

MINUTES
TOWN OF TOPSHAM
PLANNING BOARD MEETING
JULY 20, 2010, 7:00 P.M.

MEMBERS PRESENT: Donald Spann, Chairman
Stephen Mathieu, Vice Chairman
Ronald Bisson
Scott Libby
Jay Prindall
Bruce Van Note

MEMBERS ABSENT: Michael Colleran was absent.

STAFF PRESENT: Planning Director, Richard Roedner was present representing the Planning Staff.

A meeting of the Topsham, Maine Planning Board was held on Tuesday, July 20, 2010 at the Municipal Building at 100 Main Street, Topsham, Maine.

1. **CALL TO ORDER AND ROLL CALL**

Chairman Spann called the meeting to order at 7:00 p.m. and asked the recording secretary to conduct the roll call. Roll call was conducted and it was noted that all members were present except for Michael Colleran who had been excused.

2. **MINUTES FROM THE JUNE 29, 2010 MEETING**

Motion was made by Mr. Libby, seconded by Mr. Prindall, and it was

VOTED

To approve the minutes of the June 29, 2010 meeting as amended.

(Amendment: Pg. 5, 3rd par. from bottom, add at end of sentence after "closed" – "at 9:20 p.m.")

3. **ELECTION OF CHAIRMAN AND VICE-CHAIRMAN**

Mr. Mathieu nominated Donald Spann to be re-elected as Chairman of the Planning Board. This was seconded by Mr. Libby. The gavel was turned over to Mr. Mathieu to call the vote. Vote called and Donald Spann was elected to serve as Chairman. Chairman Spann took back the meeting gavel.

Mr. Bisson nominated Stephen Mathieu to serve as Vice Chairman of the Planning Board. This was seconded by Mr. Prindall, vote called and Stephen Mathieu was elected to serve as Vice Chairman.

Chairman Spann announced that workshops would follow the adjournment of the meeting on Digital Signs, Marijuana Dispensaries, Methadone Clinics and Transmission Towers. He noted that the meetings are open to members of the public.

Chairman Spann informed the Board of a potential conflict of interest as the applicant bringing Item 4 forward is also his landlord. He said he has promoted the "Red Mill" but is not part of the brokerage, as far as this particular application is concerned. He added that Fred Wygan is his dentist and that he knows all three gentlemen. He said it was up to the Board whether or not he needed to recuse himself as Chairman. Board Members voiced their opinion which was unanimous that Mr. Spann should remain as Chairman of the Board to entertain Item 4.

4. **SKETCH PLAN REVIEW: PROPOSED WELLNESS CENTER AT RED MILL, AT 11 BOWDOIN MILL, MAP U06, LOT 25. OWNER IS BOWDOIN MILL ASSOCIATES, APPLICANT IS OMEGA WELLNESS GROUP**

Dr. Malcolm Hutchinson of the Omega Wellness Group introduced himself and presented information on the Group saying Omega Wellness is a non-profit public charity formed in 2006 for the stated purpose of public wellness. Targeted clientele will be age 50 and above. Dr. Hutchinson reviewed sketch plans and an artist rendition showing the placement of the proposed pool addition and presented an overview of the proposal.

The project is before the Board for a Sketch Plan Review of a proposed modification to the approved Site Plan of the Red Mill building. The applicant is proposing a 5,000 square foot addition for an indoor pool, as well as an underground storage area and new site work and circulation patterns.

Tom Saucier, P.E., from Site Design Associates, represented the applicant and was present to answer any technical questions. Mr. Saucier reviewed a Conceptual Plan showing the existing conditions and where the pool addition would be located. Currently there are 53 parking spaces and the plan reflects an additional 73 parking spaces. There are fresh water wetlands which have been mapped and will require a DEP NRPA Permit. The Town's storm drain system will need to be extended and this was shown on the plan. An area has been reserved for an organic garden. There are plans for a retaining wall, but the design on same has not yet been completed.

Proposed traffic flow changes were questioned and Mr. Saucier said the Bill Eaton of Eaton Traffic Engineering did the original study and the plan is to hire Mr. Eaton to take a look at the proposed new use and make traffic flow suggestions. He said currently traffic flow is envisioned with some clients entering the island from Green Street. Details have not yet been decided on the landscaping. There will be provisions for a proposed amphitheater.

The Board expressed concern with traffic flow and the concerns will be addressed during Site Plan Review by Bill Eaton.

Mr. Van Note asked if the old Main Street alignment was being proposed for the access from Green Street and said there have been various contacts with DOT regarding title

associated with Green Street. Rick Cassada, representing the Bowdoin Mill Associates, explained his understanding of the title on Green Street going to a public right of way, but said the title of the fire station lot is being questioned. He said the title is not any clearer now than it was 40 years ago. Mr. Cassada said there is a question of the title of the non-officially part of Green Street discontinuance.

