

The Chair called the meeting to order at 7:00 pm.

I. Roll Call

Present: Chair Joe Cardello, Dr. Lucien Benoit, Bruce Santa Anna, Ed Magill.

Absent: John O'Donnell.

Also present: Town Planner, Michael Phillips and Assistant Town Solicitor, Bob Rossi.

II. Development Plan Review--Grapevine Landscape Service, Inc.

Location: 1184 Providence Pike,

Assessor's Plat 11, Lot 225

Zoning: RA-65 Rural Agriculture

Erin Gallogly, project manager from Marc Nyberg Associates, addressed the Board to respond to some questions and requests from the previous meeting. Ms. Gallogly stated that she had submitted test results (Board had requested that the well be tested for contamination), the soil evaluation had been completed, they have verified that there is no ledge, the abandoned well and existing cesspool have been located on the plans, ingress and egress to the property have been labeled on the plans with accompanying notes, a handicapped parking area has been designated on the plans, and the Building Inspector has written a letter stating that the building does comply with ADA regulations.

The Chair asked if the handicapped parking space could be moved closer to the door, unless they are planning on putting in a ramp. Ms. Gallogly stated that the space can be moved in front of the retail entrance. Dr. Benoit stated that the business should not have customers walking through the garage to get to the office, as this may affect the business insurance policy.

The Chair also asked if, in case a new septic system needed to be installed, it could be installed in the place where the test pit was dug (adjacent to the building). Ms. Gallogly stated that it can be located in that spot.

Mr. Santa Anna made a motion to approve the site plan, with the modification of the handicapped parking space being moved closest to the retail entrance door. Dr. Benoit seconded the motion. Planning Board vote was as follows: AYE: Mr. Magill, Chair Mr. Cardello, Mr. Santa Anna, Dr. Benoit. Motion passed, with a vote of 4-0.

III. Ordinance Review

a.) Sign Ordinance

Mr. Phillips stated that at the Ordinance Review Committee meeting on January 16, 2008, the sign ordinance had been discussed briefly. Some questions were brought up on commercial/plaza signs. Mr. Phillips spoke with the town's consultant, who didn't see the need to

change the proposed ordinance. The Board discussed the plaza sign section of the ordinance.

The Chair stated that he is not comfortable with the maximum sign size, especially the maximum refers to “per sign.” Mr. Phillips stated that the maximum size includes a limitation that the signage does not exceed 5% of the total building frontage. Mr. Phillips showed the Board pictures of sample signs. The Chair asked if there would be any limitation placed on letter height. Mr. Phillips stated that he and the consultants had considered that, but went with the 5% limit instead. Dr. Benoit said that he would guess that large companies have been advised by their marketing teams to keep signage rational. He stated that the Board must look at this objectively; businesses need to promote their stores in order to be successful. Most have standardized sign sizes that are proportional to building size. He added that this ordinance should not be so restrictive that businesses are not able to use their standardized sign size. Mr. Santa Anna replied that the ordinance should not be tailored to a few stores, and that businesses have the right to go to the Zoning Board for larger signs. He stated that he is concerned with the design of signs. He is concerned that the changes to the ordinance would allow businesses to do whatever type signs they choose, as long as they meet the size requirements. Mr. Phillips stated that design parameters are included in the ordinance, which includes elements such as lighting.

Mr. Magill asked what the town's main objective is in proposing a new sign ordinance. Mr. Phillips stated that the current ordinance is too restrictive and virtually every business is going to have to go for a variance. He added that almost every town in the state has a shopping center sign ordinance. He stated that the town is redoing the whole zoning ordinance; this is part of it. The Zoning Board has told applicants that the town is working on a new sign ordinance and some are waiting for this new ordinance before going to the Zoning Board for review.

Mr. Phillips stated that the Ordinance Review Committee would be looking at this again in the future, so if the Board has any comments, please let him know so the Board can make a recommendation.

b.) Municipal Subsidy Ordinance – Low & Moderate Income Housing

Mr. Phillips informed the Board that in order for Rhode Island Housing to count low & moderate income housing that is not subsidized by a state program, it must receive a municipal subsidy and an ordinance must be in place. The Slater Mill project has people waiting to rent low/mod units. Mr. Phillips would like the Board to make a recommendation so this can move to the Town Council for a public hearing. Mr. Phillips stated that the subsidy can be in the form of a density bonus or an internal subsidy.

The Chair pointed out some typographical errors in the ordinance.

Mr. Phillips made notes of these errors. Mr. Magill asked what AMI stands for and asked to have a definition added to the ordinance if it's not already in there.

Dr. Benoit made a motion to send a favorable recommendation, including corrections and clarifications discussed, to the Town Council. Mr. Santa Anna seconded the motion. Planning Board vote was as follows: AYE: Mr. Magill, Chair Mr. Cardello, Mr. Santa Anna, Dr. Benoit. Motion passed, with a vote of 4-0.

IV. Planning Board Issues & Concerns

a.) Elizabeth Avenue – Update

Mr. Phillips and Mr. Rossi updated the Board on the status of the Elizabeth Ave. road work. They had a meeting with the developers on January 16, 2008. They are working on a plan to correct the road work. PARE Engineering will work on a plan, and hopefully it will be ready for the Board's review in about a month. The Chair asked that the plan include a schedule of dates for when the work will be done. He said that we need to force the schedule so it won't be pushed into the fall months.

Mr. Santa Anna asked if there will be any action taken on calling in the bond, or if the developer is going to be given another chance to get the work done properly. Mr. Rossi stated that calling in the bond needs to be approved by the Town Council. At this point, they are

giving the developer one more chance, working with PARE's plans to get the work done properly. The Chair stated that they need to be definitive with a date for when the plan is due and that PARE should give an estimate of when the work can be completed. He also said that if nothing is received by February 21, 2008, a letter should be sent to the Mr. Mesolella that the town is still waiting for the plan. The Chair stated that he would like to have a plan by March so the work can start in May.

The Board discussed ways that bonds can be done away with in the future, including cash bonds, a quasi-bond/cash arrangement, and cash for small restoration bonds. Mr. Rossi said there are a lot of options available, and they could look into these options for the future.

Mr. Magill made a motion to adjourn at 8:22 pm, seconded by Mr. Santa Anna, with all in favor.

**Respectfully submitted,
Angela Pugliese
Planning Board Secretary**