

Appendix E

Planning Board Minutes

The Town of LaGrange Special Planning Board meeting for February 4, 2021 was held via Zoom. Chairman Rohrbach called the meeting to order at 7:00pm. Board members Marc Komorsky, Dennis Rosenfeld, Mary Morrison, Randy Aldrich, Stacy Olyha, Paul Bisceglia. Also present was Greg Bolner from CPL, Jennifer O'Donnell, Planner, and Lisa Cobb, Town Attorney.

Chairman Rohrbach said welcome to the Town of LaGrange Planning Board meeting for February 4, 2021. This virtual meeting is being held under the auspices of the Executive Order 202.1 issued by Governor Andrew Cuomo of the State of New York as a way to remain compliant with the stay home, stay safe mandates while continuing to carry out town business with this order. This meeting is being recorded and the video will later be posted on the town website.

The meeting and the public access procedures by computer and telephone have been announced on the town website and referenced on the town's electronic message board on Stringham Road. The public should be aware that the public comments are only permitted during the actual public hearing portion of this meeting. Please remain muted unless recognized at that time.

February 4, 2021 was a special Planning Board meeting for the applicant to present formation about the LaGrange Town Center project, to describe their extensive work with the involved agencies, which explains the extended period of time since the last appearance before the Planning Board and discuss Applicant's plan to prepare FEIS (proposed) for the Planning Board's review. Purpose of tonight also includes inviting any comments from the Board members of issues to be addressed in the FEIS.

PRESENTATION:

Presentation- Steve Rieger, Jennifer Van Tuyl, Mike Fishman, Bonnie Von Ohlsen. Phil Grealy, Anthony Guccione, and David Lombardi available for questions. Ian Rieger, Dan Rieger, Alexa Sikoryak also in attendance.

Applicant Presentation:

Steve Rieger:
Introduction

Key part of DEIS was the necessary improvements on Route 55 corridor
Since the public hearing, the Applicant and its consultants have been working with DEC and other agencies regarding turtles and bats
Project remains centered on Traditional neighborhood design principles
More than 50% open space

Jennifer Van Tuyl:

Where have we been: there has been environmental review - generic and site specific level

Before zoning was adopted the town prepared a GEIS which concluded that Town Center zoning would not cause negative impacts to the town center-

Challenges included wetlands

Coordination with town to bring water and sewer to the site - same

DEIS concluded that potential adverse impacts could be appropriately addressed

Zoning adopted in 2003

Applicant worked to develop a site specific plan and EIS

Planning board was/is lead agency - has the clearest and broadest jurisdiction over development

Public was involved from the beginning

Took 2 years to develop DEIS

It was acknowledged in the DEIS that changes due to time and market might change elements of mixed use project

DEIS was circulated and Public hearing held (& closed) July 2009

Comments were mostly about traffic and the Route 55 improvements.

On the last day of comment period, the Planning Board received letter from DEC, raising concerns about wetlands, habitat issues, and endangered species.

Project needs substantive permits from DEC

Mike Fishman explained long review process with DEC and outside agencies. Also emphasized that the plan now is better for the bats and turtles than if the project was not built.

As to removing the trails in the DEC wetland adjacent areas, Mr. Fishman stated that with all of the improvements that would be required, including handicapped accessibility of the trails, the elimination of the paths at DEC's request protects the wetlands, and the project still has ample pedestrian connectivity by means of all the sidewalks.

Throughout the site.

Mr. Fishman also emphasized that the conservation easement to be given to the Town would protect upland habitat and add a layer of protection to the wetland adjacent area, which would limit its future use, thus adding important protection.

Working on project since 2010

Roadways were designed with culverts to avoid dredging; Utilities installed subsurface have only temporary impacts

The 875 sq. ft. of wetland impact temporary - will be returned to former use

Extensive turtle study in 2004, no Blandings turtles detected; main concerns are preserving habitat connectivity and nesting areas for turtles

Agricultural fields are nesting habitat but are plowed and disturbed every year so there is a threat for turtles

1 known roost tree for Indiana bat was on site at the time of the DEIS. That tree has subsequently died and no longer exists

Tree clearing on site will be during a limited time frame to make sure bats are not roosting in trees

Question from Planning Board: what happens after 10-year turtle monitoring period?

