

Planning Board Minutes
September 26, 2018

Chairman Chris Maron called the meeting to order at 7:00 p.m. with the following members present: Mr. Dwight Anson, Ms. Cynthia Fairbanks, Ms. Mary Lou Fitzgerald, Mr. Alan Hipps, and Alternate, Ms. Robin Severance. Also in attendance was Mr. George Hainer, Building Codes/Zoning Officer. Guests in attendance: Robert Hall, Bruce Ware, Keven Severance, Steve Malone, Dan Ford, Ann Hale, Rickie Hall, Nancy Page, and Ike Tyler.

Chairman Maron: The first order of business is to approve the minutes from May 23rd.

Mr. Hipps: I'll move it.

Ms. Fitzgerald: I'll second.

Chairman Maron: Is there any discussion? All in favor? Minutes are approved. We'll go ahead and begin the Westport Golf Course project discussion.

Mr. Robert Hall: I'm Bob Hall and I represent Consolidated Mortgage, which controls the golf course. We've been working on a real estate development plan up at the golf course. This is Dan Ford and Steve Malone. Steve's a developer in Vermont; he also has a home here in Westport. We have a preliminary, conceptual plan and wanted to start the discussion with the Planning Board. We haven't made a formal application yet for a development permit, but that'll be coming down the line. We have spoken with Ike and George on one of the components of the design that requires a hamlet line change. The town has submitted the application and it is now the APA's hands; there will be a meeting next month concerning that. We have some slides here to show.

Mr. Dan Ford: As Bob indicated, I'm a land planner with Beau Welling Design. The tipping point for this discussion and introduction was the application that the Town of Westport made for the moving of the hamlet line. This plan contemplates that and thinks it's a good thing, but it doesn't rely on that move either. As you know, this is over a hundred-year-old golf facility. The existing clubhouse is a historic building; it's been there since the '20s. The property is 357 acres total. What we're really talking about is utilizing the parcel to the east and the plan does contemplate the shifting of a few golf holes to open up for development. It will not run into any wetland issues; wetlands are on the western portion of the property, on the other side of Stevenson Road. On the right of the graphic is the hamlet and it's approximately 39 acres. All the way to the east, running in a diagonal, is Main Street and the property to the west of that is a mix of agricultural land and residential land. We've done about four concept plans to look at different options. The hamlet line has always been very clear and earlier plans respected that. We met with the APA and they were very amenable to moving the line because it was just an extension of the existing hamlet. Where we are proposing changing follows a very natural drainage and frees up flatland that is contiguous with other flatland for potential development. It frees up the high point for a potential new hospitality structure – a small

inn of sorts. It also allows the property to expand its amenity package in the form of maybe more expensive food and beverage offerings. We don't know what the critical elements of that need to be just yet, but we're calling that an inn and new clubhouse. We're thinking about repurposing the historic structure as more of a wellness and fitness element where there's room for sports courts or a swimming pool. Extending the hamlet line that frees up the ability for development. We'll be doing some renumbering and rebuilding of existing golf holes and I can get those details if folks are interested. What is proposed behind it is our 64 cottage type products and those have yet to be defined. The squares here are 40x50; it's 2,000 square feet. That could easily go up or down depending on the market size. They're 30 feet apart and within the hamlet zone. The next slide shows detail of the proposed hamlet expansion zone. The next few focus on architecture. We're interested in maintaining that mountain golf experience and are proposing to do some course upgrades – the 3-hole rerouting and we may shorten or lengthen some existing holes. We'd like to do our courses so that golf is fun again and approachable. We hope to improve the quality of golf while also hanging on to the roots. For the residential component, we'll be using forms that are timeless and pedestrian in scale. The cottages will have porches and have timeless residential features. We started thinking about the new inn and clubhouse component and want to pay homage to the existing architecture that's out there now. The forms and materials used work well on all scales. The final slide is the master plan, which we can certainly discuss more.

Ms. Rickie Hall: Can you go through the new holes and how the layout would be for this particular design?

Mr. Ford: If we reposition and build a new structure the clubhouse will give a new sense of arrival.

