

**Topsfield Planning Board**  
September 16, 2008

Chairman Winship called the meeting to order at 7:30 PM. Board members present were Robert Winship, Janice Ablon, Gregor Smith, Ian deBuy Wenniger and Jonathan Young. Roberta Knight, Community Development Coordinator was also present.

**Visitors:** Selectmen Martha Morrison and Dick Gandt; Greg Hochmuth, Nick DiBenedetto, James Evans, Amy Carney, Rob Baker, Frank Iovanella.

**Minutes:** Clerk Janice Ablon made the motion to approve the minutes of September 2, 2008 as amended; seconded by Member Ian deBuy Wenniger; so voted 4-0. Member Jonathan Young was not present for the vote.

**37 Gail Street:** At this time, Chairman Winship commenced the discussion concerning the status of the 37 Gail Street site. He noted that according to Dave Bond the Saturday rain event was registered at three inches (3"). Chairman Winship further stated that he had visited the site on Sunday and noted that the outlet was working with water draining from the detention pond. He also noted it was determined at the September 6 site visit that no planting would take place until the springtime.

Member Gregor Smith noted that he had contacted an associate and received information concerning white pines. There are many varieties of white pines and one needs to get the right variety relative to growth for the replacement of the former white pine buffer strip. Red maples and oaks do not grow as fast. Mr. Smith recommended that the buffer strip be replaced with white pines and that alternative pricing for deciduous tree be provided to the abutters. It was agreed that the replacement trees would be planted between the property line and the underground utility lines in the spring of 2009. The parties need to work out an agreement beforehand otherwise the Planning Board would make the final decision.

**94 South Main Street Continuance:** Chairman Winship called to order the continued public hearing to consider the special permit application of Timothy Collins, represented by N.D. Landscaping Inc., for the removal and replacement of the stone wall located at 94 South Main Street, a designated scenic road. Greg Hockmuth and Nick DiBenedetto were present for the hearing.

The Board noted that the wall reconstruction had been undertaken without the issuance of a permit, and further that the members were displeased with the use of mortar in the construction of the wall replacement which did not lend the wall's design to a true New England stonewall. Chairman Winship read the memo from Tree Warden Dave Bond relative to the replacement wall and the proposed remedy by ND Landscaping which he endorsed.

Mr. DiBenedetto proposed a wall “antiquing” process which upon seeding would create moss coverage over the wall. He presented the Board with pictures of a stonewall with moss coverage that had resulted from this application process. The wall would be at 80% coverage within 30 months. The process would commence at the end of April to early May of 2009.

Member Gregor Smith made the motion to approve the special scenic road permit for 94 South Main Street subject to the following conditions:

1. Continuation of cap consistent with the attached photo and section design plan
2. Relief for mortar coverage on stonewall with an application process known as “antiquing” to create a moss coverage over the wall
3. Removal of excess mortar at top edges at junction of top and side of the existing newly constructed portion of the wall
4. Wall as constructed to roll with terrain

Seconded by Clerk Jan Ablon; so voted 5-0.

It was agreed that the Board would sign the special permit at the next meeting.

**37 Gail Street Reduction Request:** Member Gregor Smith made the motion to approve Reduction Request No. 3 per the Schedule of Values as recommended by Consulting Engineer Dave Varga in the amount of \$37,931.30; seconded by Member Ian deBuy Wenniger; so voted 5-0.

**New Meadows Golf Development ANR:** The Board reviewed the plan submitted by New Meadows Enterprises LLC for an ANR to create the 10.2 acre lot within the New Meadows Golf Course for the elderly housing development to be known as “The Meadows”. The Board noted several deficiencies in the plan as engineered by Eastern Land Surveyors and marked up the plan accordingly for developer Frank Iovanella. Mr. Iovanella stated that he would have his engineers make all the requested revisions and re-submit a revised ANR plan at the next meeting of the Planning Board.

At this time, Member Gregor Smith left the meeting.

**470 Boston Street Proposal Update:** Chairman Winship and Community Development Coordinator Roberta Knight gave an update on the proposed plans of developer Doug

Conn for a 65 unit assisted living facility to be built on the site. When and if plans are formalized, the project would be filed with the Planning Board for a special permit under the use category, and dimensional and density requirements of the underlying ORA District.

**Stonewall Access for Fair Parking:** Chairman Winship informed the Board members that the Planning Board had received a verbal request from resident Ara Aftandilian relative to a temporary widening of the opening in the stonewall along his property on South Main Street. A portion of the field at the corner of Salem Road and South Main Street would be used for parking during the two weekends of the Fair. Essex County Greenbelt holds a conservation easement for this property and has approved the use for temporary parking for only this year. Chairman Winship noted that it is the intention of Mr. Aftandilian to replace the stones that would be removed to widen the width of the access into the field from South Main Street.

Selectman Martha Morrison noted that the frontage along South Main Street was under an Order of Conditions issued by the Conservation Commission for the South Main Street Beautification Project as well as that the property is within the riverfront and flood plain area.

After a discussion on the request, it was the consensus of the members to approve the request. Clerk Jan Ablon noted her concern that if this request were made again in future years, there would be an impact on the proposed sandstone trail that would be installed as part of the South Main Street Beautification Project.

Member Ian deBuy Wenniger made the following motion: In the public interest, the Planning Board approves the temporary removal of stones from the stonewall (up to ten linear feet of stonewall) adjacent to a sixteen foot (16') existing access opening in the wall along South Main Street located on property with legal address of 37 River Road in order to improve temporary vehicle access to the property for week-end Fair parking from October 3 to October 13, 2008; such stones to be replaced by December 1, 2008; and further, any use of such property be contingent upon the terms and limitations approved by the Essex County Greenbelt Association and upon receipt of permits and other approvals as necessary for such use;

Seconded by Member Jonathan Young; so voted 4-0. Member Gregor Smith was not present for the vote.

**Plate Discussion:** Chairman Winship noted that the 1997 action by the Planning Board relative to the approval of the plates for the Subdivision Rules & Regulation requires certification. It was agreed that Chairman Winship would contact David Bond and check with him that all the information is correct, and the Board would then re-adopt a complete set.

The meeting was adjourned at 10:21 PM.

Respectfully submitted,

Roberta M. Knight  
Community Development Coordinator