

SANFORD PLANNING BOARD MINUTES
MEETING – September 9, 2015 – 7:00 P.M.
City Hall Annex Third Floor Chambers

MEMBERS PRESENT: John McAdam, Chair
Lenny Horr, Vice Chair
Kelly Tarbox, Secretary
Dana Peterson
Richard Bergeron
Lucas Lanigan
Dianne Connolly

MEMBERS ABSENT: None

STAFF PRESENT: James Q. Gulnac, AICP, Planning & Development Director
Michael Casserly, Asst. City Engineer
Shirley Sheesley, CEO

STAFF ABSENT: None

I. CALL TO ORDER

Chair McAdam called the meeting to order at 7:00 PM. He then made opening comments before beginning the meeting. Chair McAdam disclosed he is an abutter to the subject property – he is one of four shareholders of Hanson Farm Inc. and own a small sliver of land across the street from the property during the opening comments.

Staff member Gulnac asked both the applicant and Board members if either party felt there would be a conflict with John McAdam remaining as Chair even though he was an abutter. Neither party was concerned with Mr. McAdam remaining as Chair.

II. PUBLIC HEARING

1. File #14-15-W: Joe Sevigny, 655 Hanson’s Ridge Road, Springvale, Maine.

Chair McAdam called for a representative to present the project.

Staff member Gulnac announced the applicant was handing out updated information and the information would be added to the official record.

Joe Sevigny introduced himself and his brother Sam Sevigny. He gave an overview of their business. Mr. Sevigny then gave a brief history of how he and his brother obtained the former Mountain View residential care facility from the city. He then overviewed the proposed project.

Chair McAdam asked the Sevigny’s where they lived and why. Mr. Sevigny stated where he lived and said he lives there because he loves the Ridge just like everyone else.

Jim Nimon, Executive Director of the Sanford Regional Economic Growth Council said good, quality housing is good for economic growth in a community. He then said the developers presenting the proposal construct quality housing projects. Mr. Nimon continued with his point of view of the current property.

Chair McAdam asked the Sevigny's if they were currently paying taxes on the property. Mr. Sevigny responded they were. Board member Lanigan then asked how the taxes are currently being assessed for this property and what the valuation would be after the project is constructed.

Mr. Nimon then said when he is asked by other coastal communities what destinations Sanford has for the fall, he said he promotes McDougal's Orchards, located on Hanson's Ridge, as an attraction.

Chair McAdam asked if there were any questions.

Board member Peterson asked if there were any plans to expand the parking on the site. Mr. Sevigny said the property would have to be redeveloped and reengineered for the project.

Chair McAdam asked if there were any other questions; there were none.

Chair McAdam asked if anyone present would like to speak in favor of the project; there was no one.

Merrell Clarke, 391 Hanson's Ridge Road asked how many residents the project was expected to house. Mr. Sevigny replied he estimated 23-24 residents, but no more than 26. Discussion followed on the number of residents. Mr. Clarke then asked if the leach field will be large enough to accommodate the project. Chair McAdam said these issues would be addressed if the project is approved.

Michelle Desautels, 406 Hanson's Ridge Road asked what the plans were to provide for open space, farmlands, etc. as these are described as characteristics in the comprehensive plan for the rural areas of the city. Mr. Sevigny said they do have some acreage around the building and plan to promote walking trails and possibly incorporating them in the surrounding farmland for everyone to use.

Board member Lanigan asked if he could do some type of community farming for their residents to help promote farming. Discussion followed.

Board member Lanigan asked what the soil is on the property. Mr. Sevigny said it was all ledge. Discussion followed on whether or not the soil would be good for farming.

Chair McAdam asked if they checked the property for soils before purchasing it; Mr. Sevigny responded they had so they knew it was ledge when purchased.

Chair McAdam read page 6-6 Farmland, #22 of the comprehensive plan. He then read an article that was posted on the city's website regarding a conservation easement, which McDougal Orchards leases from the city.

After reading articles regarding the preservation of farmland in Sanford, Chair McAdam opened the floor for public comment and asked if anyone present wanted to speak.

A gentleman (no name given) asked what would be done to the property if the project should not move forward in the process. Mr. Sevigny responded the current building would remain and nothing would be done with the land because it is not feasible to have a vacant lot.

Board member Lanigan asked if there was anyone besides them at the auction. Mr. Sevigny responded they were not the only ones present, but the only ones who submitted a bid. Board member Lanigan asked if any of the abutters were there; Mr. Sevigny replied there were no abutters present.

