

1 **AMHERST PLANNING BOARD**

2 **JULY 1, 2015**

3 In attendance: J. D'Angelo- Selectman Ex-Officio, A. Rosenblatt- Chair, M. Peterman-Alt., R. Hart,  
4 E. Hahn-Alt., G. Leedy, A. Merriman-Alt., S. Wilkins, C. Harris and C. Mailloux-Community Development  
5 Director.

6  
7 A. Rosenblatt called the meeting to order at 7:30pm.

8 **Pond Parish Cross Country Trail**

9 Jim Callaghan is a student entering his senior year at Souhegan High School. For his senior project, he  
10 has presented a proposal to the Amherst Conservation Commission for development of additional cross  
11 country ski trails on the Pond Parish Conservation Land. There is no planning board approval required  
12 for this project. Jim appeared before the board to present his plan for informational purposes.

13  
14 Jim Callaghan introduced himself and his partner to the board and described his project. He is part of  
15 the Amherst ski club and is expanding the cross country ski trails in Amherst. The project originally  
16 started about 5-6 years ago when the original trail system was put in. No one really knew about it until  
17 he brought it to the Recreation department. Now the Recreation department has agreed to put in the  
18 parking lot and supply the grooming equipment and maintain the ski area. The Conservation  
19 Commission has also been helping with the project.

20 Jim handed out pictures to the board.

21 The trail development includes putting wood chips on the trails so they can be smooth and groomed.  
22 They are trying to copy the Dublin school area trails. The Amherst ski club will work closely with the  
23 Recreation department. The Souhegan Nordic team will use the trails and club members will work on  
24 the trail as part of their community service hours.

25  
26 M. Peterman asked when it will be ready and if the trails are marked.

27 Jim stated the main loop is open, cleared and mowed. The trails can be used now for walking. They are  
28 not marked, but the trails are very wide. There are some trails still in development and they are working  
29 on the permits for a bridge. They are also looking to put in a building and cover an area with gravel next  
30 to the parking lot so there is a warming hut and place to store grooming equipment.

31 M. Peterman asked if the parking lot and trail entrance are on Pond Parish rd. Yes.

32 R. Hart stated that some of the trails have been there quite a while as old logging roads.

33 C. Mailloux stated that now when the cross country team uses the trails they are parking on Pond Parish  
34 rd. so this project will provide off street parking.

35 R. Hart stated the conservation commission is working with them to make sure the trails are DCA  
36 compliant. Jim stated they have added two trails and basically doubled the trail system. There's one km  
37 of completed trails and two more that you can comfortably walk with a dog or bike, but they are still in  
38 development.

39 Jim asked if it would have to go through the town to get Eversource to put in electricity. C. Mailloux  
40 stated it would require an electrical permit.

41  
42 **OLD BUSINESS**

43 **1. Case #: PZ5935-030215 – Camp Young Judaea, 9 Camp Road, PIN #: 008-059-000 – Request for**  
44 **approval of a Non-Residential Site Plan (NRSP) for reconfiguration of the girls' cabin area and**  
45 **construction of tennis courts.**

46 **2. Case #: PZ5936-030215 – Camp Young Judaea, 9 Camp Road, PIN #: 008-059-000 – Request for**  
47 **approval of a Conditional Use Permit (CUP) for impacts within the Wetland and Watershed**  
48 **Conservation District associated with the NRSP Application Case #PZ5935-030215.**

49 A. Rosenblatt stated M. Peterman will vote for M. Dell Orfano and E. Hahn will vote for C. Harris.

51 B. Cole from Keach Nordstrom presented the case. They are seeking site plan approval.

52 When they were before the board on April 1<sup>st</sup>, the plan was to replace the girls cabins, the tennis courts,  
53 regrade the soccer field and they proposed a significant drainage infrastructure. Tonight's plan is  
54 reduced. The scope of work now is to only replace the existing girls cabins for a total of seven cabins, not  
55 nine. Six of the cabins will be for campers and one cabin will be for staff.

56 By eliminating the tennis court work, they no longer require a CUP because they will not impact the  
57 wetlands. They also no longer require an alteration of terrain permit, wetland, or shoreline permit. They  
58 only require site plan approval.

59 One of the cabins will be ADA accessible and the new cabins are planned for the same location and  
60 layout as they are now.

