

June 19, 2019

APPROVED

1 In attendance: Michael Dell Orfano- Chair, John D'Angelo-Selectman Ex-Officio, Arnold
2 Rosenblatt, Bill Stoughton (voting for Rich Hart), Marilyn Peterman, Sally Wilkins, Eric Hahn,
3 and Clifford Harris.

4
5 Michael Dell Orfano called the meeting to order at 7:31 pm.

6
7 NEW BUSINESS:

8
9 **1. Bicycle/Pedestrian Advisory Committee – Discussion on the current draft of the**
10 **bike/pedestrian plan.**

11
12 Chris Buchanan, Chairman of the Bicycle/Pedestrian Advisory Committee, and Jared Hardner,
13 member of the same committee and the Conservation Commission, presented the Multi-Modal
14 Master Plan. The current goal is to inform the Planning Board of the Committee's draft plan and
15 work with them to incorporate it into the Master Plan.

16
17 During the presentation, it was explained that there are 210 miles of roadways and 25+ miles of
18 off-road trails throughout Amherst. The hope is to "build"/modify a network that includes both
19 roadside and off-road solutions, allowing any type of user (walker, hiker, cyclist, etc.) to more
20 easily access the town. This network would be implemented over time, in accordance with
21 regularly scheduled roadwork.

22
23 More information is available through the Bicycle/Pedestrian Facebook page and on the town's
24 website.

25
26 **2. CASE #: PZ11364-052219 - Robert H. Jacobson Revocable Trust (Owner) & R.**
27 **Carter Scott, President, TransFormations (Applicant), 17 Christian Hill Road, PIN**
28 **#: 005-100-000 & 005-148-000 – Discussion to present the potential Agrihood**
29 **Development of Lots 005-100-000 & 005-148-000 utilizing a wide variety of unit**
30 **types and styles per the IHO. Zoned Residential/Rural.**

31
32 *S. Wilkins sat out of the discussion, as an abutter to the proposed project.*

33
34 Ken Clinton, of Meridian Land Services, and R. Carter Scott, of TransFormations, led the
35 discussion of the proposed Agrihood. Mr. Clinton stated that the property, Jacobson Farm, is
36 made up of two parcels. Parcel 5-148 is approximately 36 acres and consists of land gently
37 sloping from the street to the east. A good portion of this parcel is wet, there is a flood zone, and
38 it abuts the south end of the Great Meadow. There are several former fields and pasturelands that
39 have been used less and less over the years. Parcel 5-100 is approximately 94 acres and is more
40 substantially sloped. There are wet pockets on this parcel and there is also a seasonal stream.

41
42 The two parcels are about 130 acres combined. This development is in the early discussion
43 stages, and surveying is currently in process. Mr. Scott's plan is to have about 75% of the area
44 preserved as open space.

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45

46 Mr. Scott gave a brief history of his work. His intentions include: building net plus homes, that
47 do not utilize fossil fuels in their yearly maintenance; homes that are resilient, including battery
48 back-up systems, back-up heating, solar energy, and local food production; and carbon-storing
49 farming and housing.

50

51 Mr. Scott gave a conceptual plan for the site. The antique farmhouse on the property would be
52 restored. A barn on the property would contain 1st floor pick-up for the CSA and possibly a
53 public area, where the 2nd floor would contain a rental property. There will be seasonal crops that
54 can be rotated around the acreage, permanent walking paths, and a community hiking path with
55 trailhead parking. There will be a mix of housing types including: single family houses, pocket
56 neighborhoods, over 55+ single floor living, duplexes, over 55+ 2 bedroom units, etc. The mixed
57 housing will be built to make it difficult to discern which type is which. Mr. Scott explained that
58 the town seems to want the following types of housing: affordable/workforce, Over 55, 2-family
59 (attached), single-floor units, and 0, 1, 2 bedroom units – all of which he is proposing.

60

61 This property will be connectable to 6 properties managed by the Conservation Commission.
62 There are 3 identified vernal pools and 1 second-order stream in the area.

63

64 In response to a question from Michael Dell Orfano, Mr. Scott stated that the plan is for the
65 Agrihood to produce more energy than it consumes, produce more food than it can use, and store
66 carbon in the soil and the homes.

67

68 Ryan and Mike Hvizda, of The Hvizda Team, presented to the Board information regarding the
69 housing shortage in New Hampshire and Amherst itself, as it relates to the Agrihood proposal.

70

71 In response to a question from Michael Dell Orfano, Mr. Hvizda explained that there is clearly a
72 demand for housing in all segments of the market currently. This proposed project will touch the
73 needs of Amherst housing in a socially responsible way. It can also put Amherst on the map for a
74 housing approach that should be promoted.

75

76 In response to a question from Michael Dell Orfano, Ms. Hvizda stated that the more expensive
77 houses in town are not currently selling easily due to the fact that older and younger generations
78 are currently competing for the same market of less expensive houses. There are also not enough
79 rental properties in town. This proposed project would look to address many of these issues.

