milton Planning Board for FY2021 was called to order at 7:03 p.m. via the Zoom virtual meeting software.

Present: Planning Board members April Anderson (Chair), Denise Swenson (Secretary), Cheryl Tougias, Kathleen O’Donnell and Richard Boehler; Town Planner Tim Czerwienski, Assistant Town Planner Allyson Quinn, Sr. Administrative Clerk Julia Getman.

1. Administrative Items: Upcoming meetings were confirmed for November 12th and 18th. On a motion by Ms. Swenson, seconded by Ms. O’Donnell, the September 24th and October 8th meeting minutes were approved by rollcall, 5/0/0. Chair Anderson relayed the terms of the Open Meeting Law under the Governor’s order suspending certain provisions of the Open Meeting Law relating to the novel Coronavirus outbreak emergency. She noted that the meeting was being recorded and televised and provided directions on how to remotely join.

2. Staff Update: Mr. Czerwienski stated that site walks for proposed 40B developments at 16 Amor Rd. and 936 Brush Hill Rd. would take place November 4th but would be closed to the public for public health reasons and that no deliberations would take place. He mentioned that a new tenant had taken over the restaurant space at 88 Wharf and that an amendment to the special permit may be necessary. He said that a site plan technical review for a proposed funeral home at 584 Randolph Ave. was being conducted. He discussed a parcel of land with an expired 30-year deed restriction within the Winter Valley complex which would require site plan approval and a hearing before the Zoning Board of Appeals (ZBA) for the building of additional units on the site.

3. Citizen’s Speak: There were no comments.

4. Old Business: Discussion of 40B Proposals

Ms. Tougias reported that adjustments had been made to the plans for 40B developments at 648 Canton Ave., 582 Blue Hill Ave. and 487 Blue Hills Parkway which should be acknowledged by the Board in its comment letter to ZBA. Mr. Czerwienski mentioned that site eligibility letters were due to Mass Housing by December 9th.

16 Amor Rd.

Attorney Edward Corcoran, Esq. representing members of the neighborhood, discussed plans for 16 housing units within six buildings, accessed by four separate driveways and containing 30 parking spaces on the 1-acre site, which he described as a “disaster of a location.” He discussed the dangerous intersection at Brush Hill Rd., Amor Rd. and Truman Highway, said the wooded lot would be clear-cut with massive buildings pushed to the edge of the property line and that no green space would be provided. There would be no direct access to public transit or amenities. He said the Tampos Family had been unwilling to negotiate with town officials or to communicate with the community.

936 Brush Hill Rd. (BHR)

Laurie MacIntosh, 77 Cushing Rd., speaking on behalf of the Cushing Rd. Neighborhood Association, expressed similar concerns about the 20-unit 40B proposed by the Tamposies at 936
Brush Hill Rd. She discussed the extreme density, said it was out of character with the neighborhood, believed it would create traffic problems, make her street more dangerous, put additional burdens on town services and destroy the wooded atmosphere of BHR. She believed it would “look like a T station” in the middle of residential housing, worried about increased crime and trash in the area and the adverse effect it would have on property values.

Stephane Mourlon of 924 Brush Hill Rd., a direct abutter, believed the development would be an eyesore and “disrespectful to the character of the neighborhood.” He believed that property values would be gravely affected, said that century-old trees would be destroyed, and that traffic would increase significantly. He expressed concerns about a lack of green space, amenities, public transportation and sidewalks, and felt that the look and feel of the neighborhood of single family homes would disappear. He believed the development at 865 BHR, “Woodmere,” had been respectful, preserving the look and feel of the neighborhood.

Attorney Robert Galvin, representing 26 neighboring households, urged the Planning Board to be detailed in their response letter to MassHousing. He said the site, which would be clear-cut for 20 units in two buildings and 35 parking spaces, was unsustainable and said that the proposed 10-foot retaining wall would run up a 23° slope, requiring extensive grading. He said the absolute maximum density was being proposed, and that there would be no open space or common areas. He noted that it is a distinctive, historic neighborhood on a scenic road and that the plan does not follow the principals of the Master Plan.