61 As part of the project they are proposing a new storm water management system. Towards the back of  
62 the cabins there's a bioretention trench. It will be made of stone etc. and there will be landscaping on top  
63 to provide treatment. This proposal provides treatment and storage for storm water and provides  
64 landscaping.

65 One of the conditions for the waiver was to see a more detailed landscaping plan. He directed the  
66 board's attention to that plan. They added spruce trees along the edge of the existing tennis court to  
67 provide a buffer between it and the new cabins. There are bushes along the proposed fence, and  
68 throughout the trench. They believe the landscape plan is a good compromise between what the  
69 regulations require and what the client prefers.

71 S. Wilkins asked why they are not updating the tennis courts. B. Cole replied the camp has a masterplan.  
72 They will do something, probably resurface them. Cost was a factor.

73 She also stated that blue spruce seemed like a strange choice for this purpose. They grow to 60-80 feet  
74 tall and are very prickly which seems rough for a children's area.

75 A board member for Camp Young Judaea who is also a landscape architect influenced the landscape  
76 architect from Keach Nordstrom on that decision.

78 R. Hart stated the number of new cabins is reduced from nine to seven, but are you going to want to  
79 build more in the future? Will the nine cabins hold the same number of people that the seven cabins  
80 were to hold? Yes, they will hold the same amount. The proposed plan is for the seven cabins now.

82 Raeolyn and Arthur Korn, abutters, asked that a noise ordinance be put in affect during the construction  
83 process. Recently the camp was being cleared and loggers, chippers and saws were being used as early  
84 as 5:15am. She spoke to the man on site at the time and he told her the hours would probably be 7-4  
85 and maybe on Saturdays, but they were there working from 5am-5pm.

86 A. Rosenblatt clarified that she is asking for a restriction on the hours of work.

87 J. Luter- construction manager from Fulcrum Associates stated their typical schedule is 7am-5pm  
88 Monday through Friday and 8am to 4pm on Saturday. They agreed to the restriction.

90 Arthur Korn stated his property is 75-100 ft. away from the camp property where the equipment was.  
91 Are there any other plans to build? The camp owner stated there is not. He further explained that  
92 Granite State Forestry did the logging work and he didn't have any say or control over their schedule.

**G. Leedy moved to accept the plans for review as complete. S. Wilkins seconded. The motion carried.**

**G. Leedy moved to approve the site plans under the following conditions:**

1. A note be added to the plan that a compliance hearing is required, unless waived by the planning board.

2. submit 3 full sized, 1 PDF and 1 11"x17" plan set to the community development office for final approval signature by planning board chair.

3. Prior to demolition, the cabins be documented with photographs and measurements as recommended by the Heritage Commission.

4. Also, a note be added to the plans stipulating that construction activities will take place only between the hours of 7am and 5pm weekdays and 8am to 4pm on Saturdays. No construction on Sundays.

**S. Wilkins seconded. The motion carried.**

#### NEW BUSINESS

**Scenic Road Hearing** – Eversource – Scenic Road Public Hearing for tree trimming, as part of the annual maintenance program, on the following roads: Austin Road, Green Road, Baboosic Lake Road, Brook Road, Chestnut Hill Road, Colonel Wilkins Road, County Road, Dodge Road, Eaton Road, Lynch Farm Road, Lyndeboro Road, Mack Hill Road, Old Milford Road, Pond Parish Road, Ponemah Hill Road & Spring Road.

Brian Salas, the arborist for Eversource was present to discuss trimming the trees on some scenic roads in town. He has no intention to remove any trees at this time. He is looking for permission to trim the trees. They are on a four year cycle. Last time he was here a lot of work was being done on the roads and trees had to come out. There is a dead Hemlock tree that he thought the town wanted out on Colonel Wilkins. He talked to the homeowner. If the town wants help removing it he will help remove it. If, during trimming, he finds trees that need to be removed, he will probably petition to do it next year.

**G. Leedy moved to open the scenic road hearing. S. Wilkins seconded. The motion carried.**

S. Wilkins asked about some trees on Green rd. that were planned to come down but were never done. Has the plan changed? He was not sure. Maybe they didn't get to them. He has to get the homeowners approval before removal so maybe that is what prevented it. They prioritize the most hazardous trees. It got so they were removing a lot of trees in town and had to pull back.

