

Planning Board  
Town of Hinsdale, NH  
Meeting August 15, 2017

Present: Chair Sean Leary, Selectman Mike Darcy, Members Stefan Zielonko, Zeb Hildreth, Megan Bassett, Tom Woodbury. Mo Klein was excused. Thirty members of the public were present.

6:30 pm Chair Leary called the meeting to order and read the agenda for an Informal Discussion with the Board pertaining to an easement at Tax Map 43 Lot 2, which is recorded by deed, previous Sub-Division approved 6-20-2017. Chair Leary explained that the easement was brought to the attention of the Board after the approval. Since the minutes reflect no change, Chair Leary wanted the abutters notified of the change in case they had any questions or concerns. Jim O'Malley explained this is for public clarification. Joe Boggio explained that the ROW is on the deed and didn't change the boundary line adjustment in any way. Edwin Smith explained it is the same ROW that has been there. The ROW is for his four-acre parcel that he has no immediate plans of improving or subdividing, it just wasn't noted on the plans.

Mr. Rogers, abutter, was shown clarification on the map. He was satisfied.

Selectman Darcy made a motion to file the Mylar at Cheshire County Registry of Deeds. He was seconded by S. Zielonko. The motion passed unanimously.

6:40 pm Chair Leary read the public notice for an Application for Minor Site Plan Development Review submitted by New England School for Girls, Tax Map 48 lot 1, 89 Butler Ave, in the RA District. Applicant proposes to provide an educational institution in the two-family home.

S. Zielonko made a motion to accept the site plan. He was seconded by Z. Hildreth. The motion passed unanimously.

Jeff Coran, representing New England School for Girls explained that it is a residence for up to eight females, age ranging from 13-17. These girls will undergo a 60-day academic and clinical assessment while in the home. Then the faculty makes recommendations for the girl's school district. No student drives, only faculty have that privilege. We have similar programs in residential areas, we are good neighbors and are very respectful of our abutters. We actually improve homes that we purchase. I have two children of my own and they are on the campus in Bennington often, it is very safe.

**The following questions were asked by the public and answered by Jeff Coran representing New England School for Girls (NESG).**

Paul Fisher, 46 Butler Ave., explained that there is a 16' wide ROW that goes over my property. Is there a set width qualification for ROW's? (The Board explained that there is no minimum width required).

He explained that they have horses on the property. What if someone comes on his property and gets hurt by the horse. The NESG will take responsibility for the girls and their actions, full responsibility).

Iris Polley, 41 Butler Ave., asked what are the young women being assessed for? (Some of the

girls may be receiving failing grades in school, other may be displaying emotional disabilities. This is their first step, a way to be diagnosed. There are no programs like this in NH currently. The closest program is in Bennington VT. The NESG has been looking for the first step program, prior to the Bennington School, for NH residents. Currently there are girls in the Bennington program from Plymouth, Gorham, Littleton, Salem and other towns).

Are there safety nets in place? (The NESG will install alarms in the home and video cameras outside. While being assessed, the girls are on their best behavior, they want to go home). How many people are on staff and what do you offer? (The NESG has incredible staff. Teachers, nurses, assessors, therapists. The faculty work in three shifts and do not live in the home).

Does the New England School for Girls have a business license? (Yes since 2015. NESG took over the Bennington School and have moved the boys out to make the campus for girls. NESG have other residential properties in Vermont.

Ken Dixon, 57 Butler Ave., explained that there are already many issues with the 16' wide ROW. His mail box has been taken out a few times with passing snow plows. To add more traffic on the ROW he fears that more harm will come to his property.

Lisa Dixon, 57 Butler Ave., explained that they are the next legal address to 89 Butler Ave. The home at 89 is a two-family home, it is a dead-end road. Her fear was with addition traffic, who is responsible to maintain the road. At this time, they do.

Seth Stafford, 164 Brattleboro Rd., explained that many people drive down Butler, take a left and go right over his lawn, they don't drive slow either. He also explained that he would hope the Planning Board remembers the Spirit of the Ordinance, this would be a commercial use in a residential area, it isn't justified.

He asked if in the future they plan to add on to this home to allow additional occupants? (No, the school has no plans to add on or expand).

He explained that he looked up the school and would like the sexual abuse case explained. (A former employee housed a girl in his home with his wife. The girl was assaulted. This happened after he had left employment with us).

Jim Mitchell, L/O Butler Ave., explained that the ROW was built in 1967. His father has an easement through for land that he owns. The water line goes the driveway. He just wants to be sure that he will still be able to get to his land. He also explained that Butler Ave. is a public road and anyone can use the road. Maybe a nice fence could be put up around the ROW.

Jo-Ann Handelman, 45 Butler Ave., asked if the girls are there for 60 days, do they get visitors? (Yes).

Do you think this will increase traffic on Butler Ave.? (Modest traffic increase, three cars every eight hours for shift change).

Where do you buy the supplies for the home? (Our faculty purchase the supplies for the homes, there will not be any truck deliveries).

Why is this location desirable to you? (It's a beautiful home and a very peaceful and the girls deserve it. Being assessed for 60 days with everyone staring at you is very stressful. If there is opposition NESG won't come because the girls don't deserve that. Most of them are at a different learning level or have adjustment problems. The NESG has a great staff! NESG is not here to make enemies. NESG will fix any issues that there are with traffic and can also offer part of our lawn to build a turnaround or widen the ROW, we will do whatever it takes to make all neighbors happy).

Will you be hiring new staff or bringing staff from another location? (Both).

Seth Handelman, 45 Butler Ave., asked if there was any way possible to build an access road from Rt. 119? (No).

