

PLANNING BOARD MINUTES
MEETING OF February 21, 2007

A regular meeting of the Lexington Planning Board held in Estabrook Hall in Cary Hall, was called to order at 7:30 p.m. by Vice Chairman Hornig with members Galaitsis, Canale, Zurlo and planning staff McCall-Taylor, Henry and Kaufman present. Planning Board Chairman Manz arrived at 7:45 p.m.

***** MINUTES *****

Review of Minutes: On a motion duly made and seconded, it was voted to approve the minutes for meeting of January 31, 2007. On a motion duly made and seconded, it was voted to approve the minutes of January 24, 2007 as amended. The Board deferred discussion of the minutes of January 17, 2007.

***** PLANNING BOARD ORGANIZATION, SCHEDULE *****

An additional meeting was set for March 21, 2007, to accommodate the public hearing on the Lexington Hills Subdivision.

***** ADMINISTRATION OF LAND DEVELOPMENT REGULATIONS *****
SUBDIVISION OF LAND

960-900 Waltham Street, Revised Sketch Plan for Cluster Subdivision, Presentation by the Applicant: In attendance to present a revised sketch plan for a cluster subdivision on approximately 4 acres off Waltham Street were Attorney Richard LeClair, and landscape architect Roger Kallstrom. Mr. Kallstrom began by stating that the development team was hoping for approval of the proposed sketch plan so that they could begin the process of preparing a preliminary plan. Since they were last before the Board in January, the plan had been revised to reflect the Board's suggestions, including reducing the number of curb cuts, the length of driveway, and the number of units to 13, which allows more landscaping. The impervious surface ratio (ISR) has been lowered to 16%. A mix of units is shown, with all having less than 2500 square feet of living area. The affordable units will be the ones closest to Waltham Street. While Ricci Lane is as previously shown, the access to path is still being discussed.

Board Comments: Mr. Zurlo felt that the landscaping in the front of the lot was good, but wondered why unit 5 was turned in such a way that it blocked more of the view. Units 12 and 13 seemed a bit squeezed, and did not appear to have an opportunity to access open space. He asked if the sidewalk shown currently exists.

Ms. Manz liked the design better but was concerned as to how the open space requirement of 5000 square feet per unit could be met. In response to her question, Mr. Kallstrom said Ricci Path would not be an impervious surface.

Mr. Hornig also felt that it was a better plan, but had concerns about the amount of grading that might be required for the hillside units and how the useable space requirement would be met.

Mr. Canale suggested a site walk to help understand the grading and useable open space issues. He felt that, perhaps units could be built into hillside. He expected the applicants to work with the Conservation Commission regarding the open space in back and wetlands lines. Mr. Canale gave a brief summary of issues for the Waltham corridor. He said that on-street parking had been discussed at the Traffic Mitigation Group (TMG) and he felt it was a good idea. A pedestrian-activated crosswalk had been proposed in Waltham and funded by the legislature, but Waltham does not want it. These are monies that can probably be transferred to put the crosswalk in Lexington, but legislative and administrative approval would be required. TMG wants sidewalks on both sides of street. Ms. McCall-Taylor stated that Lexington Police Department expressed opposition to parking on this very busy street. She said that the Engineering Department is hoping to do a study of Waltham Street from Concord Avenue to Trapelo Road and that might resolve some of these issues.

Mr. Galatsis stated that in his mind, the development had passed many of his approval gates, such as attached units and open space good, but the comparable impact factor was still too high ($6\frac{1}{2}$ as compared to 4) because it includes the square footage of the wetlands in the formula. He felt the developer should either provide smaller units or eliminate units.

Mr. Canale asked about the affordable units. He wanted to ensure that the two two-bedroom units as proposed would match what would be required under the proposed inclusionary zoning by-law that will be before Town Meeting. Mr. LeClair wanted to know as soon as possible what number of units the Board members would approve, so the applicants can determine if a conventional subdivision would be more viable. The members were not comfortable with agreeing to a particular number of units, as they need to see how the usable open space is provided. The applicant will revise plans to show slopes, discuss calculations with Mr. Henry regarding inclusionary requirements, and then arrange a site visit.

PUBLIC HEARING

177 Grove Street Definitive Cluster Development Plan, Presentation by the Applicant: In attendance to present a revised definitive cluster development plan for a 3.09-acre parcel of land off Grove Street, were Attorney Donald Borenstein, Mr. James Emmanuel, landscape architect, and Mr. Doug Lees, design engineer. The revised plan was based on comments received at the Planning Board meeting of December 13, 2006. Mr. Doug Lees stated that there would be a shared driveway off Dewey Road used by two houses that will be 18' wide including the pavers along the edge. The existing driveway off Grove Street will be repaved and used for access by the third house. There will be rain gardens and curbing on the downhill side of driveway which will help handle runoff and minimize impacts. There is a storm drain where the water will be directed at the bottom of Dewey Road. A Notice of Intent is to be sent to the Conservation Commission for permission to tie into the existing storm sewer. The 1½" water line will be better than the 1" minimum required. A wetland enhancement area will be created within the buffer zone and will need Conservation Commission approval. This will provide extra storage for water runoff.

