

TOWN OF SUTTON
Planning Board
Pillsbury Memorial Hall
Meeting Minutes
January 13, 2015

Present: Planning Board Members: Carrie Thomas, Chairperson; Julie McCarthy, Carole O'Connell, and Roger Wells, members; Dan Sundquist, Ex-Officio; (Bob DeFelice and Peter Blakeman, members, were absent); Laurie Hayward, Land Use Coordinator (LUC) and Jeffery Evans, Applicant; John Michael Rogers, owner, of property on Birch Hill Road; Diane Rogers; and Kirsten Kraushaar, lead reporter for the InterTown Record.

The meeting was called to order at 7:09PM, by Carrie Thomas, Chairperson.

Public Hearing:

The Chair opened the Hearing for PB 2014-08, Evans as agent for John Michael Rogers. The LUC read the Notice of public hearing as follows:

“You are hereby notified of a Public Hearing to be held on Tuesday, January 13, 2015 at or around 7:00 p.m. at the Pillsbury Memorial Town Hall, 93 Main Street, Sutton Mills, NH, concerning a request by **Jeffrey A. Evans, acting as agent for John Michael Rogers**, for a minor three-lot subdivision, on Birch Hill Road, in a rural-agricultural district. Tax Map #01-576,410.”

You are invited to appear in person or be represented by agent or counsel and provide reasons why the request should or should not be granted. Please address written responses to: Sutton Planning Board, PO Box 487, North Sutton, NH 03260. All responses will be read into the record.

This is a re-schedule of the hearing that was cancelled due to weather on December 9, 2014.

Plans are available for your review at the Town Office.”

The Chair asked the LUC whether the application is considered complete. The LUC replied that it is. **Sundquist moved that the Board accept the application as complete; Wells seconded the motion and it was voted unanimously.**

The application accepted, **the Chair opened the Public Hearing for PB 2014-08, Evans as agent for John Michael Rogers.** Evans and Mike Rogers stepped forward to discuss their application for a three-lot subdivision. Evans explained that the applicant and owner are back trying to complete a three lot subdivision that was started a number of years back.

On the plan provided, the three lots in question are numbered 2, 4, and 5. Evans gave a brief history. He explained that they understood that the road, Birch Hill, had been fixed and that they could now reapply for the same minor subdivision that was denied in 2013. The Board consulted the large format map/plan of the proposed subdivision and Evans and Rogers explained their proposal. Wells asked for the lengths of frontage on each lot. Evans said that each lot had at least 200 feet. Evans stated that two lots [#2 & #5] each have a bit more than 200 feet of frontage and Lot #4 has well over 200 feet. Asked if there was a plan for further subdivision, Rogers explained that he left the large back-lot which does have wetlands so that someone might be able to subdivide. Rogers stated that he does not plan to do anything further himself. He simply expects to sell the property.

Evans explained that he had learned that there is some historical significance to the properties in the area including that he was shown the original Perry home, the oldest house in Sutton, and the location of the original Birch Hill road. There was a brief discussion about the history both long ago and the recent efforts to subdivide. McCarthy asked if there was a current driveway permit on file with the town. Evans said that he wasn't sure- there might be from one of the earlier efforts to subdivide. Rogers added that he believes there are no problems that would be an issue in obtaining a

driveway permit for any of the lots. Evans stated that if driveway permits were the only remaining concern about this minor subdivision, he is confident that can be resolved.

Discussions included that there was an application for the same three-lot minor subdivision in 2013 and at that time it was denied [determined to be “scattered and premature” due to the condition of Birch Hill Road and “denied without prejudice”]. During 2014 the repairs to that road were completed and the change of road condition did provide the opportunity for a new application and for the Board to take the request up again. Sundquist offered that he will ask the Road Agent to drive by the property and look for any potential issues or concerns. Rogers told the Board that, if the Road Agent has concerns, he would certainly work with him on the resolution. Wells pointed out that he considers Birch Hill Road to now be in very good condition. The Chair asked the only additional interested party in attendance, Diane Rogers, if she had any additional input. Mrs. Rogers indicated that she did not.

