

Pownal Planning Board
Site Walk
August 5, 2020
Meadow Brook Estates & Apple Blossom Estates (Major Subdivision)

Planning Board Members attending: Matt St Cyr, John Bowdren, Jesse Peters, Christine Watson, Gabe DiGristina, Matt Altieri, Marika Clark also attending Town Planner Tony Dater

Public attending: Michael Pratt, Drew Tieman, Rob Foster, Judith Foster, Andy O'Brien, Wendy Allen, Matt DeGrandpre, Cole Harrison, Rebecca Puffer, Michelle Harrison, Todd Harrison, Todd Wellin, Wellens King, Melissa Schulz, Ben Schulz, Adam Haynes and Luke Zaborowski.

There were 4 other members of the public who met the Group at the other side of the Property, I did not get all their names but think it was Rhonda Jones, Doyle Marchant and two others, if anyone remembers their names please advise at the next Regular meeting of the Board in August.

The Site walk started at 6:07, Chairman Matt gave an intro from the Board to the Public and handed off to Michelle Harrison from Grey Ghost Rentals, LLC, the Developer. Michelle led us to the Northeast corner of the Lot where Apple Blossom Drive comes in from Elmwood Road, we noted the center line of the Road.

Michael Pratt noted that his Dug Well was very close to the proposed road and had concerns about contamination and whether additional drilled wells would affect his well, he also mentioned that the Road seemed very close to his property line and noted that his house was about 15 feet from the property line. Various discussions later talked about possible solutions to Mr. Pratt's concerns, with some suggestions from the Developers including Annual testing of Mr. Pratt's well for say 5 years and monitoring and fixing if any contamination occurs, also perhaps offering to drill Mr. Pratt a well for his property, (while they were having the well drilling company out to drill the other lots wells, might be a discount for the Developers). Other Solutions included moving the Water Cistern across Apple Blossom Road to Mr. Pratt's side and moving the Road itself as far over in the road right of way to gain addition feet of distance between the road and property line, also mentioned were vegetative buffers along the property line. Mr. Pratt noted that he had looked for a while to find a house in Pownal and did not desire a corner lot, which the building of Apple Blossom Drive would then make of his lot.

We stopped at the corner of Lots 9 and 12 and then walked on to the center of the Cul-de-Sac and viewed the corner of Lots 10 and 11 we noted test pits for Lots 9, 10 11 and 12. Many of the test pit flags were blown down by the previous night's Tropical Storm, Isaias.

Drew Tieman, who abuts Lot 7 noted that depending on where the placement of a house on Lot 10 might be it would affect his views.

These Lots are very open with slight rolling terrain.

Several Planning Board Members expressed the wish that the Developers might try to bring in Mark Cenci or a representative (who did the Geology and water studies for the Plan) for the Final Approval Public Hearing to help explain to the Public about the aquifers and water issues on the Lot(s).

Todd Harrison pointed out several test pits that had been dug fairly deep to get a picture and data about how water was moving through the property.

We moved on to the 19 +/- acres of the Open Space area and proceeded on to the Meadow Brook Road side of the Plan, along the way Judith Foster expressed her concerns about water quality in the open space and the use of pesticides, herbicides, fertilizers and road salt. Michelle Harrison stated that the DEP was very strict and that on the Meadow Brook Road Lots it was to be written into the Deeds that the Stormwater runoff will be tested, by an independent agency, annually. Matt asked that this language be applied to the HOA agreement and Michelle H said she would bring it up with her Lawyer. The Lots on the Apple Blossom Drive do not have this restriction as the movement of water would not rise to the level of adding it to the deeds.

Matt and others went over the bank (avoiding poison ivy and barbed wire) to where Meadow Brook Road would intersect with Merrill Road, many concerns were expressed about speed along the road and safety, the site lines looked good, but very hilly road here, Select Board Member Andy O'Brien mentioned that the Town was talking to the DOT about lowering the speed limit on Merrill Road. Concerns raised about how much of the bank would need to be graded away and trees removed to have a relatively level entrance for the road, the top of the bank is about 6-8 feet above the road. Fire Chief (and Planning Board Member) Jesse Peters asked that the mowing above the Cisterns be added to the HOA agreement, there was also discussion of the color of the pipes that come out of the cistern, with the developer noting other towns wanted various bright color scenes for the pipe coming from their cisterns, the Chief and Board thought that this would not be a problem and a muted color scene would be OK.

We then walked along Lot 1 where it was noted by Michelle the narrowness of the Lot might make a ranch style home a better fit for this lot and issues of screening and house placement were raised by Rhonda.

We then walked along the center of the road noting lots 2,3,4 and 5, Test Pits were noted on these, the Flags on this side of the Plan were not blown down, much more rolling terrain here.

We noted that we had not looked at Lot 6, which gains frontage and access from Merrill road, not sure if it had been flagged, or if test pits had been dug, but there were concerns from Abutters about where the building envelope was and high water concerns during heavy rain events, The Board and the Harrisons will consider doing a separate site walk later to address concerns. Lot 6 is not part of the HOA, but is including in this plan.

Matt asked about landscaping and was there a plan, Michelle mentioned that she had thought of Apple trees along the Apple Blossom Drive Side and wildflower areas along the Meadow Brook Road side, (Board Members are encouraged to go through the HOA agreement in the presented plan on the Town website, in regards to many issues brought up.) We also talked about signage associated with the two roads (above and beyond the regular street signs issued by the Town) The Harrisons thought they would like something but were not sure how it would look at this time.

In regards to Mr. Pratts concerns, see above, Michelle mused about allowing a less wide road on the Apple Blossom Drive to allow more buffer space, the view from the Planning Board was that was not something we would be favorably inclined to, with thoughts to safety equipment and kids on bikes, etc. but that the Applicant could request a waiver.

Gabe noted several discussions about how the number of potential students in all the houses and how that would affect the Schools and budgets, he also noted that the project was unlikely to be built all at once and the Developers indicated building out the project over 3+ years, so that would buffer the number of potential students over time.

Matt Altieri also took notes at the meeting and we can compare and add to these minutes at the upcoming meeting.

I should note that I did not see any iron or steel surveyors pins placed to delineate the separate lots, they may be their, but if not the placement of these marked surveyors pins should be added as a condition of Final Plan approval, for this Site Walk wooden stakes with flags denoted Lot corners, in past Site walks the placement of these pins with the surveyors Number stamped on them, and height of these pins off the ground was noted for future reference.

The Board felt that enough issues were raised that they would like to discuss them at a workshop scheduled for Wednesday, August 12.

We walked back across the Lot to where we started and adjourned at 7:57 pm

Respectfully submitted,

John Bowdren