Board member Libby asked if the public will have access to the waterfront side. Dr. Hutchinson responded that, although their proposal is for a membership based organization, there was no intent to fence the area off to restrict public access

Planner Roedner reviewed issues the Planning Staff raised, including

Traffic

- Verification of traffic generation and timing based on proposed uses that might be different from the original traffic approval;
- Changes to traffic circulation patterns;
- Where does traffic go after it leaves the site toward Green Street;
- Proposed or needed traffic improvements; and
- Interior travel lanes

Permits

- Additional local permits that might be needed – Shoreland, Conditional Use
- State and/or Federal permits that may be needed

Application

- Clarity of proposed uses, what other permits are needed
- Dock details – permanent v. temporary, permits needed
- Changes to Stormwater Management – quality and/or quantity
- Floor area ratio impacts with new floor space
- Landscape plans and changes to landscape ratio
- Impact on Main Street Plan concepts for redevelopment of the Green Street area
- Current Red Mill was approved at 35,000 s.f. Does the new proposal increase square footage in the Red Mill building
- Access to temporary boat docks for EMS – both to get to someone in need and possibly to launch from the dock
- Is the proposed parking on the other side of Main Street still in the picture

Board member Mathieu asked for a full Landscaping Plan. He said the organic garden will only serve for a few months of the year. He noted the site is a gateway to our community and should look good.

Board member Libby said traffic issues are of real concern as it is tough now for people to get onto Main Street from the Red Mill. He said the applicant will need to rely on your entrance towards Green Street to help traffic flow.

Liz Armstrong said Topsham has a great cluster of medical professionals in the Lower Village. She said she wanted to draw the attention of the Planning Board to the fact that TDI and the Comprehensive Plan Committee labored over the Main Street Plan for over

three years and it was adopted as part of the Comp Plan. There was a lot of talk about a River Front Park. There was a survey done by Paul Ruopp for the Green Street Associates and there is a lot of history on record. Ms. Armstrong said everyone needs to work together to achieve the Lower Village Vision and she urged the Board to look closely at the Comprehensive Plan.

Peter Rosenberg said he lives at 2 Green Street and is concerned about the safety of children on the street as people use Green Street as a short cut now. He said even 50 cars on Green Street would have a significant impact. Mr. Rosenberg said he and his neighbors feel bullied with the entire project. He expressed concern that the historic bridge which was taken down and supposed to be moved is just lying on the ground and nothing is happening with it. He urged the Board to move slowly forward and be sure to consider the concerns of people on Green Street.

Dentist Fred Wygan of 7 Main Street expressed concern with the scale of the project. He questioned how full and busy the Center will be. He said in March of 2002 TDI sent a notice to citizens saying the Conservation Committee was pleased with the progress of designs for trees, open space, unimpeded views across and down the Androscoggin River. Dr. Wygan said the project poses several negative impacts to his office building, especially the proposed roadway and parking plan. He said it will take away the serenity around his building, the reason he purchased the property. He urged the Board to not go back on the original plan.

Neil Ward of the Androscoggin River Alliance said the proposed request to fill the Granny Hole area and pave over it is not prudent use of this critical habitat and said he was not in favor of filling in these wetlands.

Arlene Morris of 13 Main Street spoke in opposition to the applicant saying the project would pose too much of an impact on Green Street. She views Granny Hole as a historic location which should be honored and left untouched.

Board member Mathieu suggested the applicant consider a traffic plan with less impact on Green Street and asked if consideration had been given to a green strip and a foot bridge.

Esther Lacognata suggested that people get together and form a discussion group to negotiate some of the concerns.

Liz Armstrong suggested that the Selectmen be charged with getting the ownership issues along Green Street resolved.

Ted Crooker, President of Omega Wellness, spoke in favor of the project saying the facility will make a positive difference for the people in the area and that citizens will be helped both in body, mind and spirit. He said the applicant plans to address issues with safety in mind and will work hand-in-hand with those already in the area as they want to be good neighbors.

With all comments having been heard the Board was in agreement that the applicant met Sketch Plan Review requirements and that the basic concerns were with traffic flow.

With no further business to address, the meeting was adjourned and the Board moved into Workshop Session.

WORKSHOPS

1. **Digital Signs**
2. **Marijuana Dispensaries**
3. **Methadone Clinics**
4. **Transmission Towers**

Respectfully submitted,

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Patty Williams". The signature is written in black ink and is positioned above a horizontal line.

Patty Williams, Recording Secretary