

CITY OF ROCHESTER
PLANNING BOARD REGULATION COMMITTEE
“Sub-Division and Site Review”
Monday, February 8, 2010 at 6:00 p.m.
City Council Chambers
31 Wakefield Street, Rochester, NH 03867

Members Present

Richard Groat, Chair
David Meader
Nel Sylvain

Alternate Present

Gloria Larochelle, Secretary

Contractor Present

Art Nickless, Norway Plain Associates

Contractor Absent

Chris Berry, Berry Surveying & Engineering

Richard Groat, Chair called the first meeting to order at 6:00 p.m. All members agreed to have Gloria Larochelle as recording secretary.

Goal of the Committee

Richard Groat reviewed the purpose of this committee is to determine those areas of the Sub-Division and Site Review Regulations which are ineffective, inappropriate, or counter-productive.

To re-write the identified portions of the Regulations affected in such a way to promote “Original Intent, appropriateness and clarity”.

Invited Guests

Art Nickless and Chris Berry were invited to discuss those areas of the Subdivision and Site Reviews Regulations that have presented a problem from their point of view.

Richard Groat introduced Art Nickless from Norway Plains and asked that he discuss with all members what he feels that could be improved or reconsidered regarding the Site Review and Subdivision Regulations.

Art Nickless felt biggest issue that comes to mind that zoning; site review and subdivision regulations many times contradict one another and that when reviewing

site plan and subdivision regulations we need to take zoning regulations into consideration.

Richard Groat then commented that regulations are not standard from town to town.

Nel Sylvain also felt it is important to make our regulations more friendly so as to make it easier on applicants and less costly for them.

Art Nickless also commented Rochester, Dover and Somersworth are quite similar on the process they are following. He also commented that the Technical Review Committee (TRC) has more authority in other towns but takes quite a bite of time to get to the Planning Board in comparison to the City of Rochester.

Art Nickless felt there are time issue factors when outside consultants are asked to review a project. He felt that probably + needs to be well defined with the consultant and what the City of Rochester wants reviewed and also given a specific time deadline.

Art Nickless felt some of the City policies are ill defined. Example: Applicant builds everything according to plans then building inspector goes out and then adds something that needs to be added to the plan that probably should have been pointed out at the time the plan was reviewed which then is additional cost to applicant.

Art Nickless pointed out that for new subdivisions standards for road design is 7% and feels there is no flexibility. He recommended we review Astro Standards, which gives more flexibility.

Art Nickless also felt we should reconsider granite curbing in our subdivision regulations because it is not working well.

Dave Meader then discussed the bump outs and the width of parking spaces in downtown Gonic, which was only 5 ½ feet wide, which is inappropriate.

Dave Meader then spoke about street tree requirements in the regulations that have caused problems for water and sewer and safety.

Nel Sylvain then commented that the regulation was based on typical neighborhoods.

Art Nickless then posed the question “Is this appropriate number of lots for piece of land? He suggested we look over the criterias in our subdivision regulations.

Art Nickless also felt the TRC is not holding up the process of applications, but wonders if they are reviewing plans prior to their meeting. He recalled a time when the Planning Board had approved a project that had not been engineered. Art Nickless feels current process is working very well.

Richard Groat thanked Art Nickless for his suggestions and input.

Summary

It was decided by the Committee that the following areas of the regulations would be reviewed:

- 1) Subdivision road grades
- 2) Street tree requirements 5 feet and house lots
- 3) Sidewalk criteria
- 4) Criteria for outside consultants
- 5) Set back requirements to agree with planning regs and zoning regs
- 6) Process of Technical Review Committee

The Committee agreed to send Gloria Larochelle to the February 16 TRC meeting to report to Planning Board on what type of process is followed at this meeting since it may have an impact on how site plan and subdivision regulations are carried out.

Meeting adjourned at 8:00 p.m.

Respectively submitted,

Gloria Larochelle, Secretary