C. Harris arrived at this time.

**S. Wilkins moved to permit routine trimming and to confer with DPW on removing the dead tree and any other tree that might need to come out. M. Peterman seconded. The motion carried.**

**G. Leedy moved to close the scenic road hearing. S. Wilkins seconded. The motion carried.**

**S. Wilkins moved to open the public hearing on CIP. M. Peterman seconded. The motion carried.**

**Capital Improvement Plan** – The Planning Board will hold a Public Hearing to discuss and adopt the Capital Improvements Plan (CIP) FY 2017 - FY 2027. The CIP draft is available at the Community Development Office or online at <http://amherstnh.gov/capital-improvements-plan-committee-cip/>.

C. Mailloux briefed the board. Sally and John were planning board representatives on the CIP committee with Rich as an alternate. There was an abbreviated CIP process this year because department heads have put a lot of thought into their projects and the committee was an experienced

group. There were people that really understood the CIP process. This is a six year plan and the department heads were asked to submit long term projects that extend beyond the six years. For 2017-2022 there are 50 projects that were submitted. The goal of the CIP committee was to keep a stable tax rate. They wanted to make sure projects were shifted and scheduled accordingly so there were no big jumps in the rate. Big project: road infrastructure – there has been a period of 30 years with lack of funding. They were thinking of ways to increase capital expenditures for roads by putting it in the DPW line item budget. Most projects were very familiar- nothing new came up. For example:

DPW and fire department equipment

Rec land acquisition

Annual contribution for Rec land acquisition instead of accepting one lump sum in any given year

The effect of what the CIP committee came up with would project a tax impact per 1000 assessed value of \$2.49-\$2.21. It would keep this impact steady for the next 5-6 years.

This is being presented to the planning board. This is to be accepted and adopted and is used by the department heads and the BOS for budgeting this fall budget cycle.

M. Peterman asked about the sewer study committee line item.

The sewer masterplan is for 2017- next year. Sewer engineering would be 2019 and 2020.

M. Peterman asked if she heard that Merrimack was willing to take the discharge.

Yes, Milford could have some capacity, but Merrimack was approached about it a year ago and is possibly an option. If we have funding for 2017, there will be more conversation.

G. Leedy stated Merrimack lost half their flow- several million gallons. So the capacity should be there.

G. Leedy stated that a number of years ago we had a reserve fund established for planning activities. It was 10 or 20 thousand dollars a year. The thought was we would someday embark on another masterplan project. S. Wilkins said there was a traffic plan, sewer plan, and water supply plan. G. Leedy said the selectman determined it was no longer necessary. The board discussed that the CIP started in 2006 and the masterplan in 2010. G. Leedy: so by statute we have five more years?

C. Mailloux said right now for the 2020 master plan there is a lump sum of \$100,000 for 2018. Putting aside \$20,000 a year eases the tax impact and they can consider staggering that. And they could not earmark it specifically for master plan.

R. Hart mentioned doing chapters of the master plan at a time instead of the whole thing at once.

G. Leedy stated the transportation, land acquisition and trail sections have to be kept updated. If we want to get any grant money, it's got to be supported by a plan.

E. Hahn for that kind of money and repetition, wouldn't it be better to get it imbedded in the town budget, instead of having to vote on it year after year? G. Leedy stated that's what a capital reserve fund is- it's a revolving fund and it goes into the budget.

C. Mailloux said if we were constantly writing chapters and spending the money, it can be a budget line item. But if the intent is to add to it and roll it over, it has to be a capital reserve fund.

G. Leedy said the authorization of that is part of the budget, it's not a stand-alone warrant? S. Wilkins said it used to be a stand-alone, one-time warrant to create it.

G. Leedy asked how does it work if we had it but don't now? J. D'Angelo suspects it's still there, but with no money in it.

M. Peterman said aren't we putting money in that current use? Have we put any money in that that we haven't used for land acquisition? R. Hart said yes there is money and we are getting some from current use. Because of the recession there hasn't been a lot of current use money. Recently it's bumping up a little bit, but it's still not a lot. S. Wilkins added that ACC has some significant commitments already.