Mr. Hall: The inn/clubhouse. There are 25 rooms.

Mr. Ford: And potential event space. For the holes: Hole 1 is existing Hole 3, Hole 2 is existing Hole 8, Hole 3 is existing Hole 7, 4 and 5 will stay the same, new holes for 6-8, Hole 9 is existing Hole 18, holes 10-17 remain the same, and 18 is existing Hole 6.

Mr. Hall: The purpose is to begin at Hole 1 from the clubhouse, arrive back on 9, leave again on 10 from the clubhouse, and arrive back at 18.

Mr. Ford: If you repurpose the existing clubhouse, there's really significant land and opportunity to create that as a separate component. Many times you're answering to both sides of a family and maybe not everyone is golf focused. We're trying to insert a multi-generational experience. Pushing the hamlet to the west allows us to maintain a pretty significant buffer zone.

Mr. Hall: One of the earlier plans we had had units down in the wooded area, but then we worked on the hamlet line and that allowed us to leave that buffer there that we think is a positive for all the homeowners on Main Street. The units will now be spread over a large area, allowing for a more hospitable development.

Mr. Steve Malone: From my perspective as a resort developer, whether it be golf or ski, it's really hard to make a place like the Westport Golf Club have a long-term lifespan if you don't develop a play-and-stay program. For the life of this project, in terms of a vital operating golf community, having that base is critical.

Mr. Hall: The 60 units will be second homes, like remote hotel rooms. It'll be rentable when the owners aren't there.

Mr. Malone: You build a core hotel and clubhouse and then the ancillary residential units become rentable units that are managed by the hotel component.

Ms. Fitzgerald: Is it a bit early to talk about the pool? The size and whether it would be inside or outside?

Mr. Ford: Right now it's drawn at 25 meters long by 30 feet and it's outside. That's a placeholder for what it could be.

Ms. Fitzgerald: When the former pool was there it was fully used. A lot of people had memberships to it.

Mr. Ford: I think this creating multiple nodes creates the potential to have a separate fitness membership.

Chairman Maron: Do any of the houses have the possibility for year-round people to live?

Mr. Malone: These will be fully insulated and year-round livable.

Mr. Ford: The narrowest part of the buffer is no less than 300 feet wide. It can obviously get a little bit narrower, but I still think we want to keep that buffer there.

Mr. Malone: I think that, as Dan was pointing out during the slide presentation, we're trying to have the architecture of the community be reflective of the existing architecture of Westport.

Mr. Ike Tyler: The concept before was to move closer to the town and village, but his is ideal because the neighbors won't be affected.

Chairman Maron: I know in the previous plan the neighbors were concerned about water runoff.

Ms. Nancy Page: Where is the main access into it?

Mr. Malone: The same road that's there now. We're just at a conceptual level right now. There are what we call programming elements that have to take place. We are doing a

market analysis of what the club looks like – what the real estate looks like in terms of what it sells for. When all of those elements are derived, then it gets translated back to the planners and architects. This gets the conversation going.

Ms. Page: So the hamlet expansion is next to Stevenson?

Mr. Hall: Initially we were talking about moving it to everything east of the Stevenson Road, but now it's been pushed back.

Mr. Malone: It's really driven by what we need and we don't want to get into a complicated Adirondack permitting process. By staying at 99 units or less, we don't have to go through a lengthy process.

Mr. Hainer: This is going to be year-round, right? Is there going to be skiing?

Mr. Malone: Cross-country skiing is an obviously natural thing that you can do out there. We haven't investigated snowmaking for cross-country skiing, but certainly the water capacity is there if we wanted to. Cross-country skiing is not a huge growth sport, but it's very accessible and affordable.

Ms. Page: I think that as a town we're trying to patch it together so that there are trails.

Mr. Hall: We'd like to see some kind of access to hiking trails in the hills.

Mr. Malone: For a person who's buying, who lives down country, they come up here and they've got a lake, golf course, skiing, hiking, and access to Whiteface or Vermont. There are plenty of year-round opportunities.

Ms. Hall: We can't keep the club open now because it doesn't have insulation.

