



Town of Hollis

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HOLLIS PLANNING BOARD MINUTES

May 16, 2023 – 7:00 PM Meeting - Town Hall Meeting Room

MEMBERS OF THE PLANNING BOARD: Bill Moseley, Chair; Doug Cleveland, Vice Chair; Chet Rogers; Julie Mook; Benjamin Ming; Virginia Mills; David Petry, Ex-Officio for the Selectmen; Alternate Members: Richard Hardy; Jeff Peters; Mike Leavitt.

STAFF: Kevin Anderson, Town Planner & Environmental Coordinator; Mark Fougere, Planning Consultant.

ABSENT: B. Ming.

1. CALL TO ORDER – 7:00 PM. J. Peters led the group in the Pledge of Allegiance.

B. Moseley stated that at this meeting, R. Hardy will be voting in place of B. Ming.

2. APPROVAL OF PLANNING BOARD MINUTES:

April 18, 2023: **Motion to approve with correction of line 75** – motioned by R. Hardy, seconded by D. Petry; J. Peters abstained. Motion passed.

3. DISCUSSION AND STAFF BRIEFING:

- a. Agenda Additions and Deletions: none.
- b. Committee Reports: none.
- c. Staff Reports:

- 1. Revise and re-codify subdivision regulations. K. Anderson stated that he and M. Fougere have met with Joan Cudworth and Beverly Hill of the Department of Public Works, and discussed some edits to the subdivision regulations. They made great progress; however, there is one item that he wanted to bring to the Board's attention: the DPW Director is looking to move toward closed drainage rather than open drainage. This is such a large change that it would involve quite a few edits to our regulations, and they wanted to take this opportunity to get the Board's feedback about it.

K. Anderson explained that closed drainage is a series of catch basins and pipes that route the water underground, typically under the road, to detention basins. Most of Hollis has open drainage, with roadside swales. This would be a bit of a change from what we're used to.

M. Fougere shared pictures of examples from Federal Hill Estates, showing a one-sided swale of an open drainage system with riprap that was installed, per our current regulations. Another image was from Woodmont Orchards, with more grassy swales – the rock has been obscured by

grass over time. There is no curbing; water runs off the crown of the road into the swales, which lead to drainage areas. Another image showed catch basins along Long Hill Road, built in the 1990s with Cape Cod berm, which would be the spec going forward. Two more images showed catch basins with berm at Lovejoy Lane and Patch Road – lawns would come up to the edge of the road, versus a swale system or going into a ditch. He concurred with K. Anderson that this would be a pretty big change from what has been on the books for 20 years, now.

M. Fougere stated that another issue that has come up is that we require an aesthetically-driven guard rail of a wooden beam with metal inside of it, and that has been our standard for quite some time. The DPW has a concern about these guard rails, as over time they have to be replaced and are very expensive. Only a few people make these guard rails, so replacing them is very challenging. We would have to find an alternative.

DPW Director Joan Cudworth was invited to speak about these points.

J. Cudworth stated that the wooden guard rails are not holding up; they don't last, and they're quite expensive. There is a W-beam rail with a brownish stain, which she believes would look just as aesthetically nice as what we have been using. It's more affordable, more durable, and would last a lot longer.

D. Petry pointed out that brown W-beam rails have just been installed on Route 113 in Dunstable, and look pretty good.

K. Anderson pointed out that in Hollis, guard rails are mostly used around steep slopes and sharp turns.

In regard to the drainage, J. Cudworth stated that the maintenance and upkeep of open drainage is tremendously expensive. The last couple of subdivisions are probably going to drive the Town to buy a remote-controlled lawnmower, and hire extra staff. Keyes Hill Road has drainage from Lorenzo Lane; she does not know how we would even venture to take care of that. The problem is that we have these beautiful subdivisions, but no one maintains their open drainage. Every home owner has a culvert pipe under their driveway, which they don't know to maintain. In the winter time they plow all their snow into the open drainage – which then, when it turns to icy rain, floods the roads. She does not know how we are going to maintain the open drainage, without incurring a very large expense. By contrast, if there are catch basins, one hires the catch basin company. As an example, we did 482 catch basins last year, which cost the Town \$21,208.00 – the maintenance was far easier.

J. Cudworth pointed out that where it has been used in Town in the past, the Cape Cod berm is beautiful, and the catch basins are doing their job. Another issue is that the DPW gets a lot of complaints about ditch work: so when they have to go into these communities that have open drainage, they have to do some aggressive ditch work.