Evan McDougal, co-owner of Hanson Farm Inc. gave additional history of the land on Hanson's Ridge. Mr. McDougal said he was also on the Planning Board during the comprehensive plan update. He asked the Board to find the application inconsistent with the comprehensive plan.

Wayne Davis, 264 Hanson's Ridge Road said he feels an apartment building with about twenty units and all the cars and tenants doesn't fit in with the surrounding area but does feel removing the building would be a plus. He said the Sevigny's have done a great job with their other projects. He urged the Board to find the application inconsistent with the comprehensive plan.

Michelle Desautels, 406 Hanson's Ridge Road said she and her husband are excited to be farmers on the Ridge. She is urging the Board to deny the request presented tonight. Ms. Desautels stated the request does not follow the comprehensive plan and feels that if this request is granted, more contract zone requests will be presented and the Board would have no choice but to grant those as well. She then gave her points of how she thought the proposal was not consistent with the comprehensive plan.

Board member Lanigan asked Ms. Desautels about needing good soil in order to farm. He said that the site for the proposed apartment building does not have soil conducive to farming so this site would not be suitable farmland. Discussion followed.

Jace Clark, owns farmland on the Ridge, said the topo map didn't prevent his land from having the topsoil stripped from it. He said the topo map has rough boundaries and wouldn't be a good tool to use to prevent growth on farmland. He did say the land in the proposal is mostly ledge which is not good for a leach field even though there is a leach field there now. He then asked how many zones in the city allow multifamily units to be hooked up to septic. His other two concerns were 1) setting a precedent if this size of a project should be allowed to hook-up to a septic and 2) why this property wasn't reverted back to single-family after being vacant for a period of time when the house at the corner of Hanson's Ridge and Oak Street was reverted back to a single-family use once the house had been vacant for a year.

Board member Bergeron said he would like to review a few of the areas in town that are not consistent with the comprehensive plan. He said a property that was zoned industrial became a commercial property (Wal-Mart) through a contract zone, one of the mill buildings had a contract zone for it, and a pharmacy that went in the downtown area (Walgreens) was approved through a contract zone as well. He said he has more of an issue with the three prior contract zone approvals than he does with this one which involves a dilapidated building that needs to be torn down. He understands that the zoning is not correct for the proposed project, but neither were the other approved contract zones. He believes The Ridge project would be a better use of the contract zone process than the others that have been approved.

Ann Marie Mastracchio, 23 Lebanon Street lives about a mile from the proposed property but was a sitting member of the city council when this property was sold to the Sevigny's. She explained why the city decided to put the property out to bid. One of the reasons she approved the sale was because she thought the Sevigny's were going to reuse the existing building. She expressed her concerns with the current proposal and the different ideas she was expecting to be done with the property. Discussion followed.

Ellen McAdam, 201 Hanson's Ridge Road spoke to address the traffic issue on this street. She felt that the proposed location was the wrong location for an apartment building and explained why.

Aaron Gonzales, owner of Our Farm at 377 Hanson's Ridge Road, would like to see the building used for a use within the comprehensive plan instead of the proposal. Discussion followed.

Staff member Gulnac read two letters the Planning Department received into the record. The first letter is from Jean Noon, resident of Springvale and the second letter is from Bud Johnston, a member of the land trust abutting the Sevigny property.

A resident asked if the use of requesting a contract zone in this area is against the comprehensive plan.

Chair McAdam asked if anyone else wished to speak; there was no one.

Chair McAdam closed the public hearing.

After going through the rest of the agenda, Chair McAdam asked if the Board would like to take action on the project.

Vice Chair Horr stated he would like to see the property.

Chair McAdam asked if there were any questions before they adjourn. He then asked the Board if they wanted to do a site walk.

It was decided the Board would conduct a site walk on Monday September 21, 2015 at 5:00 P.M.

The item will then be continued at the next meeting which will be held on the first Wednesday in October.

III. NEW BUSINESS

There were no new business items.

IV. OLD BUSINESS

There were no old business items.

V. APPROVAL OF MINUTES – June 17, 2015; July 15, 2015; August 5, 2015; and August 19, 2015

All sets of minutes were tabled.

VI. PLANNING DIRECTOR'S REPORT

There was no Planning Director's report, but he said that the city had won the Phoenix award for the Sanford Mill project for brownfields.

VII. ADJOURN

The meeting adjourned at 8:30 P.M.