Wells moved that the Public Hearing be closed; Sundquist seconded the motion and it was voted unanimously.

Wells moved the application be approved with the condition that the town Road Agent approves the locations as noted in the driveway permit applications.

There followed a brief conversation regarding the process to follow to complete the condition. It was agreed that Evans should complete the applications and keep the LUC advised so that she can follow up with the Road Agent.

This ended the Public Hearing for PB 2014-08, Evans as agent for John Michael Rogers.

[At this point Evans and Mike and Diane Rogers left the meeting.]

Wells noted that the plans should be signed after the Road Agent has checked and approved the driveway locations. The LUC explained that she generally checks with the Road Agent regarding the Driveway Permits when there is a Condition involving driveways, for example, she did so in the Robert Stewart, agent for T&G Land Holdings three-lot subdivision.

Administrative:

Minutes of previous meetings: The Chair asked for a motion regarding the minutes of previous meetings on December 16, 2014. Wells moved to approve the minutes of December 16, 2014; McCarthy seconded and it was voted unanimously.

Correspondence: None

Old Business:

Wells brought up the subject of new members. He suggested that Jim Lowe and Lisa Hogarty be recommended to the Select Board. After a brief discussion in which it was clear that most of the members already know Lowe and feel he would be an excellent candidate and that he could take David Burnham’s old slot. [This is an error: in 2014, Carole O’Connell took Burnham’s slot, which means that the Board was full and both appointments would be as Alternates.] The LUC told the members that Blakeman had broken his hip she explained that although Blakeman often cannot make meetings, he has provided wonderful support and information-sometimes going over complex documents and helping her determine what action might be taken. Blakeman has expert’s knowledge so his assistance is very valuable. Members agreed that it is hoped that Blakeman can continue to be involved. Lisa Hogarty could take a slot as an alternate member and the rest of the Board remains the same. Sundquist stated that the Select Board could put a letter together to each candidate. Sundquist explained that he could present the two candidates to the rest of the Select Board. **Wells moved that the two candidates, Lowe and Hogarty, be accepted as candidates and recommended to the Select Board, Lowe as a member and Hogarty as an alternate. Wells motion to recommend candidates Lowe and Hogarty was seconded and approved unanimously.**

[Kirsten Kraushaar joined the meeting.]

Master Plan: Kirsten Kraushaar was invited to step forward and join the discussions. Wells explained that he had requested Kraushaar come to a meeting to discuss ways to liven up the Master Plan, to make it more interesting to people. He told Kraushaar and the Board that he had experience working with other Master Plans, including involvement with advertising efforts. Wells said that he realizes there is not much money in the budget; but, he would really like to see perhaps a full pull out section, 2-4 pages long, front and back, providing information on the Master Plan. Wells told Kraushaar that he could get a sample of that sort of advertising to her. There followed a brief discussion about costs and that this is not in the current budget request which is before the Budget Committee. Sundquist asked if the LUC could get the approximate costs so they could consider adding it to the 2015 Budget. Kraushaar said that she could get information on costs and forward it to the LUC.

There was considerable discussion about ways to generate interest, including ways to keep it fun like “survey trivia” or some sort of game, there was considerable interest in the idea of getting useful definitions and information out, perhaps using Sutton historical persons in imaginary dialogue for and against ideas generated by the survey and the expected Chapters and areas of interest in the Master Plan. Sundquist pointed out that during the last Master Plan development; there were some subjects that provided very lively discussion. He suggested that some of that subject matter could be used to provide brief segments for the InterTown. Board members expressed interest in this approach and agreed that having more than one person writing pieces was also a good idea. There was discussion of ways to “step outside the box” and do things a bit differently, even including considering some cartoons. Kraushaar explained to the Board members that there are a number of different sections of the InterTown where brief articles could be placed. The question of what is brief came up and Kirsten indicated maybe 200 words each.

The discussion turned to the timing of the work on the Master Plan. It was generally agreed that May would be a good time to do the kick-off. With early May as a goal, there was agreement that perhaps food and information for the Town Vote/Town Meeting about the Master Plan might be a good idea. Additionally, Articles could begin in February and then go through the entire process --- not necessarily every week; but, on a very regular basis. Sundquist reiterated that he would like to see something that is maybe a regular feature so that they could get some momentum and seek to get people looking forward to what is going to be in the InterTown this week?

