

**Cornwall Development Review Board (DRB)**  
**SKETCH PLAN REVIEW MINUTES • March 1, 2018 • 7:00–8:45pm**  
**Cornwall Town Hall**

**MEMBERS PRESENT:** Barbara Greenwood, Gary Barnett, Joe Severy, Annie Wilson,  
Magna Dodge

**ALTERNATES PRESENT:** Shari Johnson, Cheryl Cesario [recused]

**ATTENDEES:** 59 non-DRB (sign-in sheets available at the Town Hall )

**1. CALL TO ORDER:** 7:00pm. Barbara opened the meeting.

**2. QUORUM:** Established.

**3. AGENDA:** Magna MOVED/Gary SECONDED to approve the Agenda. ***Motion passed***

**4. BEAVER BROOK Sketch Plan Review**

- Barbara opened the meeting with introductions and explanations of how the meeting would be conducted, the role of the DRB, what a Sketch Plan Review is and where it fits into the procedures for a subdivision application. She then administered the oath to the applicants and to all who planned to speak. She noted that this would not be the only chance for the public to participate and that speaking at the sketch review had no impact on the appeal process. The DRB was queried as to any ex parte communications with the applicants—none noted.

**• Applicant Presentation**

- Churchill Franklin introduced himself and gave a brief introduction to the project.
- Matt Bonner further explained their goal of establishing a hamlet consisting of small homes not large multi-family dwellings. He explained their view that this was an investment, but they are not developers with the usually accepted connotations.
- Eric Blair walked the attendees through the project as currently planned, explaining their concept of a hamlet as based on the type of town/village development of a hundred or more years ago, prior to the advent of land planning and zoning. He noted that he is a planner/designer and has been involved in this sort of project in other states, this is his first in Vermont. He is not a member of the investment group, but has been hired by them to oversee the project.
  - The overall land parcel size is 167 acres.
    - 21 acres is Phase 1—the area immediately surrounding the Bingham farmhouse and Greek Revival church. This area is planned for up to 22 small dwellings, and a Commons.
    - 23 acres have been set out as Phase 2—no development has been planned yet for this area.
    - 123 acres to be conserved—this portion has preliminary approval for conservation from the Vermont Land Trust, to be conserved in perpetuity. The land is expected to be sold to the Cesarios for agriculture use.
  - Eric noted that pages 6–9 of the sketch plan followed the review items required by the *Subdivision Regulation* and *Town Plan*, and that the group has meticulously followed and adhered to all. He pointed out the page containing names of abutting property owners (and tax map identifying their parcels) who will be contacted when the actual permit application is filed.

- Matt noted that the 123 acres to be conserved represented 75% of the entire parcel. He also noted that a survey of Cornwall residents indicated that 72% were concerned about the lack of affordable housing in the town, and that very little—if any—homes currently fall into that category. The project will aim to remedy that, with homes designed to sell at various price-points including “affordable.”
- Barbara accepted into evidence and marked as Exhibits the application itself (*Exhibit A*) and the presentation/notes (to be marked when received as *Exhibit B*). She then offered the DRB members the opportunity to ask questions, followed by an opportunity for the public to comment.

### • DRB Questions/Comments

Board members had a number of questions and made note of some items they require to be submitted at the next round. Also noted was the possibility of an escrow account to be set up to cover any Technical fees incurred.

- Gary—To clarify, the 23-acre section is slated for future development and will interconnect with the 21-acre section to be developed initially? *Matt*: Yes, they will be connected via a network of paths and trails. *Eric*—each section (phase) will be finished before the next is begun so there will be a “finished” product, nothing left as partially done or unfinished.
- Magna—Indicated that the submitted materials are missing items. The DRB needs all the materials listed in §310 of the *Subdivision Regulations*. She requested that any new materials be submitted ten (10) business days prior to the next meeting. Specifically, in accordance with §310, she would like to see:
  - (1) A drawing at a scale not to exceed one inch = one hundred feet (1” = 100’) drawn on a contour map at no greater than 10-foot intervals, showing the project boundaries, zoning district boundaries, adjacent land uses and ownership, significant natural and manmade features, existing easements, and layout and size of the proposed lots, uses and improvements (§310 (3)). and
  - (2) General timing of construction, and nature and extent of all improvements.
  - (3) A map combining the information on pages 12, 14, 15, and 16 of the presentation material in a simplified, clarified manner making it more understandable.
- Barbara—Agreed that better drawings are needed; wants an explanation how the 21- and 23-acre parcels relate to phases 1 and 2. Also, while the DRB will require a certain amount up-front, more may be asked for as the application proceeds.
- Joe—The need for technical review fees and other Town expenses, including legal fees, will need to be determined, and an escrow account set up with sufficient funds to cover those fees. Also, with regard to §310, what plans have been started? *Matt*: Understood, regarding the escrow account. As for §310, plans have just started.
- Magna—What is the role of Beaver Brook LLC, who is in charge of the project? *Matt*: Beaver Brook is just a holding company, not a developer. [*Eric*: Eric is the contractor on this project. typically, applicant in such a project would be the homeowner who would pick from a builder's guild/architect guild list from the contractor and then submit their choice to the contractor for approval. This project is so small that the holding company (Beaver Brook), in consultation with the contractor (Blair), will select whatever builders/architects the project will need. The builder(s)/architect(s) chosen by the holding company will be overseen by the contractor. Additionally, it will be the holding company rather than a home-owners' association which creates the regulations regarding building size, appearance, etc that is used to guide the construction.

