

FARMINGTON PLANNING BOARD
153 Farmington Falls Road
May 8, 2017 – 6:00 P.M.
Minutes

Planning Board members present were Clayton King, Tom Eastler, Bill Marceau, Lloyd Smith, Craig Jordan, Gloria McGraw, and alternate member Jeff Wright. Donna Tracy and Mike Otley were unable to attend.

Others present were Town Manager, Richard Davis; Selectman Joshua Bell; Code Enforcement Officer J. Stevens Kaiser (CEO); Planning Assistant, Cindy Gelinis; applicants, represented by engineer Elliot Thayer, owners David and Lon Walters, architect Peter Bethanis, executive administrator Irv Faunce, geo-engineer Bill Peterlein; and abutters Erika Schumacher, Isaac Hogate, Amanda Bolduc, Levi Daku, Sam Webber, and Robert & Cynthia Carter; and Ann Bryant of the Lewiston Sun Journal, among others.

1. Designate alternate members, if needed.

Mr. King designated Mr. Wright as a voting member.

2. Review minutes of April 10, 2017

Dr. Eastler made a motion to approve the minutes of April 10, 2017 as submitted.

Mr. Smith seconded the motion.

VOTE: 4 – Affirmative 5 – Absent
Motion carried.

3. Woodlands Senior Living of Farmington LLC - Phase 2
17-SR-02 and 17-SS-02
175 Knowlton Corner Road
R4/22

Mr. King said the Planning Board members will ask questions first and then the audience will be allowed one question each so everyone gets a chance to speak. He said if the meeting lasts until 8:00 p.m., the members can make a motion to continue in 15 - 30 minute intervals. He asked who will be representing the project.

Mr. Lon Walters said he is one of the owners of Woodlands Senior Living which is based in Waterville. He stated we are back again for the Phase 2 non-memory care facility, which consists of 48 residential care units with 44 of these being subsidized for MaineCare eligible people. Mr. L. Walter said the other half of the building will be 18 assisted living apartments, two of which will be two bedroom, that will have full service packages with 24-hour staff, medication administration, three meals a day restaurant style, and a nurse on duty during the day. He said this facility will have 24-hour staffing with approximately 30 full-time positions - 8-10 people on the first shift, 5-6 people on the second shift, and 2-3 people night shift.

Mr. L. Walters introduced Irving Faunce as the Executive Director for the facility. He said each side of this new facility [independent and assisted] will be licensed separately by the Department of Health and Human Services. Mr. L. Walter said the project will cost approximately \$7 million.

Peter Bethanis said he is the architect for the project and he would be presenting the interior layout of the building. He said the project is a 32,447 square foot addition to the Alzheimer's facility currently under construction. Mr. Bethanis said the 46 residential care units have their own toilets and two of the units are two-bedrooms, which the State requires to be a minimum of 160 square feet, and these are 238 square feet which can be converted to handicapped. He said this side of the building has a large living room, dining room, and activity areas. Mr. Bethanis said the assisted living apartment side has its own living room, reading room, dining room, and coffee room, and both sides have their own separate entrance. He said the walls of the entire building are covered with 5/8" sheet rock with two two-hour fire walls to separate each building, and both are sprinkled with four smoke compartments, where only two are required, composed of a fire wall all the way to the roof and doors that close automatically. Mr. Bethanis said the walls are insulated to an energy efficient rating of R25 and the ceilings are rated R57. He said there is a one-hour ceiling over the entire facility, and another ceiling below with all of the duct work in the space between these ceilings. Mr. Bethanis said the apartments have covered decks for views.

Mr. Wright asked where the propane tanks are located.

Mr. Bethanis said they are underground.

Mrs. McGraw asked about the noise from the facility especially when the windows are open.

Mr. Bethanis said the insulation should keep it very quiet, and the windows can't be opened in the Alzheimer's building.

Mr. Thayer stated he is the civil engineer for both projects. Referencing site maps, he said the property is a total of approximately 34 acres, and both projects, including parking, cover about nine acres of land area. Mr. Thayer said there are two existing driveway entrances that will access both facilities – one off of Knowlton Corner Road for patients and visitors and the other entrance is off of Webster Road for deliveries and staff, and Wilson Stream runs along the southerly side of the property. He said Phase 2 will be of a similar design with the same floor elevation, which is about 20 feet lower than the Knowlton Corner Road, and the buildings will preserve the abutter's view of the hill across Wilson Stream with minimal impact on abutters. Mr. Thayer added that this is a low impact project due to the elder occupancy.