Mike: Habitat will go through succession naturally, probably after 20-30 years

Bonnie Von Ohlsen summarized some of DEIS aspects and how the FEIS would update them, and presented the changes to the TC-B layout.

The applicant concluded their presentation by describing their proposal to proceed with the next step of SEQR process, wherein the applicant will prepare a proposed FEIS for planning board review. As noted, the applicant also requested any comments and input from Board members as to issues to be addressed in FEIS.

PROCEDURAL DISCUSSIONS:

Only two members (Stacy Olyha and Dennis Rosenfeld) were on the Board in 2009. Ms. Olyha still has her DEIS copy; Chairman is emailing links to DEIS to all members. Lisa Cobb agreed that it is reasonable to proceed to FEIS, because there is no significant adverse impact not already discussed in the DEIS. She assures Board that a Planning Board always has the right to consider this issue again if a change is later proposed which *does* present such a potential impact.

Board decision is to calendar this application for the regular meeting (2/25/21) to allow the 2 absent members to provide comments to be discussed in the FEIS.

Mr. Rohrbach stated that Town consultants are authorized to work with the Applicant during preparation of proposed FEIS. Bonnie Ohlsen and Ms. VanTuyll authorized to speak with Lisa Cobb and Jennifer O'Donnell re: meeting schedule and interim reviews.

QUESTIONS/COMMENTS FROM PB MEMBERS AND SUGGESTION OF ISSUES TO BE ADDRESSED IN FEIS:

Chairman Christian Rohrbach:

Impacts summary table – question about residential units. In some cases, applicant compared 2021 FEIS plan with Alternatives A & B in DEIS, not base plan. Suggested that an additional column be added, so you can compare with the 2009 proposed action and with the alternatives.

Parking lot design - think about snow storage

Marc Komorsky:

Civic Bldg. E-2 – (existing bldg.) – Mr. Komorsky asked if civic space can be increased
Mr. Rieger - per DEIS, the plan is dynamic - open to more Civic, and has spoken to
Town in the past about a town building. Could include courthouse, firehouse, other. (all
TBD)

Civic space shown now includes 8,600 sf Library (in existing. Building), plus the Town
Green/ Pavilion and Park Square

Asked about Phasing-

Mr. Rieger - will start in TCB and TCR, but market will determine the pace of residential.
Jennifer O'Donnell noted the Planning Board's authority regarding phasing of
projects.

Bldgs. along Route 55 - tough to predict, potential commercial tenants want to see
residents living in the community before they will commit to leases.

A lot of site work is necessary.

Asks for identification of all entrance/exits to the site. Applicant confirms that there are
multiple connection points to roads surrounding the site. Concerned with single internal
wetland crossing. Response is that this is all DEC would allow (Town and DOT have
insisted that the crossing be there for connectivity). Ms. Ohlsen responded that there
are no dead ends and lots of loops (for pedestrian and vehicular circulation)

Board member suggested consideration of an additional hydrant at Town Center. Town
only has 2 hydrants where tankers can be filled up.

Mr. Bolner - water mains will be installed with hydrants to improve fire flow at Town
Center - hydrants will be located throughout development, 1,500-2,500 gpm flow
throughout Town Center. The Planning Board could specify a hydrant or 2 for Town
use to fill trucks. Fire flow will support sprinklered buildings.

Stacy Olyha:

Consider community pool? School desires pool for swim team, need practice space.
Colleges won't let local swim teams use their facilities. Stacy can provide name of
person compiling investors for a pool

Where are townhome garages? Mr. Rieger – explained detached garages for
townhomes at Park Square are indicated on plan

Parking east of Bldgs. 13 & 14 – suggested consideration of land banked parking here.
Consider relocating Bldgs. 6, 7, 8, 9, which presently lack a neighboring building across
the street, and front on a main road - not friendly (she prefers 3,4,1,2 which face each
other).

