

PLANNING BOARD

DATE: October 25, 2012
TIME: 7:00 P.M.
PLACE: Large Meeting Room
FOR: Regular Meeting
PRESENT: Jonathan Hankin, Chairman; Ethan Culleton; Brandee Nelson
Malcolm Fick, Associate Member
Chris Rembold, Town Planner

Mr. Hankin called the meeting to order at 7:00 P.M.

FORM A'S:

Mark Reynolds from Kelly, Granger, Parsons and Associates was present with a Form A application on behalf of James Santos at 504 Stockbridge Road. Lot 1 contains 2.014 acres of land. The remaining land of Santos is 2.6 acres. There are no zoning issues.

Ms. Nelson made a motion to endorse the Form A, Mr. Culleton seconded, all in favor.

Mr. Reynolds presented a Form A on behalf of Beth B. Sackler Trust at 55 Hurlburt Road. Lot 1 contains 17.432 acres of land. Lot 2 contains 2.170 acres of land.

Ms. Nelson made a motion to endorse the Form A, Mr. Culleton seconded, all in favor.

MINUTES:

Ms. Nelson made a motion to approve the minutes of September 26, 2013 as amended, Mr. Culleton seconded, all in favor.

Ms. Nelson made a motion to approve the minutes of October 10, 2013 as amended, Mr. Culleton seconded, all in favor.

SPECIAL PERMIT: #822-13

Brian Hazelton was present to discuss the special permit application submitted on behalf of Robert and Mary Ann Norris for an addition at 22 Prospect Street. The addition will encroach into the 20-foot side yard setback. Mr. Hazelton said the applicant proposes to build the addition in this area so as not to disturb a drainage area in the rear of the house. There are no issues with the neighbors.

Mr. Hankin said the Board needs to make a recommendation to the Zoning Board of Appeals. It is only necessary to determine if the proposal is detrimental to the neighborhood.

Ms. Nelson asked if there is any screening proposed.

Mr. Hazelton said there is a hedgerow that will remain.

Mr. Culleton made a motion to send a positive recommendation on the special permit application, Ms. Nelson seconded, all in favor.

SITE PLAN REVIEW: #38-13

Attorney Edward McCormick was present to discuss a site plan review application for Eagleton School to add an 8 x 18.5 foot room to an existing classroom. There is a special permit for the campus but this addition only requires site plan review. Mr. McCormick said he is not disturbing anything that is there. An existing deck will serve as the foundation for the addition.

Ms. Nelson said they are taking an existing impervious structure and replacing it with a different impervious structure. She read through the site plan review criteria.

Ms. Nelson made a motion to approve the site plan review application, Mr. Culleton seconded, all in favor.

MONUMENT MOUNTAIN HIGH SCHOOL RENOVATION:

Richard Dohoney was present on behalf of the Berkshire Hills Regional School Committee to get the Planning Board's endorsement on the school renovation for which there will be a vote on November 5.

Mr. Dohoney said there is a funding mechanism that is currently driving the project. He presented a power point presentation explaining the plan and how the plan qualifies for state reimbursement of 48.52% or \$25 million. He presented data that indicated over the next ten years the school will require approximately \$40 million in repairs and required upgrades, including replacement of single glazed windows, replacing the HVAC system, security upgrades, ADA accessibility, new roof and sprinklers. The maximum reimbursement from the Commonwealth, if any, would be 25%, leaving at a minimum \$30 million for the district to fund. The proposed plan includes all these upgrades plus the addition of science classrooms, a new greenhouse, and reconfiguring a number of spaces to reflect better present education methodologies, moving the library to a more central location, and administration to a new principal entrance to enhance security. This scheme is estimated to cost \$56 million minus the Commonwealth's assured reimbursement of \$30 million, leaving a net of \$31 million for what would be essentially a new school. The build-out would be done incrementally to have a minimum impact on school operations and would require no rental of mobile classrooms.

At the conclusion of the presentation Mr. Fick said the people are being asked to approve more money to rebuild the school. Then we will be asked for more money to pay the teachers. Every year Peter Dillon makes a good argument for more money but the people are going to be over saturated. He asked if teachers and classrooms will have to be cut in order to afford the renovation.

Mr. Dohoney said he did not think there would be have to be cuts. He said the people in this community have a big commitment to education.

Mr. Fick said he comes from New Jersey where the school budget was voted down 22 years in a row. He said he does not like the way this proposal is being presented, that we will have to pay for it anyway.

Mr. Dohoney said no, we think this is the best option. If it is not done the town will be in a political mess for the next 10 years.

Mr. Rembold said we will be on the hook one way or the other.

Mr. Rembold asked if the % would change for what each town pays. Great Barrington is currently paying 68% of the school budget.

Mr. Dohoney said the local contribution works against Great Barrington. We have to pay the minimum amount based on percentage. The amount of the assessment is determined annually based on the number of kids which fluctuates.

Mr. Hankin said it is crazy that the percentage is based on the number of kids from each town. Since the school system is a communal asset of each of the three towns, there should be a more equitable way to determine what each town pays.

Mr. Dohoney said the Town would have to petition the legislature and receive an exemption from the legislature on the formula.

Mr. Hankin said a regional school should be jointly owned by the three towns. The amount each town pays should be determined by the assessed value of the real estate tax base. It would be fairer to determine the assessment based on the tax evaluation.

Mr. Dohoney said the towns are obligated to educate the kids. There is no downside to the project except the cost which will have to be paid anyway. This project would give us more for our money.

Mr. Hankin said the other towns have far less of a financial obligation if it passes.

Mr. Dohoney said if there is a change in the formula it would be reflected in this project.

Mr. Hankin asked how we make it more equitable. People won't be able to live in Great Barrington with these tax increases.

Mr. Dohoney said there is an agreement among the school committee from the other towns to make the burden more equitable.

Mr. Rembold said the Master Plan recommends a more comprehensive concept.

Ms. Nelson said it is worth it to support the project.

Mr. Fick said we need to figure out how to invest in our teachers and reduce class sizes. Ultimately we have to support our schools. Our feet are to the fire with this proposal.

A member of the audience said we will end up paying close to \$40 million no matter what. It would be better to spread it out over 15 years than 4 years.

Mr. Dohoney said we are maximizing the reimbursement rate. The school will be fully ADA compliant with more room to educate.

Mr. Hankin elevated Mr. Fick to a voting member.

Ms. Nelson made a motion to endorse the proposed plan, Mr. Culleton seconded, all in favor.

TOWN PLANNER'S REPORT:

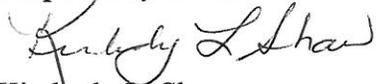
Mr. Rembold said he is putting the Master Plan on desk top publishing.

Mr. Rembold said he will suggest some zoning amendments for the Annual Town Meeting.

Mr. Rembold said an application for a Community Block Grant will be submitted with Sheffield. He told the Board there will be a 5th Thursday dinner at BRPC on the 31st.

Without objection Mr. Hankin adjourned the meeting at 9:16 P.M.

Respectfully submitted,



Kimberly L. Shaw
Planning Board Secretary

Reference Material:

- Town Planner's memo/e-mail to Planning Board dated October 22, 2013
- Form A plans (2)
- Draft minutes of September 26, 2013 & October 10, 2013
- Special Permit application for 22 Prospect Street
- Site Plan Review application for 442 Monterey Road
- Power Point slideshow presentation about MMRHS renovation