Dwayne Daye of 53 Cushing Rd. discussed significant pedestrian traffic from a nearby housing project and concerns about the lack of sidewalks and safety issues. He mentioned past experiences with “unsavory” activity in the area, and said that strides had been made by the Town to improve lighting. He believed there would be too many residents for such a small area, with no green space and no nearby amenities, and mentioned the historic significance of many of the homes in the area.

Larry Voke, 945 Brush Hill Rd., said he was “very distressed” and discussed how disruptive the lighting from an existing 40B facility on Wolcott Rd. was. He believed property values would suffer a sharp decline with the addition of another 40B.

Christina Costello, 64 Cushing Rd., said that developers often negotiate unit counts but stressed that the neighborhood was “100% against this project.” She said she supported affordable housing but that the site was inappropriate and that she would help in the search for a suitable site.

The Board discussed the permitting process for obtaining a curb cut onto Truman Hwy, a state road. It was mentioned that the Tamposies currently have four 40B developments proposed for Milton, all of extremely high density. They agreed the Amor Rd. application ignored topography, MassHousing design standards, sensitivity to surrounding areas, massing issues, traffic problems, access to amenities and public transportation, green space, and the sustainability of ecosystems. Mr. Czerwieniski discussed ways in which to obtain “safe harbor” from the threat of 40B developments and the need to achieve the 10% affordable housing quota. Ms. Tougas said she preferred that new affordable housing units be less concentrated and that the siting of 40Bs needed to be more appropriate. Ms. Anderson encouraged the public to submit comments to Mr. Czerwieniski and Ms. O’Donnell offered to draft the comment letters.
The Board discussed equivalent concerns about 936 Brush Hill Rd., including its incompatibility with the neighborhood, the loss of significant trees, excessive impervious surfaces, a lack of open space, and topographical issues.

6. New Business: Planning Department Budget Discussion
Mr. Czerwienski stated that the FY2022 budget allocation would match that of FY2021 and that no additional funds were being requested. He mentioned encumbered funds for East Milton Planning Consultant Judi Barrett and an ongoing town-wide traffic study, and discussed funding for the Metropolitan Area Planning Commission’s study of bicycle and pedestrian planning. Ms. Tougias suggested that funding be provided for implementation of design guidelines within the Milton Village overlay. Mr. Czerwienski mentioned the need to update the Town’s open space plan, which may help to provide funding for acquiring and maintaining open space. Use of Town-owned land was discussed.

7. Old Business: Discussion of Zoning Bylaws

Condominium Conversion Bylaw:
The Board discussed adjustments to the existing bylaw to allow for less restrictive acreage requirements in an effort to protect historic dwellings, provide affordable units, and preserve the environment. The bylaw would allow for homes of 3,000 SF, built prior to 1930, to be converted into 3-story condominium units with an option for additional units of 2,000 SF on lots of 10,000 SF or more, with adequate open space. Façade and building materials would be required to be compatible with existing buildings, which would be front-facing for street view protection. Ms. Tougias discussed different build-out scenarios using 3-D graphics and mathematical calculations to determine allowable unit volumes relative to lot sizes. She discussed existing conditions and possible scenarios for condo development at 582 Blue Hill Ave. and 648 Canton Ave. as an alternative to the proposed 40B developments.

8 Parkwood Drive Landscaping Discussion
Mr. Czerwienski reported that the developer who had removed the trees and Carol Stocker of the Hillside Neighborhood Association agreed that the $12,000 bond for replanting was to run from May of 2018 to May of 2021. Payment of the water bill for the irrigation system, which was supposed to be separately metered from the house, was discussed. The replanting plan, which was being carried out by Thayer Nursery, was discussed. On a motion by Ms. Swenson, seconded by Ms. O’Donnell, the Board voted by rollover to support the landscaping plan, 5/0/0.

8. On a motion by Ms. Swenson, seconded by Ms. O’Donnell the meeting was adjourned by rollover at 10:10 p.m.

Denise Swenson, Secretary

10.29.20