Mr. Thayer said the facilities are connected to municipal water at Knowlton Corner Road and a sewer pump station on the Wilton Road. He said there is a fire hydrant at Knowlton Corner Road, another for Phase 1, and a third for Phase 2. Mr. Thayer said all exterior lighting will be fully shielded and the site will be landscaped. He said the trip generation analysis under Maine Department of Transportation (MDOT) standards showed there is no impact study required. Mr. Thayer said the impervious areas total four acres, and the storm water will be directed to two storm water ponds with sand filters. He said test pits have been dug and analyzed by Bill Peterlein from Summit Geoengineering Services and he has determined the soil is suitable for development and the ground water levels and flows will not be noticeably affected.

Mr. Thayer said there will be 11,570 square feet of wetland impact and they have applied for permits through the Department of Environmental Protection (DEP) and the Army Corp of Engineers (USACE) and he doesn't expect there to be any problems there. Mr. Thayer said all other State agencies have confirmed they have no problems with the project. He said they would like to begin construction June 1st with completion expected September 2018.

Mr. King asked if it is required to have a one-for-one compensation for wetland impact.

Mr. Thayer said there is no mitigation required on a Tier 1 NRPA permit.

Mr. King asked about the "underground streams" brought up by abutters.

Mr. Thayer said Mr. Peterlein would answer that issue.

Mr. Wright asked about adding additional trees and landscaping to their plan for Phase 2.

Mr. Thayer said we haven't added to the initial landscaping plan.

Mrs. McGraw asked if more could be added or the plan be modified.

Mr. Thayer said, presently we don't have any plans to do so.

Mr. Bethanis showed a computer graphic looking west from the Webster Road along the access entrance to the site which depicts where the trees and landscaping will be located. He said Mr. Walters typically likes to design his own landscaping and takes pride in this and his signage. Mr. Bethanis showed photos of the landscaping from some of their completed facilities, including Hallowell, adding that they'll be preserving existing trees.

Ms. Schumacher asked if the trees shown in the Hallowell photo were planted, and Mr. Bethanis said yes.

Mrs. McGraw asked if there would be noise from sources such as generators or the residents.

Mr. Bethanis said when he's visited existing facilities, of which he's done 25, they're very quiet, and you might hear a piano but no excessive noise.

Mr. Jordan said, in consideration of the fact you are putting in 1.5 times the square footage of what we originally approved for Phase 1, there is potential for 1.5 times the traffic.

Mr. L. Walters said the additional square footage doesn't translate to significant additional traffic count trips. He said the access road traffic will add 11 additional trips going in around 6:30 a.m. and there will be about two cars going out at about the same time. Around 3:00 p.m. there will be five cars coming in and 11 cars going out, and then about around 11:00 p.m. there will be five cars coming out and two cars coming in. Mr. L. Walters said there won't be any additional garbage, food or propane truck delivery trips, as they will just be making larger deliveries.

Mr. Jordan said the Town Manager asked for more screening and he didn't think that was an unreasonable request in light of an increase in shift traffic.

Mr. L. Walters said he would be willing to double the amount of tree plantings.

Mr. Smith said they did an overall good job on the plans, but the landscape plan lacked info on planting specifics.

Mr. Thayer said the cross-hatched areas on the landscaping plan show where the plantings are and the legend provides a list of the specific types of trees and shrubs, though not numbers.

Mr. Smith asked about the exterior lighting on the buildings.

Mr. Thayer said there will be lights on outside walls at the entrance walkways, and parking areas, which are all shielded and cut-off so no light goes up. He said the fact that the site is mostly lower than the surrounding abutters will keep them from being negatively affected.

Mr. L. Walters said these are fire code lights that are required for life-safety in case of an emergency evacuation. He distributed photos of some of their other facilities.

Mr. Marceau said he didn't think more landscaping was needed to hide the facility.

Mr. King said landscaping was the largest neighbor issue at the preliminary presentation.

Dr. Eastler said additional landscaping info has been provided, noting that Farmington has been a Tree City since initiation of that program, and we do an Arbor Day program annually.