Bldg. 20 – she notices it is 1 story. Ms. Olyha said she would want it to be built to look
like a two story. This is what the Town required with Hannaford, to create the look of 2
story. Architectural design standards very important to Town Center. She cites
Hannaford/Tops as an excellent example of exterior facade

Will there be any work force housing? Ms. Olyha refers to code definition in 240-112
(238)

Mr. Rieger - will take a look at that, but should be noted that the 2021 plan provides more accessibility due to different price points.

Will there be separate loading areas for retail? Or will you use the parking lot?

Are there invasive species in wetlands? Specifically, phragmites? Does DEC have special requirements for removal of this (by hand)? Are you planning to clean this up?

Are there any Buttonbush ponds? Turtles' favorites - please check if any

Ms. Olyha said she can provide hands on experience help based on her work behind the High School.

Where on site was the Indiana Bat tree (now fallen)?

Mr. Fishman - western portion of site in dry area

Hudsonia has information on the soils the Blandings turtles like and nest depth.

Hudsonia did a survey use hand tilling and roto tilling to figure out what (tilling technique) the turtles like best - that's available at the High School. Referenced HS teacher, now retired.

Turtles go under road in Fly Sprout Creek. You could offer for high school to use TC wetlands for study.

Which roads will be Town Roads and which private?

Mr. Rieger – Have had discussions with Mr. Bolner about this, and thinking hasn't changed from DEIS, the major roads are planned to be Town roads. Ultimately Town will decide which roads it wants to accept for dedication.

Ms. Olyha suggested reconsideration of the curved lane/road through green space north of Town Green.

School bus pickup – notes need for adequate turning radii.

Brief acknowledgement that drive-thru rules have changed (now food drive-through is permitted).

Randy Aldrich:

He pointed out need for pedestrian routes, including walking paths along Route 55, and crosswalks, which get a lot of use. Board discussion acknowledged the environmental purpose of eliminating walking trails within wetland adjacent areas to protect wetland and habitat, but wanted assurance in FEIS that there will be sufficient sidewalks in TC-R to provide adequate pedestrian circulation.

Asked Mr. Rieger to consider providing a location for LaGrange Station Fire 4 if needed in future.

He wants to hear details about maintenance plan for the Town Center, and ongoing operations, on a permanent basis, to assure that the project remains a credit to the Town. Mr. Rieger stated that there would be HOA/POA management of property.

Also concerned about coordinating clearing and project phasing. He does not want the site clearing to get ahead of project building.

Dennis Rosenfeld:

Asks why hotel was removed from the plan.

Steve Rieger - hard to finance hotel, and that's why it's not in refined 2021 plan. Don't think hotel is viable today, but may be prior to build out and will consider in future. We are open to all uses permitted in the TC, and will consult with the Town as opportunities arise. (Chair notes that hotels would be helpful in graduation season, but he realizes this won't sustain a hotel year round).

Mary Morrison:

Would like the FEIS to include updated traffic information.
Lisa Cobb advised that traffic will be reviewed in the context of the current conditions, and traffic data included in the FEIS

Greg Bolner:

Have met with Applicant with Wanda Livigni.
Applicant needs to meet new storm water regulations
Water & Sewer - no significant changes from 2009. Town is working through their process for the infrastructure

Jennifer O'Donnell:

FEIS should discuss how to address maintaining project mix throughout construction phases: See zoning Code section 240-35.G.3.
It is important that the owner is open to maintaining flexibility for more Civic Uses, because Civic uses are essential to maintain 24/7 community activity in a Town center. As to school bus stops, the new code incorporated 2003, 2008, 2014 changed street designs to reduce turning radii - significant for new urbanism - school bus routes should be accommodated where necessary but also need to maintain intimate street scale. FEIS should consider whether only certain routes would accommodate school busses. Conclusion: Board discusses options for workshop sessions with Applicant as proposed FEIS developed. Any further comments of Board members regarding comments for the FEIS to be submitted to the Chair by the next regular meeting on February 25, 2021.

These minutes are respectfully submitted with a thank you to the applicant for providing and assisting me with their presentation material which was a great help.

Ms. Olyha made a motion to adjourn the meeting at 8:47 pm, seconded by Ms. Morrison and the motion carried. Meeting adjourned.

Eileen Mang

Planning Board Secretary

