

Shaftsbury Development Review Board (DRB)

January 2, 2019

Shaftsbury Elementary School

- 1) The meeting came to order at 7 pm. A quorum was present, to wit: Tom Huncharek (chair) via phone, Chris Ponessi (vice chair), Michael Bidy, and Michael Day. Also present was zoning administrator Shelly Stiles. Several citizens filled the small school library meeting space.
- 2) Conflict of interest: Mr. Bidy reported he'd discussed the project with a member of the Planning Commission, also on the board of Shires Housing (the applicant). He didn't feel it necessary to recuse himself, nor did any other members of the DRB or the audience.
- 3) Sign in sheets were passed around.
- 4) Mr. Bidy moved to approve the November 21, 2018 minutes. Mr. Day seconded the motion, which passed 4-0-0.

An item that would otherwise have been reviewed under agenda item 6, other business, was without objection brought to the board. Mr. Barth VanderEls said a subdivision approved by the DRB many months before, through a misunderstanding, was never recorded. He asked the Board to re-approve the subdivision (application 16-9729). Mr. Day moved to re-approve. Mr. Bidy seconded the motion, which passed 4-0-0.

- 5) Mr. Ponessi opened the hearing on application 18-10031, preliminary plat review, and 18-10032, site plan review, both submitted by Shires Housing and William Rice. Jason Dolmetsch of MSK Engineering, Stephanie Lane of Shires Housing, and Jeff Goldsmith of Goldstone Architecture presented the application.

The proposal calls for a 22 –unit housing development in 4 separate structures. Mr. Dolmetsch described how the open space subdivision density calculation was conducted. More than 20% of the total area of the project site will be set aside in an easement-secured conservation area. Thirty three parking spaces are required by the zoning bylaw; 34 will be provided. Municipal water and sewer will be provided.

An Act 250 permit will be required. Mr. Dolmetsch expressed the hope that the DRB would approve the proposal on the condition that various permits be secured as the Act 250 Commission will not issue its permit until the local permits have been issued. A waste water permit, a water supply permit, a stormwater operations and construction permit will all be required.

Mr. Dolmetsch submitted impact statements from the town, school, fire department, rescue squad, and police department. He will submit statements regarding North Bennington's supply of municipal water, and Bennington's agreement to provide municipal waste water treatment.

Mr. Ponessi reviewed the application packet in the context of 5.4, preliminary plat submission requirements, of the subdivision regulations, asking for clarification, discussion and further information as necessary.

A subdivision plat signed by a licensed surveyor with owners of record, deed information, meets and bounds and other items must be submitted.

Mr. Dolmetsch noted that plan C103 shows the location of the existing water line. The existing line does not cross the property. North Bennington will extend the line under Paran Road in the summer of 2019.

A certificate of notification was submitted.

A section of the extended sewer main will become the property of Shires Housing.

The structures will be heated and domestic hot water will be provided to them via a wood pellet boiler installed in the basement of building one. Wood pellet storage will take place in the basement of building one. A 100% redundant propane back up system will be constructed. Two 1000 gallon tanks will be placed on the site. They will be labeled plan C104.

The soils on the site are highly infiltrative. Two stormwater practices will be installed: a buried infiltration area under the parking lot between buildings 1 and 2, and a grassed basin near the entrance to the development. It has been designed to hold all runoff from the ten-year storm; no discharge off site will occur. The pond drains to a ditch which flows to a culvert under Paran Rd., discharging to a wetland which belongs to the State. Stormwater practices were conservatively sized.

Regarding street profiles: no streets as such are proposed (no roads will be turned over to the town). There are no street profiles in the plan set, but a detail is shown on plan C502.

Re grading, the project will be a "universal design" project, all sidewalks of a slope of no more than 5%.

No curbing is proposed. For those areas adjacent to roads, parking stops or curbing will be provided. Those features will be illustrated on plan XXX.

Soil classification will not be needed. The stormwater permit will be accepted as evidence of their suitability. Mr. Dolmetsch said an erosion risk assessment hasn't been completed.

Regarding screening, a tree belt will be planted between Paran Road and the development. The belt will top a berm that separates the road from the proposed structures. Existing shrubs and evergreen plantings will be conserved. McCarthy Acres will secure visual protection from existing vegetation on the proposed conservation parcel. No shrub enhancements around the buildings are proposed at this time.