Ion Handelman, 45 Butler Ave., stated that the road is very narrow in that area and there is an angle. He is worried that an accident may happen, it's very dangerous with the thought of increased traffic.

Edwin Smith, 764 Brattleboro Rd., asked if the school is non-profit and is tax exempt? (Yes, NESG is a non-profit but we pay all property taxes to be responsible).

Pat Massey, 43 Butler Ave., explained that she was a foster parent. That there are traffic issues on Butler Ave. already. She asked what will happen to our quiet peaceful neighborhood? (NESG's faculty are trained and skilled. They can deal with clinical, academic and mental issues. NESG aren't coming to make enemies, we have great relationships with our neighbors at our other schools. The NESG has been asked by NH to start a program like this because of need. At this time, we have 24 NH residents in our VT locations. We have animals at the homes: horses, goats etc. NESG has a sugar shack that the kids built and we harvest sap. NESG is a fully accredited school, very professional. NESG often offers a meet the staff day, rent a hall and get to know everyone prior to opening).

7:25 Chair Leary closed the public portion of the meeting and asked for comments and questions from the Board.

M. Bassett asked about the Bennington School. (It is a rural area, kids are more at ease in a home). You have other facilities? (Yes, in Campton, Warren, Littleton, some larger than others). How many faculty on a shift? (Depends nights only two, during the day there are three staff to a shift. There is also a teacher, nurse and therapist. There is also a therapist that works with the family in the child's home while they are under assessment).

S. Zielonko asked what the size of the home is? (It is a seven-bedroom home, with two common areas, kitchen, bathroom and an academic area. The home would be sprinkled and there would be no smoking allowed).

Z. Hildreth commented that the local schools are very close, do you ever work in coordination with them? (Yes, NESG does activities with them, sports etc.).

M. Brault asked if there is staff for social crisis or nurses? (NESG will have a therapist, nurse faculty and a family worker on site. Some children are from good homes in crisis or others are from homes that need educating. Some of the kids are just having difficulty in school. They

would be assessed and sent home with an IEP to bring to their school. NESG have constant dialog with them. They may excel in math but be a remedial reader) Do they have access to computers and is that access monitored? (Yes).

Chair Leary stated that it is a public road. We have heard many concerns about the end of Butler Ave. There are multiple easements on the property. The school is willing to work with the residents with traffic issues. How willing are the abutters to work with the school? Would you like something written up to be assured?

Seth Stafford explained that no he is not willing to work with the school in any way.

Selectman Darcy made a motion to table the meeting until September 19<sup>th</sup> to obtain legal opinion. He was seconded by S. Zielonko. The motion passed unanimously

7:50 pm Z. Hildreth was excused from the meeting.

Chair Leary read the public notice for an Application for Subdivision submitted by Cheshire Oil Company Inc., Tax Map 23 Lot 1, 837-849 Brattleboro Rd., in the RC District. Applicant proposes this subdivision to create a buildable commercial lot from the excess acreage of tax map parcel 23-1.

Selectman Darcy made a motion to accept the application. He was seconded by S. Zielonko. The motion passed unanimously.

Russ Huntley, Land Surveyor from SVE & Associates represented Cheshire Oil. He explained it is a two-lot subdivision. Years ago, there were five lots and they were merged into one. There is land between Sunoco and TBird that Cheshire Oil does not need. They decided to sub-divide the land and sell a commercial buildable lot. There is water on site and an existing curb cut. The lot would need its own septic.

With no questions from the public the Chair closed the public portion of the meeting and asked for comments from the Board.

Selectman Darcy wanted to be sure of the frontage and acreage required for a buildable lot in RC District. (100 ft. of frontage and one-acre minimum).

Selectman Darcy made a motion to approve the sub-division. He was seconded by S. Zielonko. The motion passed unanimously.

Mari Brunner from SWRPC came to discuss complete street strategies to be used on a proposed School Street Project. She asked the following questions:

Will the crossing islands be curbed or painted? (Yes, they will be curbed and trees will be planted on the field side as well. These are ways to discourage parking). Make it clear on the plan that you wish to discourage parking with these techniques.

On the plan there is a chain length fence? Will there be gates for children to use? Fences with no gates would discourage kids to walk or biker to school? (There will be gates to allow walkers and bikers to pass). Make the gates clear on the plan.

Will there be accommodations on the plan for bikers? (Not sure). A great idea would be to widen the sidewalk to accommodate bikers and walker, so they can share the area.

Look into the City of Keene's raised crosswalks and ask if they have snow removal problems. The raised crosswalks have a gradual incline than speed bumps.

It would be helpful to post "no idling" signs at the parent pick up and drop off areas. If you show that the plan is to make it more convenient for parents to drop off and pick up it will hurt the application because the application is to stop or reduce idling.

It is beneficial to depict how School Street merges into the sidewalk project (TAP Grant).

CDC Lynch will bring this information to TA Collins since she is writing the grant.

CDC Lynch will send a draft plan of the project to review and send M. Bloesch a copy of the Complete Streets Plan to review.

Selectman Darcy mentioned that at the next BOS meeting they will discussing the intersection of Church and Main. He will be suggesting two small parklets with low growing vegetation due to visibility issues. Another idea would be to extend the curb to alleviate parking in those spots due to visibility issues.

Selectmen Darcy made a motion to approve the minutes dated 7/18/17. He was seconded by T. Woodbury. The motion passed unanimously.

There being no further business to come before the meeting, S. Zielonko made a motion to adjourn. He was seconded by Selectman Darcy. The motion passed unanimously.

The meeting was adjourned at 8:35 pm.

Respectfully submitted,  
CDC Kathryn Lynch