Mr. Emmanuel, landscape architect, discussed the grading to be done and additional plantings to be utilized to define property and pedestrian access. Trees will be preserved wherever possible. There will be additional plantings along the pedestrian path and a hub will be created. The native trees and plantings in the rain gardens will provide extra water storage.

Mr. Borenstein spoke about how the usable open space in the cluster plan provides a visual buffer for the neighbors, and that the houses will not impact the streetscape, but relate to each other.

Board Comments: Mr. Galaitis wanted to know what the houses will look like, would they stay within the 2½-story limit and would they have dormers? Mr. Borenstein said the houses will be custom designed, that they would stay within the 2½ story limit, and would stay within the footprint shown. Mr. Lees showed a cross section for height and asserted that the buildings did not tower over the neighborhood. Ms. McCall-Taylor said the Board would probably request that the footprints not exceed the building envelope as shown, that the orientation be maintained (no rotation), and that windows be used only on three levels, so if there were a walkout cellar there would be no dormers. Mr. Borenstein was comfortable with these suggestions, however small casement windows at the basement level might be used for ventilation.

Mr. Canale expressed concern regarding the different designs in the photos Mr. Lees presented, as well as how the natural and finished grades were considered. Mr. Borenstein said the developer would have

approval over design and some latitude would have to be given. Mr. Lee said the grading was taken into account when the plans were done, but does not have the calculations with him. Mr. Canale said the Homeowners Association Agreements that should include restrictions to maintain the rain gardens, the common open space, the driveways, and the stormwater systems. Questions were raised about the trees marked as possibly being removed and whether there would be replacements if they were removed. Mr. Emmanuel said he would make every effort to keep trees unless they conflict with construction, but they want to reserve the right to remove trees as they see fit without having to return for permission. They will try to replace trees where viable.

Mr. Hornig found the sewer line as depicted confusing. Mr. Lees said it is existing except where it will attach to the new home. Drainage area 1A is treated as one even though a culvert runs through the middle. The 12" culvert under the driveway would be able to handle a large storm and should be maintained as is so there is no negative impact. Mr. Hornig had a letter from the fire chief suggesting sprinklers due to length of driveway. Mr. Lees suggested the 1½" water line could handle such a system. In response to questions about number of stories and height, Mr. Borenstein said that 27' feet above the finished first floor to peak would be acceptable and that there would be finished living area on the top floor.

Legal covenants for all three lots need to be drafted to include access and utilities easements, as well as access to the pedestrian and driveway easements. Covenants for the homeowners should cover maintenance of dry wells, rain gardens, downspouts, gutters and catch basins. A landscaping covenant should require consistency with the landscape plans, maintenance of plantings, set out the limit of work line, areas where clearing is prohibited and a provision that would permit town to enforce the covenant, at the landowner's expense, if not complied with.

Mr. Zurlo expressed concern about the visual impact of development. He wondered if the covenant used in the Luongo subdivision had relevant restrictions that might work here. Mr. Borenstein said it is hard to enforce architectural standards but that bulk and dimensional standards could be worked out. Mr. Zurlo said he hoped for limits on the size of dormers, as the houses are so large for the neighborhood. If the height is restricted, he was concerned that it would result in long dormers that would give the appearance of a three stories. He suggested limiting dormers to no more than 25 percent of the linear measurement of any elevation.

When asked, Mr. Emmanuel said the rain gardens were within the catchment area of the driveway and didn't need to directly abut the drive to be effective. Mr. Galaitis wanted to know if the wetland

enhancement was outside limit of work and would require an adjustment to the limit of work. He was told it would.

Audience Comments: There were a number of abutters in the audience and the main concerns were downslope drainage, water table levels, size and height of the new homes, and the location and protection of the wetlands. It was asserted that the water table levels would be higher than the cellar foundation of the new houses.

Ms. Manz explained to the abutters that the cluster is a better alternative than the conventional plan, which would have paved roads with more impervious surface, and could possibly create a more negative impact on the surrounding area. Mr. Lees addressed the issue of large storms and said the capacity was based on the 100-year storm, which would be 6½ inches in 24 hours. The rain gardens and wetlands enhancement do not have standing water as it is stored underground. A resident asked what had happened to the trench drain/infiltrator to the south of the property that had appeared on previous plans. Mr. Lees said that had just been a different design. Mr. Galaitis wanted to know if the current design will catch more water and will it handle water better than the system proposed for the conventional subdivision. Mr. Lees said yes. Mr. Galaitis wanted to have engineering confirm that water is handled better this way. Ms. McCall-Taylor said engineering was comfortable with the current design. The hearing was closed at 10:50.

Mr. Canale said Turning Mill is an important area listed in the Lexington Reconnaissance Report. He urged the residents to look into neighborhood conservation districts.

The Board agreed to discuss conditions of the decision at the meeting of March 7. After discussion with the applicant, the Board, on a motion duly made and seconded, voted, 5-0, to request a 30-day extension of the time in which to file the decision on the definitive conventional subdivision.

***** STAFF/BOARD REPORTS *****

Ms. Manz advised the Board that the public hearings on the warrant articles would be televised.

On a motion duly made and seconded, it was voted to adjourn the meeting at 11:00 p.m.

Gregory Zurlo, Clerk