Ms. Schumacher said all of the neighbors agree that this facility is a good opportunity for employment but there are many other commercial properties for sale in the area that would be better suited for the Phase 2 facility. She said Mr. L. Walters is a businessman out to make a profit and he hasn't contacted any of the neighbors for their input on types of screening including fencing. Ms. Schumacher said this project would devalue the neighboring properties, and along with causing possible flooding in the back yards, it adds more traffic to the already dangerous intersection on Wilton Road. She said the Planning Board should be pushing them to build this somewhere else, or at the least, to screen and fence the area.

Mr. King said they submitted a landscaping plan although not required, and we can enforce the lighting requirements through the CEO, adding we can't reject the project on the basis of landscaping. He asked Mr. Thayer about the water issue.

Mr. Thayer said Mr. Peterlein would get to that later.

Mr. Carter said that they have water on their land.

Ms. Bolduc, owner of Creative Care, said they will be removing large boulders and digging the swale with heavy equipment ten feet from her property line where 36 children will be playing, and she is concerned for the safety of all of the children in the neighborhood. She said they should put up a fence on her property line, adding that Phase 2 could be built on a commercially zoned property on Route 2 and 4 instead of a residential area.

Mr. Kaiser said this project and use is permissible in this zoning district, Farm & Forest, as it is in General Purpose, with Planning Board approval.

Mr. King said the contractor will be E. L. Vining and would be responsible for safety during this work, and asked the developer if they'd considered fencing to which they answered no.

Mr. Davis suggested the Planning Board require they install a temporary chain link fence during construction.

Mr. Bell said this shouldn't be the responsibility of the contractor, and Ms. Bolduc should fence her own yard.

Mr. Carter asked if there will be a security fence or guard rail for the driveway and parking areas because it is so close to the abutters and a car could easily cause an accident.

Mr. Thayer said there will be wooden guard rails on the driveways and the closest the parking area is to the abutters is 30 feet. He said the swale, which is between the parking lot and the abutting owners, will be deepened and will improve drainage for the abutters as well as provide a barrier.

Ms. Schumacher asked why they weren't considering making another access through the Mt. Blue Shopping Plaza to the intersection signals there to lessen traffic on the Knowlton Corner Road which is in bad shape and is an un-signalized intersection with the Wilton Road.

Mr. Davis said it was informally discussed as a future possibility, and it was something Home Depot looked at when they were considering this site, but there's no requirement to do it for this project. He said we also discussed opening an entry by the sewer pump station, and the department heads agreed it wasn't a safe entrance.

Mr. Hogate said he is concerned about the increased traffic and the dangerous intersection at the Wilton Road and Knowlton Corner Road when the high school lets out.

Mr. King said Phase 2 was mentioned during the Board of Selectmen's TIF meeting and at the Phase 1 Planning Board meeting. He asked Mr. L. Walters why Phase 2 wasn't discussed in more depth at that time and why it is happening so quickly after Phase 1.

Mr. L. Walters said he didn't expect to be back so soon because we needed a certain number of MaineCare beds to make the project financially feasible, and we couldn't build a project big enough by using just private paying clients. He said for the last 21 years we have always done both private pay and MaineCare together in a facility. Mr. L. Walters said you have to wait until another facility gives them up and the State to take receivership to get MaineCare beds. He said the court decided to put these beds out to bid about six weeks ago, and they went full speed ahead when notified they won the bid. Mr. L. Walters said Mr. Thayer had been working on the preliminary site plan for Phase 2, and now we can roll from Phase 1 to Phase 2.

Mr. Webber asked why you commit with the State before site review approvals.

Mr. L. Walters said you have to first secure the rights to do the beds.

Mrs. McGraw brought up Home Depot's plans to connect to Mt. Blue plaza.

Mr. Davis said Home Depot would have had a much different impact than this project.

Mr. Marceau said there may be other properties in the area, but it is much more cost effective to do Phase 1 and 2 on the same site.

Mr. Hogate asked about the environmental impact of runoff containing salt, antifreeze, oil, and other contaminants entering the ponds and Wilson Stream.

Mr. Thayer said the runoff from all impervious areas will go into the ponds for filtration and treatment, then pipes under the sand filters will collect and discharge clean water to the stream - cleaner than farmland runoff.

Mr. King said although there are some pollutants in runoff, most of the residents at this facility won't have cars.

Mr. Peterlein from Summit Geoengineering Services said the DEP permit required the storm water runoff to be treated for quality as well as quantity. He said there may be some minor antifreeze and oil spills, and combined with the volume of water on a daily basis, it will be insignificant and pollutants will be absorbed, dispersed, diffused, and diluted through sand filter treatment to reduce contamination down to undetectable levels. Mr. Peterlein said phosphorus is more of a concern, which is also processed through this treatment.

