

VILLAGE OF BALDWINSVILLE
PLANNING BOARD MEETING MINUTES
Tuesday, January 23, 2007, 7:30 P.M.
Approved 3/27/07

PRESENT: Chris Savacool, Chairman
Dave Arthur
John McFall
Robin Augello
Larry Barnett

ALSO PRESENT: J. C. Engelbrecht, Village Attorney
Dan Faldzinski, Village Engineer
Susan LaQuay, Secretary

NOT PRESENT: Edward Rock, Board Member
Russ Lucy, Board Member

GUESTS: Howard Tupper, Village Trustee
David Mott, Village Trustee
Joseph Saraceni, Village Trustee

REGULAR MEETING - 7:30 P.M.

APPROVAL OF MINUTES

Upon motion by J. McFall and second by L. Barnett that the minutes of the November 28, 2006 Planning Board meeting be approved as submitted. Motion passed.

NEW BUSINESS

Revisions to Aspen Springs Subdivision

Chairman Savacool noted that the Applicant had submitted the revisions in November and was planning to address the Board at this meeting. However, the Applicant has been very busy and has been unable to respond to engineering comments as of yet. The Board has received comments from D. Faldzinski.

Chairman Savacool asked D. Faldzinski to review the nature of the revisions. D. Faldzinski stated that early in the approval process, the Applicant had to be creative with their management of the stormwater coming off of the road and had to work with the DOT to come up with a plan to mitigate this. The result was a plan to place an underground pipe to collect, store, and attenuate stormwater prior to release. However, this was not considered a good system for the Village to take over and the developer was encouraged to acquire additional property adjacent to his to allow for room to construct a stormwater management basin. The nature of the revision is changing from underground storage in a pipe to open storage in a pond. D. Faldzinski stated the developer picked up a tract of land to the east side of the entrance and also to the west side of the entrance with the idea of developing the 6-acre piece on the west side of the entrance instead of having a series of stormwater management basins in a row. There is a large basin at the intersection of Route 31 and 631 and now with the addition of this one there will be two. D. Faldzinski stated they were encouraging the developer to expand on a constructed basin to account for the development of the 6-acre parcel to the west of the entrance. He stated they have asked the developer to, rather than create their own stormwater management basin, expand the existing basin to avoid having multiple basins. D. Faldzinski stated that a plan has already been approved by the DOT. However, he does not think they really understood the development occurring west of that entrance. The revisions to the plan are to avoid developing another stormwater management basin for the

Village to take over and instead would just expand on this one. D. Faldzinski noted that the majority of his comments are in regard to this.

D. Faldzinski stated that he is also concerned regarding the depth of the water in the basin (Basin 2) during the time it would not be involved with a stormwater event. He noted this would likely be a liability for the Village and would like to see it at a depth of below 24 inches. He stated Basin 1 is all the way up the hill and toward Festa Fairway and noted this one (Basin 2) is smaller and more incidental. Chairman Savacool asked what percentage of stormwater would be directed to each basin. D. Faldzinski stated that 80% would go towards Basin 1 and 20% towards Basin 2.

Chairman Savacool stated the developer still needs more time to respond and this issue will be on the next agenda.

Discussion with Trustees regarding overlay district, codes updates per the EDR study, and discussion regarding ARB alignment with Planning and ZBA regarding signage...

Trustees Howard Tupper, Joseph Saraceni, and David Mott and are present to address the Planning Board on behalf of the Board of Trustees.

Dave Mott stated he has been charged to work with each Board to bring the code book up-to-date. He stated he met with Chairman Savacool and other Planning Board Members and they agreed there is a somewhat different scope with this Board regarding this issue, mostly due to the EDR plan, among other studies done throughout the years, and there would, therefore, be significant deviation to the general code. This prompted them to consider an overlay district for some of the major projects involved with the EDR study. D. Mott stated they would need to look at how some of these projects can be accomplished knowing that there will be significant deviation with the general code and the potential for appeals.

The EDR plan identifies 7 key elements and the Board of Trustees would like to approach this by creating an overlay district for specifically this set of projects. They will need to identify the properties involved. The Board of Trustees identified 3 action items as follows:

- 1 – Create a scope regarding why the overlay district is needed and the intention of it;
- 2 – Identify the property areas involved; and
- 3 – Identify the deviations to the general code and determine how these will be addressed.

Dave Mott stated that Joe Saraceni had worked on action item 1. The Board of Trustees would like the Planning Board over the next few months to look at the properties involved (item 2) and would like them to also consider what general code deviations would be appropriate regarding setbacks, etc. (item 3).

Chairman Savacool stated the Planning Board has had difficulty in the past because they have a vision of what they would like to see, but no way to tell a developer what they want them to do. He stated this Board is often stuck and needs to find a way to make the vision a reality without being too heavy handed. They need to leave the developer with some latitude, but would like to accomplish certain goals for the Village (for example, better ingress/egress, improved pedestrian traffic, etc.). He would like to find a way to remove obstacles to the Planning Board and let potential developers know what the vision is and at the same time use them as a mechanism to accomplish some of those visions.

