

**PLANNING BOARD PUBLIC MEETING
TOWN OF LITCHFIELD**

Held on MARCH 1, 2022

minutes approved on 4/5/2022

The Litchfield Planning Board held a meeting in the Town Hall conference room, 2 Liberty Way, Litchfield, NH 03052 on Tuesday, March 1, 2022 at 7:00 p.m.

MEMBERS PRESENT: Michael Croteau - Chairman, Kate Stevens - Vice Chairman, James Boffetti, Ronn Stephens, Curtis Sampson, Kimberly Queenan - Selectmen's Rep., Sam Terrill - Alternate

MEMBERS ABSENT:

ALSO PRESENT: Jay Minkarah (Executive Director Nashua Regional Planning Commission - NRPC), Louis Caron, L.C. Engineering, LLC

CALL TO ORDER

Mr. Croteau called the meeting to order at 7:00 p.m. and led the Board in the Pledge of Allegiance. Roll call of members.

Sam Terrill is appointed as a voting member of the Board for this meeting.

Public Input: No Public input on non-agenda items.

AGENDA ITEMS:

Corning Farm at River Edge, application is for 66, 3-bedroom townhouses. The units are proposed to be 16, 4-unit buildings of multi-family housing on a 40 acre parcel at 540 Charles Bancroft Hwy, Tax Map 22 Lot 14. The existing buildings are proposed to be removed except for the existing house which will be converted into a 2-family unit.

Owner: Corning Farm at River Edge, LLC; Applicant DAR Builders, Reginald Moreau.

Representing the owner is Eric Mitchell, ECM Assoc. Inc. also present is Don Weldon, co-owner of Corning Farm, LLC.

Eric M. and Chairman Croteau spoke of the site walk by Planning Bd. members on 2/12/22 that was well attended and informative for the Board and addressed concerns of the abutters.

One of the concerns was headlights coming from the Corning Farm site towards the abutters on Route 3A. Eric M. commented that they can't move the alignment of their road 40 or 50 feet, they might be able to move their roadway approximately 25' but not more than that because

they don't want to create "S" curves in their access road. It would also cause them to move the units closer to Temple Dr. which they wanted to avoid so they would have an adequate buffer to the Temple Dr. residents.

Eric M. stated NHDOT doesn't have any major concerns about traffic. NHDOT needed more information on the proposed sidewalk on Route 3A, DOT wants vertical granite curb, and a drainage swail. DOT will not maintain the sidewalk. The engineering co. has to come up with a design that NHDOT will approve.

James B. asked if they had talked to the homeowners on 3A yet regarding buffer ideas for them. Eric M. no they had not talked to all the abutters yet.

There was discussion on a fence versus plantings near the turnarounds abutting the Temple Dr. homes. Eric thought a fence would cause problems with snow plowing. Lou C. explained he still prefers the stockade fence solid barrier concept as it would be more effective blocking headlights into Temple Dr. than plantings. There are ways to handle the snow with smaller equipment to remove the snow in the parking areas that have a stockade fence.

Jay M. questioned: Is there any more thought about the land abutting the Town conservation land (Moore's Falls)? Eric M. Some options were discussed with the Conservation Commission (ConCom) in non-public. We are working with ConCom on that issue to connect old trolley track trail to their portion of trolley track to make a loop trail. We are not promoting a trail along the top of the river bank because of steep slopes to the river and disturbance of wildlife habitat. People could walk in that area but we are not going to promote it.

Lou Caron comments on his February 25 letter to the Board. He stated that traffic from the project is not a major contributor to traffic on Route 3A as evidenced in the traffic study. He believes that between now and eleven years, more likely 7-8 years, the Corning Road intersection will be in failure for left turning traffic. Eventually 3A will need a left turning lane into Corning Rd., similar to what is left turning into Albuquerque Ave. now. What is happening now is south bound traffic is going around the left turning traffic turning on to Corning and hitting the (small) brick wall that is there now. Lou has measured 15' from the 3A Right of Way (ROW) to the existing house. Eventually you will need a strip on land along 3A to do a lane widening (for the left turn lane) to Corning Rd. The thought of a sidewalk along 3A with a grass swail and a house 15' away with be really tight, just something to think about.

