

## **Topsfield Zoning Board of Appeals**

November 26, 2013

Chairman Moriarty called the meeting to order at 8:00 PM at the Town Library. Board members present were Robert Moriarty, Jody Clineff, David Merrill, David Moniz and Gregor Smith. Roberta Knight, Community Development Coordinator was also present as well as the applicants, their representatives and interested residents. See attendance sheets for specific public hearings.

**Visitors:** Selectmen Richard Gandt and Martha Morrison; Brian Woodland, Alan Grenier, Sean Ward, Eric DiGrazia, Joel DiGrazia, Candace Ward, Melinda Gutman Michael Gutman, Jeanine Cunniff, Joseph Geller, Kerry Cheever, George Rogers, Lois Sneddon, Donna Page, Jamie Peirce.

**7 Grove Street Site Plan Modification:** At 8:01PM, Chairman Moriarty initiated the review of the request by Brian Woodland, Grove Realty Partners, LLC for a minor modification to the approved site plan dated April 13, 2007, as amended, for 7 Grove Street relative to parking spaces for said location.

Mr. Woodland presented the Board with the updated site plan dated September 21, 2013 which incorporated the rail trail easement, the corridor and 32 parking spaces required by the 2007 special permit. The trail in front of the building was reconfigured and created an additional 9 feet of open space. There are 32 parking spaces for the building which include four (4) parallel spaces in front of the building.

Rail Trail Chairman Joseph Geller noted that there was a three foot safety shoulder to the curb; however, when a car door is parallel parked in front of the building the car door when opened infringes into this safety buffer. He would like the parallel spaces removed from in front of the building.

Selectman Gandt noted that having the parking in front of the building was not the best situation for the rail trail and requested that the Board waive the requirement for these four spaces by reducing the total number of spaces.

Member Gregor Smith noted that he saw no problem with the parallel spaces.

Chairman Moriarty suggested that Mr. Woodland black out the lines and place planters there. If it is determined that the spaces are not needed, the Board could address the issue of the number of parking spaces in the future.

The Board determined that the request was a minor modification to the previously approved Site Plan and thus a public hearing with appropriate notice and publication was not required. Member David Moniz moved that the Board amend the April 24, 2007 decision and approve the modified site plan; all in accordance with the copy of the revised Site Plan dated September 21, 2013 entitled "Plan of Land in Topsfield, MA

Showing Proposed Parking Lot and Trail Layout “Topsfield Station”; prepared for Grove Realty Partners LLC; dated September 21, 2013”; a copy of which is on file with the Zoning Board of Appeals; seconded by Member Gregor Smith; so voted 5-0.

**116 Boston Street:** At 8:35PM, Chairman Moriarty called to order the public hearing to consider the application of Syllogistic Management Solution, LLC for premises located at 116 Boston Street for (1) a special permit for the conversion of a residential dwelling with horse farm to a conference and event facility pursuant to Article V, Section 5.04 and Article III, Table of Use Regulations Section 2. Community Facilities, Sub-section 2.17 Conference and Event Facility for said facility located in the Outlying Residential and Agricultural District; and (2) site plan review pursuant to Article IX of the Zoning Bylaw.

Attorney Alan Grenier, the Applicant’s representative, addressed the Board explaining that Syllogistic Management Solution, a software training group, would like to convert the residential use of the property for use as a retreat style training center under the conference and event facility use category as allowed by the Topsfield Zoning By-law. He noted that historical use has been a residential building lot and horse farm comprising of a single family home, a barn with a second floor apartment and first floor garage area, swimming pool, driveway and septic system on a 13 acre site. Attorney Grenier then introduced the President of Syllogistic Sean Ward to explain the company’s objectives and plans for the property.

Mr. Sean Ward explained that Syllogistic Management Solutions, LLC is a software group providing Yardi implementation and training services for the property management sector and would use the property as a retreat style conference center. The intention is to use the site for small day time training sessions for up to 3 days. There are 15 employees that would use 8 rooms for business space as support staff for the training sessions. Most likely at any one time there would be approximately 18-20 individuals at the site with a maximum capacity of 30. The barn would eventually house a technology center located in the large entry space. The intention is to preserve the buildings and grounds. There would be no exterior renovations to the buildings at this time. Mr. Ward introduced an historic picture of the property showing the original location of buildings and water tower. He noted that eventually he would like to restore the exteriors as depicted in the picture. His intentions are to preserve the natural historic state of the buildings on the site. The intent is for the property to look as it does today as a residential lot. However, there will be site work to provide parking spaces; possible driveway improvements for access and egress for clients as directed by Topsfield public safety departments and MassDOT.

Attorney Grenier asked if the Board would entertain the separation of the special use permit and the site plan review and vote on the special permit request. Chairman Moriarty responded that the Board’s policy was not to separate the special permit for use and the accompanying site plan review. The Board would require further discussion as to how to effectively limit what may happen on the site to limit possible expansion of use and may look to a preservation agreement.

At this time, Planning Board Chair Martha Morrison reminded the Board that the ZBA would be required to conduct the stormwater and erosion control management permit review as part of the site plan review. Chairman Moriarty then acknowledged the need for an independent peer review. Ms. Knight informed the Board that the Town has been using Beals and Thomas Inc. for peer reviews specifically for stormwater by the Planning Board. The Board directed Ms. Knight to work out the details. The public hearing was continued to the January 21, 2014 meeting at 8:00PM.

**Minutes and FY 13 Annual Report:** Member David Moniz made the motion to approve the minutes of October 22, 2013 as written and the Fiscal 2013 Annual Report as written; seconded by Member Jody Clineff: so voted 5-0.

The meeting was adjourned at 9:37 PM

Respectively submitted,

Roberta M. Knight  
Community Development Coordinator