

Topsfield Planning Board

January 20, 2015

Chairman Morrison called the meeting to order at 8:00 PM at the Town Library. Board members present were Martha Morrison, Jeanine Cunniff, Joseph Geller, Ian De Buy Wenniger and Steven Hall. Roberta Knight, Community Development Coordinator was also present.

Visitors: Selectman Dick Gandt; Conservation Member Hoger Luther

Updates: Ms. Knight updated the Board on several issues. First, she noted that Larry Beals was not able to provide a cost estimate relative to responses to the Hickory Beech peer review for this meeting, but would have an estimate to the Board for his services in advance of the next meeting. Second, Ms. Knight informed the Board that she had discussed the tax title issue relative to the Hickory Beech Open Space parcels with Town Counsel Pat Cantor who would refer the documentation to discuss with tax title specialists at Kopelman & Paige.

Chairman Morrison informed the Board that developer Gary Patch now would like to place the house on Lot 4 in its original location on the hill. This decision is most likely the result of legal action by the Association and owners of Lot 3. Ms. Morrison also noted that there is a stormwater drainage issue between Lots 19 and 20 located on Evergreen. The owners of Lot 19 relocated their house on the lot in order to have a walk-out basement and the builder graded the back yard 4 to 6 feet below the natural grade to accomplish this house design. The intermittent stream at the back of the lot has broken through the berm creating a flooding situation. A pipe was installed by landscapers under the sod directing the water from the intermittent stream on Lot 19 to Lot 20.

Conservation Member Holger Luther then gave a summary of the history on Lot 19 relative to the Conservation Commission's involvement. He stated that the water issues on this lot as well as others in the Hickory Beech subdivision were the result of a lack of communication between the original developer, the project engineer and the individual builders. Changes were made in the development of each lot that did not take into account the original stormwater calculations and design plans; moreover, the Town's soils map shows that the lots were developed on red soils that have severe limitations and are considered drumlins.

Development on Drumlins: The above discussion led into Mr. Luther's presentation and findings on the "Difficulties of Dealing with Development on Drumlins in Topsfield". Please see attached copy of presentation dated January 20, 2015 for specific details. Mr. Luther noted as part of a series of recommendations for development in a red area of the Topsfield Soil Map, project engineers need to account for the subsurface conditions of the area since red soils are not amenable to HydroCad modeling; that a final assessment to determine if the drain structures worked as designed should take place a year after completion; and finally integrate the list of recommendations (as stated on the final page) as procedures to be followed in the SWEC Rules & Regulations.

The Board members thanked Mr. Luther for this insightful presentation concerning this serious development issue within the Town.

Warrant Articles: Ms. Knight presented the Board with Ian De Buy Wenniger's comments which were accepted by the Board to Draft 1. See attached document. The members discussed language concerning the slope/total area exemption for Section 51-5 B. and also Common Plan of Development for ANR lots.

Chairman Morrison requested that Ms. Knight contact ZBA Chairman Bob Moriarty to schedule a joint meeting after the ZBA's meeting next Tuesday, January 27th to review the proposed zoning amendments relative to village parking and non-conforming uses.

The meeting was adjourned at 10:06 PM.

Respectfully submitted,

Roberta M. Knight
Community Development Coordinator

Attachments: The Difficulties of Dealing with Development on Drumlins in Topsfield,
January 20, 2015

Draft No. 1 2015 Warrant Articles with IdBW comments, January 20,
2015