



CITY OF GLOUCESTER

PLANNING BOARD

MEETING MINUTES

November 15, 2012

7:00 P.M.

Kyrouz Auditorium, City Hall, 9 Dale Avenue, Gloucester
Richard Noonan, Chair

Members Present: Rick Noon, Marvin Kushner, Linda Charpentier, Henry McCarl, Karen Gallagher, Mary Black – vice chair- **Absent**, Joe Orlando- **Absent**

Staff: Gregg Cademartori, Acting Community Development Director, Pauline Doody, Recording Clerk

Rick Noonan opened the planning board meeting at 7:05 pm

I. BUSINESS

- A. Call to Order with a Quorum of the Planning Board
- B. Introduction of Planning Board Members and Staff
- C. Review of Planning Board Minutes of November 1, 2012

II. PUBLIC COMMENT **None**

III. SITE PLAN REVIEW and MAJOR PROJECT SPECIAL PERMIT REVIEW

In accordance with Sections 5.7.5, 5.8 and 5.26 of the Gloucester Zoning Ordinance, the Planning Board to review the City Council Special Permit under the provisions of Major Project and Site Plan Review submitted by Beauport Gloucester, LLC for a hotel development at 47-61 Commercial Street (Assessors Map 1, Lot 33).

Mr. Cademartori informed the board that a report was received yesterday from Beta Group, GZA Vine has been hired by the city as the third party review consultant.

Presenter: Bill McGrath, Beta Group

Mr. McGrath stated several issues have been looked at for the hotel development at 47-61 Commercial St: traffic, storm water, civil site design and coastal issues.

Issue one: Traffic Impact & Access Study

The traffic issue has been broken down into three categories: the site, Commercial St. corridor and the West End intersection.

Comment 1: More information is needed on calibrating the traffic model with real world data. Looking at the traffic gaps where it meets the intersection. More field work is needed to look at actual conditions.

Commercial Street corridor. Concerns with the number of trucks parking on the side of the road and how that may impact traffic with the hotel. It was not addressed thoroughly in the report and some mitigation may be appropriate along the corridor. It will be beneficial to have a traffic management plan that will look at how traffic is handled during construction. This is a critical piece of information.

The West End intersection: The analysis showed that the hotel will have some impact on the intersection. It is difficult to quantify because the operation at the intersection is poor now. There is a mitigation plan in the report that proposes some minor improvements; however,

there are concerns that it will still not address the issue down there. This area needs to be addressed more in depth.

Issue two: Actual Parking Supply. The site has 147 parking spaces, 45 of those are on the surface lot, and 102 spaces are under the hotel. A concern is that the 147 spaces may not be enough for the operation for the hotel, function rooms, and restaurant. The report suggests that the applicant look at other similar sites to see how parking is handled.

Mr. Cademartori asked about the potential need for gap analysis and if that is something that typically has already been collected or is a new collection of raw data that is needed.

Mr. McGrath stated it is data that has to be collected. It is not always something that is typically done, but because of the complex nature of the intersection, it will be data that will be beneficial.

Civil Site Design Review: Site layout and material plan:

A demolition plan would be beneficial to address the building. It is critical to make sure there is no impact to the beach, Fort Square and the business's. A critical part of site layout is the parking layout and the circulation of parking. Emergency access is a main concern so fire and other emergency vehicles can get through. Also the canopy should be looked at closer to make sure ambulances can get under it.

Parking layout: There are concerns on the surface lot. There is one way circulation and the spaces are at 90 degrees. Angle parking may be better. The garage is set up the same way. 90 degrees parking is difficult to access. A dead end aisle is proposed and is very awkward to park and back up. A reconfiguration is recommended for better circulation. Another concern of the surface parking is control of the area so it won't be used for public parking.

ADA & Accessibility: More detail is needed on the walkway toward the beach; proper slopes and handrails.

Location of transformer and emergency generator area: The concern is whether the access being shown is adequate for routine maintenance, replacement, etc. NGrid is strict about access to its transformer. Coordination with NGrid is suggested to be done now because any reconfiguration may affect some of the building layout.

Construction Phasing Plan: A temporary bypass road through the site is proposed to free up Commercial St for the infrastructure work. It is proposed as gravel and the recommendation is that it be paved. The geometry of it needs a closer look especially it comes onto Fort Square where the trucks make the turnoff from the bypass road onto Fort Square. Also recommended is investigating any potential issues regarding easements, insurance etc, since it is a private site and will be used by the public.

Lighting: The level of lighting in the parking lot may be too low.