The DRB turned to site plan review, section 3.5 of the zoning bylaw. Many of the items listed there duplicate preliminary plat requirements as so had already been discussed.

Mr. Goldstone presented elevations for the buildings, which they think of as two "farmhouses," one "barn", and one "bunkhouse." All exteriors will consist of a wood substitute resembling either board and batten or clapboard. Each building will have its own utility room. A series of heat exchangers will heat the structures. The farmhouse building units each have a front porch. The barn building will have front and back porches. All buildings will meet the highest energy standards promulgated by Efficiency Vermont.

The proposed elevations will not change although details such as color remain unresolved.

One single site enclosed refuse area will be constructed between buildings 3 and 4. A detail of this structure will be provided. There will be no individual trash or recycling receptacles.

Mr. Ponessie suggested a sidewalk connecting building 4 to Paran Rd. Mr. Dolmetsch will show this feature on the plan. It may exceed a grade of 5%.

Each unit will have its own storage unit where bikes and the like can be kept.

Mr. Dolmetsch will indicate a snow storage area.

The conservation lot is wooded, except for the buildings, which will be torn down. Those areas will be seeded and left to grow up.

Mr. Dolmetsch described the system of sidewalks and paths. He said the project team had discussed, though had not finalized, a connection across Fund for North Bennington land to the Robert Frost trail, and a connection to land owned by Paran Recreation. The board discussed the pros and cons of providing trail access parking at the existing Rice curb cut. Mr. Bidy said it would allow access to Paran Recreation after hours.

The photometric plan was explained. One light pole was left off the plan and will be added. The lighting will be Dark Sky standards compliant.

The site is in Shaftsbury school district 1.

Members of the public spoke.

Mr. Tim Scoggins, select board chair, noted that workforce housing in the area is very limited. This proposal responds to that need and will help spur economic activity. He said the applicant has been very responsive to public comments, moving buildings and the entrance, providing sidewalks, and volunteering to pave the short connection to North Bennington.

Mr. Art Whitman, select board vice chair, said that Act 46 mandates that hydrologically connected roads such as Paran Road must be upgraded to meet new standards. He suggested that Shires Housing work with the Town to upgrade Paran Rd. between the entrance to the proposed development and Paran Acres as required by the state. Perhaps Shires could pay for the material while the Town does the work. He suggested many drivers will turn right out of the development, using a portion of the road that now can be nearly impassable. Mr. Dolmetsch responded that the entrance had been moved south in response to earlier citizen comment. He said it was hard to say how many drivers would go north or south, but in any case there will be easy access to Route 67 from North Bennington.

Mr. Ed Myers asked if any development for the remaining parcels, which will be held by Sage City Syndicate, is planned. Mr. Dolmetsch said no development is planned at this time.

Mr. Dolmetsch explained for the audience's benefit how the density bonus was arrived at.

In response to a question from Mr. Bob Howe, Ms. Lane said an early summer start date is hoped for. Shires will be responsible for maintaining the project for twenty years. It maintains a high level of operating and replacement reserves. It will subcontract out such activities as snow plowing and mowing, and will have on site project managers and do routine inspections. Security has not been an issue, but the manager could patrol more, and security cameras could be installed if necessary.

Mr. Tyler Resch said such housing is greatly needed. He is in total support of the project.

Ms. Rochelle Jones said she would discourage any trail connections. People already access Paran Recreation the back way and party in the woods. She is not in favor of providing extra parking at the old Rice curb cut.

Mr. Huncharek noted that at the sketch plan review meeting, the DRB had requested that Shires provide an operations manual, which might include a copy of the leases. Mr. Dolmetsch will provide that item.

Mr. Day moved to recess the hearing until January 16, 2019. Mr. Bidy seconded the motion. It was agreed that trail connections would be discussed at a later time; if they are to be made, maintenance agreements with the partner organizations should be secured.

The motion passed 4-0-0.

Mr. Bidy moved to adjourn at 8:50 p.m. Mr. Day seconded the motion which passed 4-0-0.

The team will need to submit a curb cut application.