Dr. Eastler said the Waste Water Treatment Facility (WWTF) uses sand to filter its effluent which takes care of 99.9% of the solids and discharges cleaner water than is naturally in the Sandy River. He said Walmart has the same sand filtration pond system, and he's supportive of the engineering plans. Dr. Eastler said all water flows downhill, sediment will settle in the ponds, and runoff will be cleaner after it has passed through the sand filters and into Wilson Stream.

Mr. King asked if they have to clean the ponds.

Mr. Thayer said, yes, the DEP permit has a five-year maintenance schedule, conducts periodic inspections, and they're cleaned when necessary.

Ms. Bolduc asked about the amount of traffic, visitors, and whether a traffic light is needed.

Mr. King said visitation trips would vary.

Mr. Davis said MDOT evaluates whether a traffic signal is warranted only if the project creates more than 100 trips per hour.

Mr. Thayer said the traffic summary was based on the manual for senior housing which in turn is based on a national study, with the conclusion by a traffic engineer of "no significant impact".

He said this project will generate a maximum of 22 new trips in one hour which is less than the measurable impact in the manual.

Mr. Daku said he has a right-of-way to his property and hasn't been able to access his fields.

Mr. King said that is a matter between you and the property owner.

Mr. D. Walters said that the right-of-way is muddy due to construction and they've offered a temporary alternative through the site.

Dr. Eastler said we've talked about landscaping and fencing and need to conduct a walkover to assess. He said we've made some progress in our review, the project has benefit to the town, but it also impacts the neighbors.

Mr. L. Walters said he thought the excavators would be able to take boulders out in a couple hours and a chain link fence would have to be hundreds of feet long.

Dr. Eastler asked if they could flag the area where a chain link fence could be located.

Mr. Daku reiterated that the right-of-way is blocked - and doesn't even exist anymore.

Mr. Davis said the right-of-way is either fixed or floating, and it's up to you to work this out with the owners - it's not a Planning Board responsibility.

It was decided to schedule the site walk on Friday, May 19, 2017 at 6:00 p.m.

Mr. King said the Board members will be gathering information and the public is invited to attend the site walk. He said the Board can take questions from the public but they can't give answers or make decisions at this time because the members are not always together to hear what was said. Mr. King said they will meet at their regular meeting on June 12th to make a decision about the two applications.

Ms. Schumacher said she felt this meeting is a forgone conclusion. She asked if we could take a step back and review whether this is the right project for this location and be thoughtful of the neighborhood.

Mr. King said we printed out a statement of what we as Planning Board members can do.

Ms. Schumacher asked who represents our interests.

Dr. Eastler said I'm on the Board of Environmental Protection (BEP) and therefore the target for people not wanting a particular project, and this Board is in the same position here. I haven't voted yet and there's no forgone conclusion.

Ms. Schumacher said they [developers] didn't follow up on the Board's suggestion last year to talk to the neighbors about screening - you didn't make them do anything.

Mr. King referred to the handout stating the Board's mission, and if you aren't happy with our decision you can file an application with the Board of Appeals. He said in that application you will have to prove where we erred in our judgement. Mr. King said the Planning Board members have criteria they must follow to approve or deny an application.

Mr. Marceau said all of us on this Board are members of the community, and you're welcome to become a member. He said we all care strongly about Farmington.

Mr. Smith asked how tall are the pine trees they plan to put in - because some can grow 2-3 feet per year and eventually block the sunlight of the abutter's property.

Mr. L. Walters said it varies on the setting, but usually 4', 6', or 7'.

Mr. Jordan made a motion to conduct a site walkover on Friday, May 19th at 6:00 p.m.

Dr. Eastler seconded the motion.

VOTE: 7 – Affirmative 2 – Absent
Motion carried.

Mr. King made a motion to continue the meeting on June 12, 2017.

Mr. Jordan seconded the motion.

VOTE: 7 – Affirmative 2 – Absent
Motion carried.

Ms. Schumacher asked where the planning comes into all of this.

Mr. King said we helped develop the Comprehensive Plan, then worked on adopted Ordinances, with enforcement by the Code Office.

4. Other Business

There being no further business, the meeting adjourned at 8:00 P.M.

Minutes respectfully submitted by Cindy Gelinas.

Planning Board

Date