There is a detention pond at the bottom of Shedd Lane, and after many years it's just a forest. It's not even working. Open drainage is nice, but over time it just goes away – people slowly fill it in, we slowly push in more dirt from paving, from winter sand. It's the upkeep, in the long term, that is the main issue. She does not know why open drainage became the standard in Hollis, when previously it had not been; she and K. Anderson have had several good conversations about it, and she believes that it's something at which we need to look.

J. Peters stated that where he lives, on Deacon Lane, after repaving, the Cape Cod berm isn't doing its job. Runoff comes right into his property. J. Cudworth stated that she will take a look at that. She and J. Peters agreed that the catch basins in that area are indeed doing their job.

J. Cudworth pointed out that the expense coming down the pipeline, from open drainage at new subdivisions, is troubling. In addition, we have these large detention ponds everywhere; she questions whether in fact they should have fencing around them. There is liability there.

K. Anderson pointed out that, in going toward closed drainage, it's a budgetable, fixed cost that would involve a given number of catch basins, and having a catch basin company clean them. By contrast, with the roadside swales it can vary year to year: you might have money to keep them up, or you might not. With the catch basins, it would be a straightforward line item.

J. Peters pointed out that it would also look better than the riprap along the side of the road. J. Cudworth concurred; over time, the grass grows up and the riprap disappears, it cannot be mowed, and nothing gets done. 20 years later we have to go back and tear it all up, and aesthetically it doesn't look good.

M. Fougere stated that to maintain the swales they have to be cut at least twice a year by somebody – which is the DPW. J. Cudworth added that, due to their nature, some swales would have to be cut by hand, or with a remote-controlled mower.

Per a question from J. Mook, M. Fougere explained that the drainage spec will be changed in our regulations. The standard would become closed drainage, although there could be situations in which, because of the site, we would want some open drainage – that would be allowed, but the predominant design would be closed drainage. If they wanted to vary from closed drainage, they'd have to justify it because of grading, or whatever. K. Anderson added that any open drainage would be case by case, and that we should have options, but that primarily we would be focused on closed drainage and that is how the ordinance would be written. There would be new standards and details added to our regulations. He pointed out that 20 or 30 years ago, the products that were used on roads were not as they are today. What we have today lasts a lot longer, and is self-cleaning; the piping, the catch basins, and the materials overall are better. They are now almost hands-off for 20 or 30-plus years.

R. Hardy asked whether, if we were to propose this change, the DPW would be in a position to come up with a management program for existing open drainage – such as on Long Hill Road, where the detention ponds are all grown over. J. Cudworth pointed out that, originally, a lot of the subdivisions had associations which have fizzled out over time; those associations were collecting money for upkeep. On Long Hill Road, the association is supposed to maintain that pond, and the sidewalk area. The DPW was not supposed to be doing that work.

K. Anderson stated that the process moving forward will be for Planning Staff to work on revising the outdated regulations, and to put together a formal package for the Board to review. Once the Board approves the changes, there will be a Public Hearing, and then it will be voted upon. The goal is to get it done by the end of the summer, before zoning season.

2. Master Plan update. K. Anderson stated that this will continue to be on the agenda; he is still working on a method of listing questions for Town residents on the website. The latest suggestion was to use Survey Monkey, but there must be a better option out there.
3. K. Anderson stated that he has been working with the Fire Chief in regard to cistern specifications. He will probably be adding a line to our new subdivision regulations that requires individuals who are installing cisterns to consult with the Fire Department for the latest version of the Fire Department's cistern specifications. It will be formally written in the regulations that the Fire Chief needs to be consulted for those specifications.

d. Regional Impact: none.

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155 4. **SIGNATURE OF PLANS:** None.
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158 5. **CASES:**
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- 160 a. **File PB2023:005 – Lot Line Relocation:** Proposed lot line adjustment between 3 & 5 Johns Way,
161 located off Dow Road. Owner & Applicant: Dana Rasmussen, Map 13/68-5 & 13/68-6. Zoned R & A.
162 **Application Acceptance and Public Hearing.**
163