O’Connell asked Kraushaar what she thought her part in the process would be. Kraushaar said she would certainly be happy to assist Board members or others in their writing by acting as editor and she could contribute articles herself. Wells asked Kraushaar if there were things that she thought would be more or less acceptable to the InterTown’s General Manager. Kraushaar indicated that possibilities discussed would all work. She cautioned that, unlike paid advertising, these short pieces would not necessarily be published in a specific week.

O’Connell offered that there are a number of interesting things that the Historical Society has turned up that could also provide a basis for brief pieces- for example an old road marker in an obviously incorrect location. Wells described that, in his work with another Planning Board, he put together a four-page, color newspaper advertisement summarizing the Master Plan which made information readily available to the entire town. O’Connell asked whether the Planning Board could afford to spend that kind of money. Wells said that he did not know and that it would be useful to find out what the cost would be. Wells pointed out that there is something special about publishing in the newspaper and in a format that can readily be pulled out of the paper and used for reference.

There was an extended discussion about creative ways that these InterTown pieces, both advertising and articles, might be developed and who would write them. Both O’Connell and Wells offered a number of suggestions about how to both generate interest and inform the readers on a variety of Sutton specific subjects. The Board asked Kraushaar to check on costs and let the LUC know a range of costs so that the Board can determine what level of paid advertising the budget will support. The Chair reminded the Board that this coming year the Historical Society is planning an expanded program this year and it would be nice to coordinate in such a way that the Planning Board efforts are not duplicating or detracting from the efforts of the Historical Society.

Kraushaar asked when the Board wanted to begin the articles. There was a brief discussion about timing of the Master Plan and of advance notice. Again, it was agreed that the actual kick-off of the Master Plan should take place in early May. Wells offered that perhaps they could start with the idea of two protagonists holding a lively debate on some Master Plan related subject. Wells and Sundquist both pointed out the importance of having a good editor for any of these submissions written by members of the Board or other interested persons. There ensued a discussion about topics and who might want to write on defining the issue and the pros and cons. There was an agreement that they need to develop a list of topics. The LUC explained that she has a list of Master Plan chapters and of the people who have indicated interest in those topics and she can share that information with the Board and offered to email the list to Members. There was a brief discussion about possible contributors. There followed a brief discussion about writing simply and keeping it brief. O'Connell suggested using two different Sutton historical figures as pseudonyms and carrying that through the series. The Board liked the idea and O'Connell offered to check with Jack Noon, the town historian, for suggestions.

Sundquist indicated to the LUC that she should look at the Budget and the costs and determine whether they should make an adjustment to their request which is currently before the Budget Committee. The Board returned to the question of start date for articles. Wells suggested the start should be well in advance of May. Kraushaar suggested they start in February. There was some discussion about Town Meeting and whether there was an opportunity to start generating interest while so many Sutton voters are in one place.

[Kirsten Kraushaar left the meeting.]

Wells stated that he would put together a series of starting sentences on topics they might want to write about before he leaves for Florida. Wells also explained that he does have a packet with examples of articles that were published in connection to another Master Plan in which he participated. Wells said that he would drop it off to the LUC and wanted it back at some point.

Regulations Revision: Wells took up the subject of revisions to Subdivision Regulations. Wells explained that he feels the Board should be able to approve at a minimum an addition to the Subdivision Regulations to limit the number and frequency of "minor subdivisions" to already subdivided property as that can be an attempt to avoid the requirements of a "major subdivision" of more than three lots and a revision to the driveway regulations. It was agreed that Board members would give the LUC their written suggestions for the two regulations and that she would draft something that melded those suggestions. Wells explained that the change in Subdivision Regulations that he is proposing simply says that if an applicant turns right around after obtaining a minor subdivision and further subdivides the lots, that second application would be approached as a major subdivision and the sum of the parts considered. Also it was agreed that the LUC would obtain Blakeman's suggestions and include them and then send the draft documents back to members so they would be prepared to take up both suggested revisions to the Regulations at the next meeting.