Joe Saraceni stated he agrees with this and noted that this is where the vision and ideas in the EDR plan need to be codified. He noted this will be difficult because they still need to decide what to do with some of these key areas, for example, the fire house which is owned by the Village, that they can have an immediate impact with. He noted the EDR study gives general outlines and aesthetics for the areas it addresses. He noted that once the Village starts making decisions and begins making some of these plans concrete, it will be easier for a developer to determine the feasibility of a potential project here in the Village. He stated that choices need to be made to avoid the status quo and the Village needs to take the lead on what direction to encourage a developer to go in and needs to put something in place to make working with developers easier. He noted that one of the things that any new development along East Genesee Street will have to consider is the build-to lines.

Dave Mott stated he is willing to work with the Planning Board and can attend meetings and provide resources to help out with this issue. He noted this is where a lot of plans from other municipalities tend to fade away and not be implemented as they cannot figure out a way to get the plan appropriately codified.

J. McFall asked if the Board of Trustees had given any thought as to what to do with the EDR study. Joe Saraceni stated the study is to be used as a guide and will give the Village direction regarding what to consider for codes that would facilitate this vision. He noted the Village is moving forward with some of EDR plans already.

Joe Saraceni stated he had walked around the Village and looked at it like a stranger would to see where some of the gaps are regarding development and potential improvements. He noted, for example, that the post office could decide to relocate or Eckerd could relocate, etc. He feels the Village would need to be in a position where it is prepared to take advantage of those types of situations when they arise. He also noted there are 25 curb cuts between the four corners and Cole Muffler and feels this is a dangerous situation for pedestrians. This is certainly something the Boards should be considering.

Dave Mott stated the Trustees will be looking to the Planning Board for their expertise regarding the details of how to accomplish this plan and the code revisions that would be necessary.

Joe Saraceni stated he would like to see a focus on pedestrian safety. He feels if they make an area safe for people to walk around in and shop, developers will see value in that. He noted it is difficult to market an area where nobody is walking around. J. McFall feels new sidewalks are needed and this would be an immediately visible improvement. Joe Saraceni referenced North Salina Street, which has new sidewalks and new lighting. He noted people are walking around there and this is something the Village can do to create an environment that will be inviting to developers. However, it would be necessary to have plans and ideas in place to better steer those developers once they are here.

D. Arthur noted that from the beginning of the EDR study the purpose was to get codes with teeth in place to implement the vision. He suggested comparing the overlay district with the suggested changes. He noted there are particular problems with this for the Architectural Review Board as there is nothing codified. He stated he would not want to go in the direction of having the EDR study and vision being just suggestions, but would want to be able to enforce them. D. Arthur referred to the way in which Village Commons was developed. He stated this Board put a lot of effort into trying to get the development up to the street and there was no way to do it. The resulting development was not what the Village wanted to see. He feels the Village needs to focus on specific codes and have developers look at them and determine the feasibility of their plans based on that. He also noted that over the last few years developers have been very interested in this area and the Village would have to make this area interesting to developers. There will have to be a balance between making this area attractive to investors and developers and also making it fit the vision. He suggested getting the Chamber of Commerce and the business community involved to get their viewpoint and come up with something to add to the code and law to accomplish this. He feels that being vague will not accomplish this.

Joe Saraceni noted that some of the code revisions could fall under pedestrian safety. For example, if a developer wanted to put in a drive thru, this could be addressed in this manner. He stated the Village needs to look at the type of development that it would like to see and could focus it around pedestrian safety to determine what kind of development certain areas can tolerate. He noted the State has supported the Village in the past regarding traffic issues and they can also lean on that.

Dave Mott noted the Village is also looking at Lock Street as a key development area in the next few years. He would hate to see something with a front parking lot on Lock Street when they would prefer a storefront right up to the road.

Chairman Savacool stated that this Board needs to focus on 2 things as follows:

- 1 – Figure out what the Board would need in terms of codes to accomplish the vision; and
- 2 – Attempt to look at specific areas of the Village.

He stated he feels the best way to start is to focus on an area and have a really good discussion about that area. Joe Saraceni suggested that the area to focus on for February should be East Genesee Street. He noted this area clearly has pedestrian safety issues and is an area where they could say that the build to line is 15' off the curb. Chairman Savacool stated it may be beneficial for this Board to have discussion regarding the area between Conroy's and Cole Muffler on the river side of Genesee Street. Joe Saraceni suggested the Board Members actually walk the area in question to get a different feel and perspective from just driving it.

D. Arthur stated he thinks they also need to determine the borders of the overlay district and would like to see definitive borders to reference. Chairman Savacool stated this is something the Board can create and he does not think they all have to be the same. He stated there can be multiple overlay districts with differing requirements.