- Magna—What is the sequencing of the Land Trust/Beaver Brook interaction? *Matt*: Once the Land Trust has approved the conserving of the 123-acre parcel (preliminary approval has been received), the expectation is that it will be subdivided from the main parcel and transferred to the Land Trust. The parcel currently has a forest plan in place which is being followed. The entire parcel is expected to be sold to the Cesarios who will maintain the forested portions per the Forestry Plan and the non-wooded portions as agricultural land. The process will take 2–3 years.

• **Public Comments/Questions**

- B. Hill—when she purchased her lot from the Bingham, there were a number of covenants on it which she adheres to; fears negative effects on the area and wildlife from project’s resultant traffic, noise, safety issues.
- D. vanVleck—What facilities are planned to deal with water and sewage, one system for all, individual systems...? *Matt*: No building can commence without State water and waste-water permits. Actual design has not yet been done.
- C. vanVleck—What plans are being made regarding wildlife? Are houses being built on spec?
- E. Keefe—Does this project come under ACT 250 scrutiny? *Matt*: Yes
- M. Senecal—Concerns: how long to complete—12 years? 15 years? Impacts on wildlife , nNumber of cars expected from 22 houses, and their impact on an already dangerous intertsection, what sort of pricing is anticipated
- E. Napier—Views project with great dismay. Fears decrease in wildlife.
- T. Keefe—What plans for existing out-buildings, many have historical value. Water—difficulties often experienced now by current home-owners—how will the water-table be protected? Will there be a traffic study and how will worsening traffic issues (specifically, at the existing dangerous intersection) be prevented?
- S. Pelkey—Hamlet needs to connect to the village that already exists. Other Bingham parcels have covenants on them, what covenants are on this project's parcel(s)? Concerned about what will happen to the church, traffic and parking provisions, performance standards, consideration given to historic aspects.
- W. Warren—Virtually all existing homes in the area have water softeners, what will be the effect of 22+ new homes with water softeners on wells?
- L. Senecal—Can't see how 22+ houses can be set on a 22-acre parcel. Also, his well is 400' deep, Water and septic issues are likely to arise.
- J. Warren—Sees risk of depleting water. How/who will determine that there is sufficient water for all?
- B, Mencart—Wildlife concerns. Read aloud the relevant sections from the *Subdivision Regulations (§§450, 470)*
- D. Richmond—Spoke in support of project.
- A. Ryan—Reminded people to consider possibility of unintended consequences. One of her clients decided against moving to Cornwall after seeing a sign protesting the project, felt Cornwall was too unwelcoming.
- Barbara accepted into evidence and marked as Exhibits the written comments from E. Napier (*Exhibit C*), K. Branch (*Exhibit D*), J. Warren (*Exhibit F*), and an *Addison Independent* article (*Exhibit E*).

• **Additional Board Questions**

- Barbara—would like more information on proposed affordable housing, also the rationale for proposed density.
- Magna—what is the confidence level for the sale of the houses at specific price points?
- The Board indicated that they had additional questions for the applicants but that they may be too detailed for where the applicants are in their permit process. It was left that the applicants will file the more detailed information required under §310 for a Sketch Plan Review and then the DRB will schedule another meeting for the Review. Barbara would like to see addressed:
  - (1) the rationale for the proposed building density, and
  - (2) an explanation of how affordable housing will work Barbara noted that a DRB site visit might be in order as part of the sketch plan review process

**ADJOURNMENT**—Barbara indicated that at this point the Board has sufficient questions, with insufficient submitted materials, to require another sketch plan review before determining the classification of the project or the complete list of submission requirements The meeting was adjourned at 8:45.

Respectfully Submitted,  
Robin Conway, DRB Secretary