The LUC explained that once the Board members agree on language, the next step is to determine a Public Hearing date with adequate time to provide Notices. The LUC stated that she would have the drafts for the next meeting, including Blakeman's input. The Chair summarized what Wells was proposing explaining that the Board was hoping to curtail applicants coming before the Board and subdividing as a "minor" subdivision and repeating "minor subdivision process until they have created a major subdivision of four lots or more; without being required to address the same issues that someone seeking a "major subdivision" must. Wells' proposal would require five years (four was also discussed) between "minor" subdivisions. The Chair asked how many weeks were needed to notice a public hearing to consider changes to the Sutton Subdivision and Site Plan Review Regulations. The LUC replied that she thought two weeks but would double check that. It was agreed by members that it would be nice to plan on the hearing sometime in February. The LUC pointed out that she does not know of any applications that are likely to be submitted in the next two days; therefore, it is likely that they do not need to worry about holding a Subdivision or Site Plan Review Public Hearing at the first meeting in February. If the draft language is approved at the January 27 meeting; then it is conceivable that they could hold the Public Hearing on two changes to the Regulations on the 2nd Tuesday in February.

Sundquist suggested that the LUC take everyone's suggestions for changes to the language Wells proposed

and meld them together and then get out a “melded” version of the proposed changes that can be taken up at the next Planning Board Meeting. The LUC noted that works well as there are no public hearings scheduled for the next meeting. The LUC was also directed to make sure that she obtains Peter Blakeman’s input on the proposed changes and includes those in the document for next meeting. Sundquist pointed out that the Board needs to answer the question whether the driveway regulations they will write will cover only those driveways that come to them via the Subdivision Applications or all new driveways in Sutton.

Sundquist reminded members of the processes involved. If they only revise the Subdivision Regulations, they can do that fairly quickly and with a simple noticed public hearing and vote. If they want to cover all new driveways, they would need to also change the Zoning Ordinance as well. That process would go out into 2016 and require a vote at the 2016 Town Meeting. There was a discussion about jurisdiction. The LUC explained that there are more than one entity involved and more than one regulation. The Subdivision Regulations include driveway regulations.

There are also Sutton Driveway Regulations that the Road Agent considers when giving driveway permits. Sundquist pointed out the Road Agent’s jurisdiction only covers town driveways. There are also New Hampshire State Driveway Regulations that cover state roads. Wells suggested that they simply start with the Subdivision Regulations. The LUC asked if that meant only Subdivision or also Site Plan Regulations. It was agreed that both the Subdivision and Site Plan Regulations but not to include changes to either the Zoning Ordinance or the Sutton Driveway Regulations. It was agreed that the LUC would get something out prior to the next meeting and Wells would email his comments on that document to the LUC, to be shared with members at the next meeting.

Members asked that the LUC use the revision tracking feature to show comments on the revised document. It was agreed that the goal would be to schedule the Public Hearing on the Regulation changes for the last meeting in February, to be held on Tuesday, February 24, 2015.

Other Business:

The LUC asked Sundquist if she understood correctly that the Select Board was using offsite participation in meetings while Ricia McMahan is away. Sundquist confirmed they are but indicated that it can be complicated making sure that the one offsite is able to clearly participate. It is necessary that all participants are able to hear all that is said by others in the context of the meeting --- that is people can hear the one who is off-site and the one who is offsite can hear them.

There was a brief discussion about the importance of not communicating back and forth. Instead, the LUC told members to make sure that they emailed any suggestions to her only and she will add them to the document and then send it out to members. Members cannot communicate amongst themselves on Planning Board business. The LUC is not a member of the Board and she can send information out to Board Members in advance of meetings so that they are prepared for subjects under consideration.

McCarthy offered that she could send anyone who needed one a copy of the 2015 New Hampshire Central Regional Planning Commission Plan, she would be glad to provide one.

Next regular meeting is scheduled to be held on January 27, 2015 at 7:00 PM.

There being no further business, the meeting was adjourned at 8:43 PM.

Respectfully submitted,

Laurie Hayward
Land Use Coordinator