Lou sees two issues: the sidewalk with the speed of the traffic (46-48 mph per the traffic study) on 3A. The traffic study done in January did not account for the volume of gravel and paving trucks that you would get later in the season on Rte. 3A.

Kate S. comments regarding the sidewalk on 3A she suggested starting the sidewalk further south on the Corning Farm property. People will want to walk within the development to get to the sidewalk. It would be safer to walk along the residential street to reach the sidewalk and then go further south to the crosswalk on 3A to get to the Albuquerque Ave. multi-use sidewalk. The goal is to attach the Albuquerque pedestrian/bike path to the future sidewalk and go further north to connect to some of the neighborhoods.

Eric M. thought the owners of the Corning Farm site had a concern with the public using a sidewalk within the development. Kate S. thought most of the pedestrian traffic would be from the Corning Farm development.

Ronn S. shared his information regarding traffic counts that he did on Tuesday, 2/15/22 at the site.

Southbound 368 vehicles, northbound 301, and 123 in and out of Corning Rd. The only thing that caused a break in the traffic was the traffic light at the Irving station north in Manchester.

Lou C. mentioned the counts from the traffic report were actually higher.

Kim Q. stated she was at the site on 2/15 from 8:15-8:45 a.m. She commented that there was considerable solar glare at 8:15 a.m. when you are leaving the site from one of the proposed roads in the new development.

Carl Eppich, Principal Transportation Planner from So. NH Planning Commission in Manchester was present. They were notified that the Planning Bd. felt this was a project of regional impact. He submitted a letter with five recommendations.

1. Make the new driveway intersection more visible for increased safety.
2. Provide internal sidewalks and/or paths within the development that connect to nearby paths or sidewalks to promote options for transportation other than by automobile.
3. Provide better sight distance at Corning Road and plan for a crosswalk and improved geometry to the offset intersection.
4. Consider the cumulative effects of other developments north and south of the development site, in addition to the impacts from this development in determining potential mitigation for safety and capacity preservation along NH Route 3A.
5. Consider impacts of the proposal to existing residents on 3A and Temple Dr.

Chairman Croteau reads an email from National Grid dated 1-10-22.

The applicant's engineer has contacted National Grid (an abutter with an easement for high voltage power lines across the property). The engineer had to certify the height of the lines. They will be working in the easement with excavation equipment. They cannot put a septic system in the easement but drainage structure would be suitable in the easement as long as they did not restrict National Grid's access to the lines.

Chairman Croteau read an abutter letter from 4/20/21 from Thomas Campagna, 3 Temple Dr. objecting to the proposal.

James B. the impact on the neighbors at Temple Dr and Route 3A are significant. The headlight issue is yet to be resolved.

Discussion centered around the Corning Road intersection and the development's access roads.

James B. The traffic issues at Corning Rd. have to be addressed in a meaningful way. He does not feel the issues have been addressed with the traffic that is there today.

Eric M. responds that is one of items he would like to address between now and the next meeting, with NHDOT, Lou Caron, Jay Minkarah and So. NH Planning Comm.

He states that Corning Rd. is a problem today even if this project isn't developed. We were asked to do studies which we did. We were not initially asked to do a study of Corning Road by DOT; subsequently we were asked by the Board which we did go and look at.

We realize there are already problems with Corning. It should not be a requirement of one developer to fix an issue that has been there.

We are trying to minimize the impact. Even if this project wasn't there something has to be done with Corning Rd. There are more technical details on our plan to be addressed.

Eric M. asks if interested parties would be willing to meet with NHDOT and work on the traffic issues. Everyone was in agreement.