Howard Tupper suggested the Village should look at restricting square footage of stores. For example, Eckerd's is 10,000 square feet, which is too big for that area to support. D. Faldzinski suggested they should consider density and restrict uses in certain areas based on that.

Chairman Savacool stated he would like the Board Members to look again at the EDR Plan and look specifically at the East Genesee Street section of the Village between Conroy's and Cole Muffler. He would like the Board members to note their comments, concerns and considerations, which will be passed along to the Board of Trustees. He stated he would like everyone to walk the area. He asked D. Faldzinski to have Plumley provide an aerial view of the area and also a tax map. Dave Mott suggested that the 7 key areas of the EDR study could be shaded in the aerial view for reference.

Joe Saraceni noted that page 22 of the EDR plan outlines what will be required to facilitate the plan.

D. Mott asked the Board to refer to Article VII of Van Buren codes. He noted they have an overlay district in this section of code and this gives good information that the Village does not currently have in its own code. He noted the Board Members can find this online. Joe Saraceni noted the Village could use this as an outline.

J. McFall asked if the final guidelines would need to be passed by the Village Board. D. Mott stated they would need to be codified.

D. Mott stated he thinks it will be easier to start with projects that are pressing, for example River Street and the fire house. Joe Saraceni noted that East Genesee Street will be greatly impacted by what is decided for the fire house.

Joe Saraceni thanked the Planning Board for being open to this issue and noted again that this is the point where many plans disappear. He stated it takes motivated individuals on the Planning and Village Boards to move forward on the recommendations of the plan.

Howard Tupper noted that there is no need to go overboard with code changes and requirements. D. Arthur agreed that there needs to be a balance as they do not want to discourage developers from coming to the Village.

J. C. Engelbrecht stated that the Village, at an appropriate time, will need to notify businesses. It may be beneficial to do that in advance to get their viewpoint and utilize their comments and concerns as well. D. Arthur agreed and stated he feels it is imperative to get businesses and developers involved. Chairman Savacool stated he also agrees but would like to see more progress and have this Board get its ideas and concerns lined up first and then invite them into the discussion. This will allow them to see the Village's vision.

Joe Saraceni stated that once the Village moves forward and codifies the vision, the EDR plan can be a marketing tool to seek out developers that share this vision. This is when he feels the Chamber of Commerce will be helpful

J. C. Engelbrecht stated he feels it may be beneficial to get the opinions and expertise of the more sophisticated developers sooner as opposed to later. Chairman Savacool noted then the Village can start getting into some creative ways to market the development of these areas and ways to encourage economic development.

Dave Mott stated he would like to address codes regarding signage. He noted the codes address dimension, appropriate locations on buildings, etc. He is looking for recommendations regarding what Planning thinks would be acceptable as they are trying to get solid code regarding signs so people will not have to come to ARB if their proposed sign meets code and would only have to if it does not meet code. He stated they ARB does not want to upset merchants, but notes these guidelines need to be in place.

D. Arthur stated a pet peeve of his is neon lights and banners that are in place longer than is allowed. Dave Mott noted there are codes regarding event banners and codes regarding lit signs, which only say that they cannot be flashing or directed at traffic, etc. He would like the Board to be thinking about this type of thing and is looking for Planning's input. He is specifically looking at not requiring a business owner to go before the ARB if that business owner intends to meet code with their sign. He noted that one thing he has been consistently told is that the dimension requirements are too small and this is something he would like to consider and potentially change. He noted the code states both sides count towards the square footage limits.

D. Faldzinski suggested they review neighboring communities and their codes regarding signage. He noted Clay recently redid their sign regulations and Skaneateles codes may be beneficial to look at as well.

Dave Mott stated he has looked at codes in Maryland that have significant detail regarding their signage right down to dimensional space utilized within a window that is displayed for a visualization outside the building. This would address the problem with the use of neon signs in windows in the Village.

Dave Mott noted that the goal is to come up with something that is agreeable to both business owners and the Village. Joe Saraceni stated he thinks it would be beneficial to talk to sign contractors as they deal with requirements every day for many different municipalities.

Dave Mott stated the ARB has many examples of signs that they would like to see and these are made available to business owners. However, he has found this does not always work as the guidelines are not codified and some business owners do not agree with them.

Chairman Savacool stated for the next meeting (February) the Board will address the overlay district issue as it relates to East Genesee Street from Conroy's to Cole Muffler. The Board will also discuss recommendations regarding signage. He stated he will meet with D. Faldzinski regarding materials that will be helpful in this review.

Upon motion by J. McFall and second by D. Arthur, the meeting was adjourned at 8:25 p.m. The next Planning Board meeting is scheduled for Tuesday, February 27, 2007.

Respectfully Submitted,

Susan A. LaQuay
Planning Board Secretary