

TOWN OF ST. GEORGE
ONE BARBER ROAD
ST. GEORGE, VT

DEVELOPMENT REVIEW BOARD
~ MINUTES ~

May 9, 2007

Agenda Item 1. SITE VISIT – Pillsbury Farm 6:30 – 7:15

Development Review Board members in attendance:

Marie Mastro- chair, Scott Baker, Connie Kendall, Matt Palmer, Lisa Beliveau, Ed Hanson- Zoning Administrator

Also in attendance:

Debra Bell – Trudell Consulting, Dan Pillsbury, Todd Pillsbury

A site visit was conducted to view the layout of the proposed subdivision of the Pillsbury Farm currently before the board.

Agenda Item 2. CONTINUATION OF A SKETCH PLAN REVIEW - Lakeview Farms
7:30 – 8:30

Development Review Board members in attendance:

Scott Baker – Acting chair (Marie Mastro recused herself from the board), Connie Kendall, Matt Palmer, Lisa Beliveau, Dan Pillsbury, Todd Pillsbury

Also in attendance:

Sheila McIntyre, Summit Engineering; Jane Stowell; Rita Martel; David Grayck, Cheney, Brock & Saudek; Marie Mastro; Lynn Kabot; Don Taub, Ed Hanson-Zoning Administrator

Scott opened the hearing at 7:30. Sheila McIntyre opened her review of the proposed subdivision by responding to four concerns expressed by development review board at the previous hearing; elevation, ridgeline development, clustering, and the need for a site visit.

To answer the questions of elevation and ridgeline development, Sheila compared the elevations of the proposed lots to several adjoining neighbors. Sheila stated that lot 7 is the highest in elevation at 80 feet below the Neff/ Garvey house. Lots 3 and 4 are 150 feet below the Neff/ Garvey residence and at comparable heights to the Kabot residence.

Sheila asked “what does the town want”? The parent lot of 283.9 acres could have 30 units on it if they followed the 10 acre zoning. However, this amount is reduced after accounting for the deer wintering area, prime agriculture soils and the soil’s capacity for

on site septic systems. This residual land was highlighted in a map presented to the board as land capable of development.

To demonstrate the concept of clustering, Sheila stated that their proposed subdivision does represent clustering since the result is 5 houses on 15 acres not 5 houses on 50 acres. She further stated that her clients will also be giving up their development rights on the remaining acreage which will be conserved land. She pointed to the areas to be conserved on a map presented to the board.

The site visit was held on May 7, 2007 at 6:30. Development review board members in attendance: Scott Baker, Connie Kendall, Matt Palmer, Lisa Beliveau, Ron Arms. Also in attendance: Sheila McIntyre, Summit Engineering; Ray Martel; Jane Stowell; Marie Mastro.

Sheila then described the potential of visibility of the homes if they were built in the locations as proposed. Sheila stated that the visibility from Oak Hill Road would be minimal since the homes would be in forested land with a built in buffer of trees. She suggested that no more than a half of an acre could be cleared for the home sites on lots 2 – 7; and only one fourth of an acre could be cleared for the home site on lot 1. Sheila stated that since the large cleared cow pasture cannot be seen from Oak Hill Road it could be assumed that the clearings for the homes could not be seen either. Other clearings: A 35 foot by 75 foot clearing would be required for each of the mound septic systems.

Sheila ended her review of the proposed subdivision by stating that she presented the full build out proposal for the property and that the farm land will not be subdivided.

Scott opened up the discussion to questions from the board members.

Lisa asked if the proposed subdivision would be done in phases. Sheila answered that they have not planned to subdivide in phases and that the completion of the project has not been established at this time.

Lisa asked if the conserved land would be managed by the Vermont Land Trust. Sheila answered that they have not finalized anything with the VLT yet and that they were waiting for the permit process to be finalized with the town first. Sheila referred to the letter from the Vermont Land Trust that was handed out at a previous meeting.

Lisa asked if they had considered a shared septic system. Sheila answered that the soil capacity was not ideal for this number of lots.

Scott asked if the remaining land would be a donation to the Vermont Land Trust. Sheila answered that since they will be waiting for the town's permit process to be completed first, they haven't followed through with any formal agreement with the Vermont Land Trust. Sheila further stated that conserving land cannot be a condition of the permit.