Chairman Maron: Even if you were to consider it, I guess the first thing is to figure out how much it might cost and then see if there are any grants available. What does it cost to insulate a building like that?

Ms. Hall: The problem is underneath – insulating the flooring.

Chairman Maron: One thing to keep in mind as you go forward is that New York State has something called the Empire State Trail, a bike trail that goes up through. For State economic development grants, if you can tie anything to the trail you get extra points. The trail comes down Stevenson Road. Back here could be a mountain bike area too.

Mr. Hall: I guess we're just seeing if there's input from you as we work further into the design and then we'll come up with our application for a permit.

Ms. Severance: I don't see how changing the hamlet line there will bother anybody.

Chairman Maron: I think it's fine. I think it's great to keep that forest buffer. My question was access – all of a sudden that little road there is going to have more traffic. Maybe that's the price we have to pay.

Ms. Severance: The nice part is the access is only about a hundred yards up the road. It's not like you're traveling very far.

Mr. Malone: When you come off Liberty Street onto Main Street you have a really good line of sight in both directions for making turns. From that perspective, you're not creating a traffic hazard.

Chairman Maron: I was thinking more of people with houses there and increased traffic flow.

Mr. Malone: One of the things that I always look at about Westport, Essex, and a portion of Willsboro is we're really one of the only places on the north side of the lake where the railroad lines don't intersect with the waterfront. It creates a unique situation and opportunity that hasn't been capitalized on.

Mr. Ford: We're shooting for the 99 development units, no more than that. We're not shifting the hamlet to get more density or anything like that.

Mr. Hipps: Has the Park Agency given any idea what the time frame for their decision will be?

Mr. Malone: There's a hearing in mid October.

Mr. Hainer: It's on the 11th and 12th. Then there has to be a public hearing here and all neighbors will be notified and will have a chance to come in and express their views. Then it goes back to the board for approval and then the town has to incorporate that section into our zoning law. That's another process to go through.

Mr. Malone: You also have to expand the sewer district.

Mr. Hipps: Will that be a separate district?

Mr. Hainer: No, it'll be an extension of the existing system.

Mr. Hipps: They deemed the application complete?

Mr. Hainer: Yes. The meeting is available watch online.

Mr. Hipps: At some point I will have to recuse myself because I own a property that's adjacent.

Mr. Hall: Do you like the buffer zone?

Mr. Hipps: Yes, it's good.

Mr. Hall: Are there any other questions that anyone has about it? Comments?

Ms. Fitzgerald: So far, so good.

Mr. Hall: We could shorten the range up too; I don't think many people can hit over 300 yards.

Chairman Maron: Any more questions? Thanks a lot for coming.

[Representatives for the Golf Course left at this time]

Chairman Maron: There's not much more to cover.

Mr. Hainer: You have Dave Reckahn's resignation so you have to make a recommendation to fill his spot with one of the alternates.

Chairman Maron: I don't know if we're ready to do that now.

Mr. Hainer: Robin's an alternate and she's been here. I don't know if Mike has been.

Ms. Fitzgerald: I think he's gotten too busy.

Mr. Hainer: You can make a recommendation to the Town Board.

Chairman Maron: We've had a resignation: David Reckahn. We have a couple of alternates and we can recommend one to take his place. Does anybody have any thoughts?

Ms. Fairbanks: I recommend Robin.

Mr. Hipps: I agree.

Ms. Fitzgerald: Will you make that a motion?

Ms. Fairbanks: I'll make that motion.

Ms. Fitzgerald: I'll second.

Chairman Maron: Any discussion? I think it's great having Robin here. On a motion to recommend Robin be appointed as a full member: all in favor? Approved.

Ms. Fairbanks: Does that give us a full board?

Mr. Hainer: We just have to try to find another alternate.

Chairman Maron: Is there any other business?

Mr. Hainer: I want to discuss the whole concept of the golf course project. The map amendment is currently at the APA and they'll go through their process and hold a public hearing here, sending letter to landowners within 500 feet of the project. The Golf Club can be there to answer questions, although the map amendment itself it not dependent on the development. The APA will take the information from the neighbors and make a determination. There's the other issue of the sewer system – extending the district and whether we have to prove the build-out of that 30 acres.

