

BRHSSC Minutes of November 19, 2003 Public Forum on Sites Selected for Affordable Housing

Meeting in Lower Town Hall called to order at 7:40 p.m. by Selectman Lawrence O'Brien who turned the meeting over to the BRHSSC.

Members of BRHSSC present: Stephen Shugrue (clerk), James Gardner (Co-Chair), Lydia Pastuszek (co-chair), Richard Davison, Michael Fee, Joseph Bausk, Mark Ensign. Also: Lawrence O'Brien, Selectman.

Mr. Gardner, as moderator of the Forum, stated that questions and comments from the public should be limited to technical questions this evening. The Selectmen will hold another meeting on December 8th to listen to non-technical questions and comments. Mr. Gardner also said that the selection process was still on going.

Presenter Lydia Pastuszek stated that the BRHSSC's mission was to locate buildable sites and to do so openly. Ms Pastuszek stated that North Rd was off the site list due to issues with water, drainage, access and/or probable cost of construction. Further, Old Meadow would probably have one of its two sites removed, and we are looking for your comments tonight.

Gary Dean of Wilshire Rd. thanked the Committee for its efforts and brought to its attention a ten foot high ledge and a drainage ditch where access would be. He closed by saying he would welcome new neighbors.

Greg Bochicchio, Pine Ridge, on behalf of the Old Lancaster, Pine Ridge, Washbrook Neighborhood Association asked which of the "three phases" of the process we were in now, the dates of each phase and the last date for public input. Ms Pastuszek said we were in the preliminary phase of gathering information. On December 2, we would deliver the preliminary report to the Selectmen and Phase 2 would be when we gave the final report to the Selectmen (Dec. 16). Phase 3 would "probably" be before the end of the year, but the Selectmen would meet on the issue the first week of January. Mr. O'Brien added that the closing date for Town Warrant articles was not yet determined--sometime between December 31 and January 15, 2004.

Dan Ladd of Blueberry Hill Lane asked if the BR Committee included the impact of traffic and the density of the neighborhood. He also questioned having to break through a cul-de-sac. Ms. Pastuszek said the BR Committee did consider density and neighborhood compatibility. She added that 1-4 buildings did not mean there would be 4 buildings. Mr. Ensign interjected that the Selectmen would consider issues Mr. Ladd was concerned with.

Jeff Bodenstad of Newbridge Rd. stated that 21 acres of the Newbridge site was the acreage for the entire Nixon School property and the current Nixon School comes to within 120 feet of Newbridge Rd. He concludes that the SHA buildings then would have to be located without a set-back that is consistent with houses already on Newbridge.

Mr Davison urged the BR committee to clarify the acreage that would be built on on all the selected sited.

Arthur Cote of North Rd. asked the BR Committe to confirm that the North Rd site is off the list of selected sites. Mr. Gardner said it was.

Arthur Doty of Robbins Rd. asked if we were accompanied by "experts" on our site walk of Robbins Rd. because there was lot of drainage there. Ms Pastuszek said the Conservation Commission had OK'd the site. Mr Ensign said before any buildings went up approval would have to come from the Board of Health, Conservation, etc.

Linda Muri of Peakham Rd spoke re the Hudson Rd Site. She said the site was actually 2 acres not the 13 acres it was referred to in the newspaper. She said the land was sold to the town by her aunt as "junk land" and would be subject to law suits if it was used as house lots. Mr Gardner relied that the assessor's office was the source of acreage. But Mr Davison's suggestion would be implemented.

Jeff Bernsein of 14 BHLane pointed out that survey of the whole street showed that the map in use was inaccurate, and that the BRHSSC needed to make sure that the access to the woods was wheel chair accessible since there was a wheel chair resident.

Vincet Quirk of 43 Hobart Rd. Asked if homes were built on school properties, would all setbacks used by the SHA have to be approved by TM. The answer by Ms Pastuszek was that setback restrictions were relaxed. Mr Quirk also asked if school bonding would be affected if housing was built on the property. Answer: Town counsel and School Com. would look over deed. Questions: will there be enough room for the Nixon School to add 6 classrooms, does the School Com have any say in the transfer? Ans. The School Com has to approve the transfer to the SHA.

Penny Day of 62 BHL Cited a "large population of children" on her street. A large number of new homes would mean an inability to control the speed of vehicles in and out. Property values would be affected. There was "glacial pit" (kettle hole) to contend with on the conservation land. Creatures would not be able to live there. There would be an increase on animals on the homes on the street because the new Jr. High disrupted foxes, etc.

Mitchell Bistany of 21 Old Meadow said that there were too many SHA buildings in the area of 25 sq miles. There is a brook, not enough space to squeeze in a driveway. Ms Pastuszek said the property on the left side of the map would be taken off. Mark said that 1989 engineering plans have already checked for water and found it not to be prohibitive.

Marjorie Teig of 42 Robbins Rd said that the deed for the Robbins Rd. property was not clear and claimed that in 1984 TM voted to sell the property to abutters. (BRHSSC note: Actual vote authorized Selectmen to offer the property for sale, but did not specify abutters as purchasers.) They have been waiting for the deed to clear since then. The town counsel was to be looking at the deed. Selectman O'Brien agreed the deed was convoluted. Maybe the vote of TM was too soon.

Scott Herzog of 99 BHL said that the land was owned by the Water District. The map projected on the screen does not show what the street looks like. There are many switch backs.

Jennifer Pinkus of 25 BHL said the a property survey shows 9 feet are missing, therefore that street needs to be re-surveyed. Mr Fee said the committee was looking into that.

Steve Swanger, an SHA commissioner, said that the 1993 or 1994 Town Meeting rejected an Inclusionary Zoning By-law.

Les Riordan of 33 Blueberry Lane wanted information on the frontage of the new houses and if we would need a permit to fill in the holes. Ms. Pastuszek said before building the committee would check on the need for special permits. Mr Fee said it would not be necessary to fill in the holes. That the site is listed for UP TO four units. And the comprehensive permit by the state allows for some town zoning laws to be relaxed for SHA housing.

Tom Pullen of 19 Wash Brook Rd said that the Water District had owned the property at the Washbook and Pine Ridge Sites. That they were supposed to "take care of" the building on the site. Selectman O'Brien said we "have not delved into safety at that level and would not on the 8th (at the next public hearing) either."

Rick Bryant of 3 Wash Brook said that scattered approaches to housing touches a lot of neighborhoods and pits neighborhood against neighborhood. The Governor has touted "smart growth and overlay districts."

Ms Joanne Garlisi of 98 BHL Asked if the Affordable Housing was for Sudbury residents. She was told that Sudbusry residents were given priority.

Paula Adelson of 164 Newbridge asked what would we do if none of these sites worked. She was told that all the sites would be put in a book that ranked their suitability and could be proposed for housing again.

David Simon of 158 Newbridge thought that the "green slice" on the Newbridge site looked very thin. And was there an allowance of 4-5 bedrooms per acre. He was told that up to five bedrooms was allowed for a 5 bedroom house that was built on an acre.

The meeting was adjourned at 9:30 pm.

Respectfully submitted,

Stephen B. Shugrue, Clerk
Blue Ribbon Housing Site Selection Committee