Scott asked if the home site clearing will be enforced by a home owners association. Sheila answered that neighbors will help to enforce no additional clearing in order to protect their own privacy and that there could be tight clearing restrictions written into the deeds and permits.

Scott asked if there is a common area for the home owners. Sheila answered yes, that each lot will have their own open space.

Matt asked if the proposed subdivision complied with St. George Zoning Regulations Section 815.1 (Planned Unit Development) criterion number 7 – to “Encourage and preserve opportunities for energy-efficient development and redevelopment”. Sheila answered that she believed the proposed subdivision did comply.

Matt asked if Act 250 will be monitoring the proposed subdivision – Sheila answered, yes.

Connie asked Sheila to review how the proposed Lakeview Farms Master Plan qualifies as a PUD. Sheila answered that she felt that it did qualify as a PUD and pointed out on the map how the subdivision takes up a small amount of land compared to the size of the conserved land. Connie asked if Sheila could site any examples of PUD’s in Vermont that have similar large lot sizes – one building lot is 8.3 acres and another is 5.5 acres. Connie further stated her concern that a precedent could be set by allowing large lot sizes in a PUD.

Connie asked about the proposed tree buffer- that Sheila had stated that it could be required that a tree buffer surround each of the building sites to serve as screening so that the homes would most likely not be seen. Sheila confirmed that this could be done. Connie questioned if the tree buffer area could be part of the conservation easement to protect the tree buffer from later being cut down. Sheila asked “who would own or manage this conservation easement”? - and that it was unlikely that the Vermont Land Trust would want to manage such small strips of land. Further discussion revealed that the town could possibly own and manage the tree buffer conservation easement. Ed stated that, with a PUD, set-back requirements are established by the DRB. Sheila also stated that they are considering requiring that the homes be painted a color that would best blend them into the surrounding forest area.

Scott opened up the questioning to all in attendance.

Ed asked if any additional septic capacity was planned for. Sheila answered that they did not include any additional septic capacity – the capacity is only for the predicted number of bedrooms.

Lynn Kabot, an adjoining landowner, expressed her concerns about the amount of water that is available on the ridgeline and the amount of water that will be required for seven more homes in close proximity to her. She testified that she has very little water and that surrounding neighbors also have minimal water.

Marie Mastro, an adjoining landowner, stated that it was her understanding that there was water north of her.

Scott stated that more information will be needed and asked if homes would share similar veins of water or could it be established that each home would have its own source. Scott also asked if a community well could be considered and that a community well could have less impact on surrounding neighbors.

Lynn Kabot expressed her concern that excessive erosion could take place since the proposed subdivision is on a slope – also because of the clearing needed for the septic systems. Sheila answered that the cleared areas will be seeded and mulched and that there will not be a lot of area cleared.

Marie Mastro expressed her concern that the placement of the proposed lots would cause fragmentation of the deer wintering yards. Sheila pointed out that all of the house sites are outside the mapped deer yard – that their plan maintains one contiguous deer yard area. Sheila offered that they could put dog convenants in the home owners' ordinances that would further protect the deer.

Marie also asked about the subdivision road visibility – that, due to the amount of trees that would need to be cut down for the road and because of the road's location, it would be highly visible from Oak Hill Road and surrounding areas.

David Grayck introduced himself to the board and noted that because it was after 8:30 (the scheduled end of the hearing) he offered to write his comments in a letter to the board. It was decided that the letter should be received by the board no later than June 5.

The continuation of the Sketch Plan Review will take place on Wednesday, June 13.

The hearing was brought to a close at 8:45.

Agenda Item 3. PREPARATION FOR THE SELECTBOARD MUNICIPAL PLAN PUBLIC HEARING – May 10, 2007

At a previous selectboard public hearing, changes and additions were listed to be considered by the Planning Commission for inclusion in the Draft Town Plan. The changes and additions proposed by the selectboard were reviewed. It was decided that Marie, Scott and Connie would attend the Selectboard hearing on May 10 to discuss the changes and to encourage the adoption of the Town Plan.

The meeting was adjourned at 9:30.