Mr. Hipps: You mean the capacity of the sewage treatment plant?

Mr. Hainer: Right. We supposedly have a report that's coming soon that will help us in determining that. There are two ways to bring the sewer up there: one is by having a contract with that section and the other is to include it in the district. Either way, the DEC would be involved and the APA won't give the hamlet designation unless the sewer can be put there; it'll be conditional. That 30 acres will have to be incorporated into our zoning ordinance. They need about another 20 building rights to make the 99. Right now they have 40 acres at ½ acre zoning giving them 80 building rights. They need 19 more, so theoretically you can zone 10 acres of the 30 as ½ acre zoning and the rest could be put at a higher classification. In the future, if they go over the 99 units you'll see the APA come into the picture. That'll keep them from increasing the number of units. But if they do, and we want to reclassify some of the other 20 acres because the sewer is capable of supporting it, then that can be done. As of now, maybe if you just do the 10 acres that would be enough to get their project up to the 99 units.

Mr. Hipps: Does our zoning amendment have to be approved by the APA?

Mr. Hainer: Yes. There's a SEQR process. It's going to be about timing. I called the APA today to try to get some of these things to run concurrently. Before they can give us an application they need to define their project. They need to send a jurisdictional inquiry form to the APA spelling out exactly what they're going to do and then the APA will send back a determination saying it's non-jurisdictional to them. The only part that's a Class B would be the relocation of the three holes. The rest of it is in the hamlet and not Class B, but would require a special permit. With the SEQR process you have to notify all these agencies. It's a Type I SEQR because of the historic district which means you can only do a negative declaration or environmental impact statement. The involved agencies: APA, Department of Health, DEC, SHPO, DOT, Essex County Planning Board, and then the Town Board for water and sewer.

Mr. Hipps: Are you expecting any problems with that?

Mr. Hainer: No. I don't think there will be a problem with the water and the build-out for sewer is already there.

Chairman Maron: Do they pay to extend the line? They pay for the sewer work, right?

Mr. Hainer: Yes. I'm not sure where the main connection is on their property, but they're responsible for everything. There are certain sections of our law that this applies to. One that you have to think about is Fees, Escrow Accounts and Performance Guarantees (Land Use Law Section 2.080) and then Additional Fees (Section 2.081). When Rolling Hills did their project we got like \$20,000 up front and then another \$10,000 for us to hire an independent review agency to oversee the work. That's something we'll have to discuss.

Ms. Fairbanks: Are these just single-family homes?

Chairman Maron: They could be if I understood right. How do we determine the contractors that we work with?

Mr. Hainer: I don't know who they're using.

Ms. Fitzgerald: I'd like to have a list in our emails of all these individuals and their positions.

Mr. Hainer: I made a call to the APA as far as the Class B because our law says that if it's Class B *and* special permit to review it as special permit. However, those are separate things and we may have to go through the separate criteria for each. The Class B requires the APA to be notified. It's just a matter of how they can comment on it – how involved they are. I think we want to use them as a resource too.

Chairman Maron: Is it going to be as complicated as Rolling Hills?

Mr. Hainer: I don't think so. The layout is simpler.

Ms. Fitzgerald: And they're not dealing with wetlands.

Mr. Hainer: It's going to be done in stages. With SEQR you can't segment these things – you have to present the whole plan. So when they present the plan they may only start with in one section and not begin another for five years. I don't know what their timeframe is.

Ms. Fitzgerald: The original SEQR will hold?

Mr. Hainer: Yes. That's where the consultants would come in. They would look at our law and see the best way to handle it.

Ms. Fitzgerald: Are you looking at a pre public hearing on this project at all?

Mr. Hainer: No. The only public hearing will be on the map amendment. The group has the option to be here to answer questions about any future development.

Ms. Fitzgerald: I think we should encourage them to come.

Chairman Maron: Are there any other comments?

Ms. Fitzgerald: I move we adjourn.

Mr. Anson: Second.

Chairman Maron: All in favor? Meeting adjourned at 8:04 p.m.

Minutes respectfully submitted,

Julie Schreiber, Secretary