164 K. Anderson stated that both of these parcels are owned by the Applicant, Dana Rasmussen. He would
165 like to do an equal-area exchange of land. He was before the Board a little over a year ago with a
166 more dramatic request for a change in the lot line, which was denied. There is now a view easement
167 over the property, to protect the views that were previously the primary concern. This is a pretty
168 straightforward application; the proposal would adjust the common lot line between lots 13-68-5 and
169 lot 13-68-6, exchanging equal-area parcels together with a viewscape easement on lot 13-68-5 to
170 benefit lot 13-68-6. K. Anderson suggested that the Board should discuss the compliance of
171 landscaping for the Applicant's lot at 3 Johns Way. Landscaping has been an issue in the past.
172

173 **Motion to accept the application** – motioned by J. Peters, seconded by V. Mills; motion passed
174 unanimously.
175

176 Applicant: Randy Haight from Meridian Land Services, for Dana Rasmussen. Stated that they were
177 before the Board about a year ago, with a lot line adjustment in which they narrowed Lot 5 down to 70
178 feet wide so that there would be no buildable area. They asked for a waiver of the regular lot shape,
179 which was denied. It was discussed that the desired result could be obtained via an easement, which
180 they have since put in place. They are now proposing a subtle lot line adjustment, of only about 3300
181 square feet swapped between the two lots. The whole intent is for whoever builds on the lot to be
182 building down, away from the existing view from the porch of the house on Lot 6.
183

184 J. Peters stated the Applicant could have an easement without a lot line adjustment, and asked why the
185 adjustment was necessary. R. Haight responded that they are trying to make the buildable lot wider in
186 the southerly portion, to keep any potential construction to that area of the lot.
187

188 M. Fougere pointed out that the buildable area was limited on this lot, to begin with. R. Haight added
189 that if they made the easement bigger, a building box would not fit onto the lot. M. Fougere stated that
190 this change would enhance the aesthetic of the corner.
191

192 Per a question from D. Petry, R. Haight clarified that the easement would be between the owners of
193 Lots 5 and 6, and that the owner could still landscape that area of their land; they just could not hinder
194 the view.
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196 D. Cleveland asked how John's Way would be affected; R. Haight answered that it would not be
197 affected at all – that is an existing easement that is in place, and that was created at the time of the
198 original subdivision.
199

200 **Public Hearing.**
201

202 There were no speakers on this application.
203

204 **Public Hearing Closed.**
205

206 R. Haight stated that K. Anderson spoke to the landscaping that was approved by the Board
207 previously, when the subdivision was done; D. Rasmussen feels that the landscaping for Lot 6 is in

place. The landscaping for Lot 5, which would run through the restricted easement, as well as along the line between Lots 5 and 7, would be the responsibility for whoever buys Lot 5.

In regard to the landscaping, M. Fougere stated that D. Rasmussen put up a bond some time ago, and then Covid hit; there has been some landscaping installed there, but it hasn't been inspected since the final installation. He suggested that a meeting be coordinated with K. Anderson, R. Hardy, and the Owner, to go out to the site, see what is planted, see if it's consistent with the revised plan that the Board approved in 2021, and in that way everyone will be on the same page. If anything needs to be fixed, it can be taken care of. The bond on Lot 6 cannot be released until that point. There is no bond on Lot 5; it will be a stipulation for a building permit.

Per a question from J. Peters, M. Fougere clarified that the easement between Lots 5 and 6 is a private matter that is unenforceable from the Town's point of view. It's a document that will be drawn up by D. Rasmussen's attorney, recorded, and placed on the deed with this plan. It will be between the owners of those two lots. The Board is only considering the lot line relocation.

B. Moseley stated that a condition of acceptance would be a meeting between Planning Staff and R. Hardy, with the Applicant, concerning the landscaping of Lots 5 and 6.

R. Hardy stated that he thinks the lot line change is minor, and is a big difference from the first proposal. He does not think it degrades what was initially approved as part of the subdivision.

V. Mills concurred with R. Hardy, and stated that she appreciates that the Applicant made the lot line changes reasonable and compact.

The Board in general also concurred.

Motion to approve File PB2023:005, with the above condition – motioned by D. Cleveland, seconded by J. Mook; motion passed unanimously.

6. OTHER BUSINESS: none.

ADJOURNMENT:

Motion to adjourn at 7:44pm – motioned by J. Peters, seconded by D. Cleveland; motion passed unanimously.

Respectfully submitted,
Aurelia Perry,
Recording Secretary.

NOTE: Any person with a disability who wishes to attend this public meeting and who needs to be provided with reasonable accommodation, please call the Town Hall (465-2209) at least 72 hours in advance so that arrangements can be made.