Storm water and Coastal: The Notice of Intent application which contains the storm water design is being reviewed that has been submitted to the Conservation Commission. GZA Vine Associates will be looking at coastal issues. One of the benefits from storm water is that the site will be slightly less impervious than it is now. Another feature is the infiltration system which will take run off from the roof and infiltrate it back into the ground. The concern with the infiltration system is the proximity of it to the proposed seawall. More information is needed to realize any impacts to the stability of wall with the water infiltrating behind it.

Operations and maintenance: The plan needs more clarification.

Coastal Issues: Flood elevations that FEMA uses are being updated and the applicant should get in touch with FEMA for the most current information. There is general information in the proposal on the seawall. More detailed information on the design/construction of it is needed and how it will connect in to the seawall on the other side. More information on the effectiveness of it is also needed.

Demolition of the building: the proposal is to construct a sheet pile wall. There are concerns with leaving sheet pile wall in after the demolition of the building is done. Consideration should be made to pull seawall completely out once the construction is done. It may inhibit

ground water flow through that sand.

IV. PREAPPLICATION REVIEW

Pre-Application Open Space Residential Development, 160 Essex Avenue (Assessors Map 218 Lot 38) Upper Banjo Pond.

Presenter: Attorney Phillip Lake

Attorney Lake stated this is an informal meeting to receive feedback from the Planning Board for the project at 160 Essex Avenue. There is a small section of frontage of approximately 20 feet on Essex Ave; there is 30 feet of easements rights to Essex where the dam is serviced from. The dam needs to be repaired and is the driver for this project. The main parcel is 28.2 acres. Upper Banjo Pond occupies the northern portion of the property with water levels controlled by the dam and dike on the pond's northeast corner. Upland environment comprise most of the remainder of the parcel. An isolated wetland is located on the south-central portion of the property and a second isolated wetland is located on the southwest corner of the property. The houses will be located on the Banjo Pond side and will be seweraged project. The owner would like to create a residential development based on the City's OSRD regulation. The conceptual plan complies with the open space and dimensional requirements. This layout emphasizes the protection and access for open space. The two isolated wetlands are completely contained within the open space. The development consists of 15 residential building lots and requires construction of an 1150 foot long road which will require a waiver from the board.

Mr. Cademartori suggested having the Fire Chief out to the site. His concerns are for the utilities; adequate fire flow hydrant location, and the road design for slope and access. A concern was the cul de sac area. The plan does not show what the driveway connections would be. The homes are 80 feet from the edge of the cul de sac. There will be long driveways and will be using most of the radius of the cul de sac for the access points. More thought might be needed as how the homes are arranged. The sides of the houses are seen from the street. Some things to look at would be the layout of the homes and the future of attractive marketable lots of the neighborhood. Mr. Cademartori asked if vernal ponds have been confirmed on the site.

Attorney Lake stated they had not been confirmed. If the vernal ponds are confirmed or not, they will not affect the setbacks. They will be the same. In looking at traditional layout, people would have longer driveway.

Mr. McCarl asked if there would be shared driveways.

Attorney Lake stated each lot will have a separate driveway. Shared drives are one way to help with the visual impact and cost. The road, the dam, and a large part of Banjo Pond would be part of a community area as a common area. The open space area would be separate. There is a common access lane and parking for the public for access to trails and Ravenswood. Under the OSRD there are 15 lots opposed to the traditional layout which would have 18 lots. There are fewer units but greater density. The homes are modest in size; 20feetx30 feet. They are consistent with the neighborhood.

Mr. Cademartori suggested parking along the path along the pond from Essex Ave.

Mr. Noonan asked for more detail for OSRD regarding open space.

Karen Fung, Leynard Engineering

Ms Fung stated that the numbers for open space areas are according the open space regulations. The parcel is 28.2 acres, with half being set aside for open space. With open space plan, it shows that it works with the topography. In a traditional plan, there would be a lot of cut and fill.

V. Other Business

1. Planner's Report

Mr. Cademartori informed the Board that there would be “blade signing” ceremony celebrating the public-private partnership wind turbine project located at Gloucester Engineering on Friday the 16th and all are invited.

2. CPA update

Ms. Gallagher stated that Budget & Finance will be hearing Newell Stadium and that City Council will receive the remainder of the proposal on November 27th.

VII. NEXT MEETING

Next regular meeting of the Planning Board December 6, 2012

Planning Board Members: If you are unable to attend the next meeting please contact the Planning Office at (978)281-9781.