Curtis S. speaks of the two access roads to the development and the reason for two roads out to 3A.

Eric M. We don't want all the traffic coming past the units in the southern area of the project. Also two entrances would be needed for emergency access.

Mike C. addresses the concerns of traffic and issues to abutters that have to be resolved before the plan is approved.

The northern access from the project was discussed. Lou C. stated that you would want to keep the northern access road from the site because most of the traffic will be going out that way, you wouldn't want all the traffic going through the Corning Rd. intersection. What needs to be done is a pavement widening. 11 - 12' of pavement would be needed to get two turning lanes for Corning Rd, one each direction.

Jay M. mentioned that to do that you may need to require land area from abutters on Corning. By moving the northern access road (for the project) a bit to the south it would avoid headlights into the abutting houses on 3A and also may be able to pull the units away from Temple Dr.

The recently passed (March 2022 Zoning) sidewalk was discussed in relation to a crosswalk. Kate S. stated the crosswalk would be further south on Rte. 3A.

James B. asks are there sidewalks proposed in the development?

Eric M. No, the main reason is we don't want to have an open look. The roadway would be wide enough with curbing to walk within the development. It is more of a calming effect.

James B. Are there concerns about people walking in the street.?

Eric M. We would have a pathway to the property line (to connect to Moore's Falls conservation area) and possibly continue on under the power line at the dead end cul-de-sac.

A question from Sam T. regarding density. Eric M. states there is a calculation on the plan as to how density was achieved. Of the 40 acres on the site they subtracted the power line easement, wetlands and floodplain to reach the buildable area.

Don Weldon, co-owner of the project, stated they had been asked to preserve the existing house. Now he is hearing they need room for road widening and a sidewalk. They are not opposed to taking down the house if the benefit exceeds keeping the house.

James B. understands the house has some history, the exterior has been modified so it is a trade off for the benefit to the area.

Kate S. The house has historic sentiment and is more important than the sidewalk (to the north). Safety of the drivers is important too,
The NHDOT meeting, to take place, was mentioned again.

With no further input a MOTION to continue the meeting for Corning Farm to April 5, 2022 was made by James B. and seconded by Kate S. The motion carried 7-0-0.

Committee Reports

March 3 Conservation Commission 6:30 pm Town Hall

March 8 Town Voting Campbell High School 7am - 7pm

March 16 NRPC Full Commissioners Meeting 30 Temple St. Nashua

Capitol Improvements Committee After Town Meeting, date to be determined

Budget Committee After Town Meeting, date to be determined

Lower Merrimack River Local Advisory Committee (LMRLAC) - No Report

Other Business

Kim Q. reported on many recent Facebook posts regarding traffic on Albuquerque Ave. Many residents were dismayed by the action of other vehicles on that roadway.

Kim commented as a response people were directed to look at Chapter 5, Transportation of the newly revised Master Plan section. That chapter looks at traffic calming and other suggestions to reduce speed, etc.

Kate S. suggested bike lanes to reduce the width and appearance of width on Albuquerque Ave. Bicycles that are going close to or below the speed limit do not belong on the sidewalk with pedestrians.

James B. stated some of the issues with traffic can be addressed as police enforcement of the existing laws.

Traffic counts were discussed. Jay M. said NRPC's traffic counting season will start in April.

The Planning Board can put in a request for traffic counts.

Jay M. also stated the Master Plan recommends crosswalks in certain areas.

NH Planning & Zoning Spring Conference – Save the Dates

Mike C. brought to the attention of the Board the worthwhile planning conference which will be remote April 30 and May 7, 2022 from 9am-Noon. Each session will be recorded.

Mike encouraged Board members to attend or watch the recording. The sessions are at no cost. **Registration opens March 28, 2022**

A motion to adjourn was made by Ronn S. and seconded by Kim Q. All in favor.
The meeting was adjourned at 8:45 pm

Minutes transcribed from video by
J. McKibben