80

81 Ian McSweeney, of Farmland Consulting, LCC, presented to the Board regarding the
82 conservation and agriculture aspects of the plan. He explained that the Jacobson Farm has been a
83 community asset for 100 years and the plan would allow that to continue in many ways. There
84 will be diversified food production as part of the Agrihood. This land is also close to the town's
85 schools, and it is anticipated that the children could walk there to see the farm, as they probably
86 did in the past.

87 In response to a question from John D'Angelo, Mr. Scott explained that they have no exact
88 acreage amounts of each item, or exact housing unit numbers yet. There will be presented at the

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89 conditional use permit meeting. John D'Angelo stated that this type of creativity is what was
90 trying to be encouraged when the IIHO was passed in the first place.

91
92 Arnold Rosenblatt stated that if the public is troubled by these 130 acres being put to use in any
93 way, they should remember that the town had the opportunity to buy this piece of land as an
94 open space project and failed to, due to lack of will and fortitude. He is not sure if the project is a
95 good one yet, but explained that the Board will be scrutinizing it carefully. He also stated that no
96 bonuses will be granted unless the Board concludes there is a benefit to the town.

97
98 Marilyn Peterman stated that the energy-efficient component of the homes is intriguing. The
99 town wants a diversity of housing types and this proposal comes up with a way to get that while
100 also creating a community with a mixed demographic. Combining new farmland with
101 community and education is positive. This project could be very innovative and showcase
102 Amherst in the forefront of zoning.

103
104 Bill Stoughton stated that this development abuts wetland and the Great Meadow and is also
105 close to an important aquifer. The Conservation Commission will have a concern to protect the
106 water sources near this development. He hopes that the application will give specifics for these
107 items, and what the plan is to also keep the farm runoff from entering the aquifer as well. He also
108 explained that he hopes the developer looks at the plan to make this project carbon neutral, as
109 that idea can be easily overstated.

110
111 In response to a question from Bill Stoughton, Mr. Scott stated that the plan is to eventually meet
112 with the Conservation Commission regarding an easement on some of the land. If that cannot be
113 achieved, they will return to the Planning Board to seek a restrictive covenant to preserve the
114 open space on this land. The proposed trails will be open to the public.

115
116 Michael Dell Orfano explained that the (future) applicant has land rights that must be respected.
117 This development can be built if done so within the ordinance.

118
119 Public Comment:

120 Daryl D'Angelo, 9 Woodland Drive, asked what the plan is for the farmland portion of the
121 development. Mr. Scott explained that the farm land will be sold to an entity in a way which
122 allows the land to be farmed for no cost. This may be through a 503c or something similar.

123
124 Scott Stimpert, 7 Brimstone Hill Road, discussed a letter he had written regarding the Agrihood
125 and his concerns with it. He has concerns with the lack of detail presented so far, the developer's
126 past business transactions, and the fact that this development will change the fundamental
127 character of the neighborhood.

128
129 Simon Sarris, 8 New Boston Road, stated that he is unconvinced that this is a good long-term
130 plan with the right developer. He explained that the proposed houses in this development have
131 more amenities than most on the market, and so he's unsure how that will equate to more

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132 affordable housing. He hopes the developer might take vernacular and cues from the Village,
133 instead of leaving the development as just another cul-de-sac.

134

135 Laurie Stevens, 17 Christian Hill Road, gave a brief history on the property. It was a dairy farm
136 until 1978 and was farmed until last year to feed local cows. The trustees of the property have
137 three choices: 1) keep the property 2) try to keep the land as open as possible 3) develop it. The
138 trustees chose to go with #2 and reached out to Ian McSweeney for help. She hopes that the
139 public will wait for the application to be submitted and give it a chance.

140

141 OTHER BUSINESS:

142 **3. Minutes: June 5, 2019**

143

144 **Arnold Rosenblatt moved to defer the minutes of June 5, 2019 until the next**
145 **meeting. Sally Wilkins seconded.**

146

147 **All in favor.**

148

149 The Board discussed a request for pet waste signage in a right of way.

150

151 **Arnold Rosenblatt moved to have the proposal presented to the Planning Board.**
152 **Sally Wilkins seconded.**

153

154 **All in favor.**

155

156 The Board discussed if there are any areas of the Master Plan that can be worked on currently,
157 before it is slated to be formally addressed in 2022.

158

159 **Clifford Harris moved to defer the conversation regarding the Master Plan, and**
160 **invite Selectman Peter Lyon to be part of the discussion at the next meeting on July**
161 **17th. Arnold Rosenblatt seconded.**

162

163 **All in favor.**

164

165 **Clifford Harris moved to adjourn at 9:42 p.m. Arnold Rosenblatt seconded.**
166 **All in favor.**

167

168 Respectfully submitted,
169 Kristan Patenaude

170

171 Minutes approved: July 17, 2019