R. Hart said that things are slowly changing with the conservation commission as well. Land is getting used up. There's not a big pot of current use money. There's going to need to be some other way to handle it. We're going to end up not buying much more property. We'll go from buying land to managing it.

J. D'Angelo commented the process went smoother because the department heads and other boards had done the documentation so they just had to update it. The second reason is because a lot of things got done in the last few years. We're knocking off some of these major projects so we have less to worry about coming up. It's working fairly well- we've leveled the tax increase over the next six years assuming the school boards and selectman choose to do what's recommended.

A. Merriman stated generally it's pretty impressive the work that's been done, the way it's laid out- it is steady and it's a great accomplishment. He has three things to mention.

1. Land for Recreation Fields. How many times do we have to have that discussion, and then when it's time to acquire them, the town won't approve it? The Rec director said they have enough fields. S. Wilkins said this week they've eliminated the Babe Ruth baseball league because they don't have enough field space. The review that A. Merriman did two years ago on the field usage showed it was under capacity, but every time they drove by the fields on weekends they were empty. He wondered if it was a scheduling problem or usage problem. It's a scheduling problem. The problem was that lacrosse and somewhat soccer would always have the fields reserved, but they wouldn't always use them so the fields looked empty. Last fall when he spoke to the Rec director he said there shouldn't be a scheduling problem because soccer had moved.

J. D'Angelo stated the Rec director was new at the time and he told the BOS that he needed a year before he could tell them what was going on. Now he's had a year.

G. Leedy said the NRPA publishes per capita facilities guidelines. He thinks we are probably half of what their recommendation is. It's a scheduling issue and the programs go away. If we had the space, we could hold more programs.

2. Library Expansion. What are the usage trends like- especially with increasing on line usage? \$100,000 users/year is the number listed and he is skeptical of that. Space for events is understandable, but is a large expansion for storage really needed? It's not convincing to him as listed.

M. Peterman mentioned the fields again. The need for rec fields has never gone away. We've made other arrangements to do something with the programs or the kids. Rec should rise over and above and take precedence for 3-4 years on how we're spending money. It's nothing against conservation, but we've done conservation for a long time and we've bought a lot of land. Maybe because we are so far behind in Rec it is time for them to take precedence.

A. Merriman said the voters have to be convinced. He suggested a more constructive option: rather than a grandiose plan that spends a ton of money on many acres, spend \$100,000- \$150,000 to buy three acres and build three fields.

3. High School Parking Lot Paving- He is over there a lot. He parks there several times a week doesn't see a problem.

R. Hart was amazed by how quickly the CIP process went. Last year they listened to presentations for months. This year it was very smooth. S. Wilkins agreed that the department heads know the system now and know how to present their portions so it went smoothly. J. D'Angelo added that even the town

239 boards and committees were working together. S. Wilkins stated that's what makes the CIP such a  
240 powerful thing is that it brings these groups together.

241

242 **M. Peterman moved that the planning board adopt the CIP as presented by the CIP committee.**

243 **C. Harris seconded. The motion carried.**

244 A. Rosenblatt thanked the planning board committee members as well as the other members for their  
245 work. S. Wilkins added that Sarah and Colleen were instrumental in the process.

246

247 OTHER BUSINESS

248 **Discussion – Condition of Approval, Case # PZ5693-120814 – Amherst AMA Realty Ventures, LLC**  
249 **(Applicant), 131 Route 101A, PIN #: 012-014-000 – Review revised architectural elevations.**

250

251 Justin Ferris was present to represent Amherst AMA in the case. He stated the applicant has revised the  
252 elevations since the board saw them in January. The condition of approval was to come before the  
253 board to take a second look at it. S. Wilkins asked if there was a copy of the old plans. Mr. Ferris had a  
254 black and white copy to show. They cleaned up the front where the entrance is- which faces Aspen  
255 Dental. In the back they shifted the storage door further into the parking lot and added some glass  
256 windows. The board viewed the photos and the projected images of the plans.

257 C. Harris noted there's still a flat roof and he doesn't like it. The board can ask, but we don't always get  
258 what we want. S. Wilkins said it looks like Albuquerque.

259 G. Leedy asked what the materials are. EFIS and split face block. He stated this is a pale attempt at  
260 making this look better.

261 A. Rosenblatt asked if we toothless. Yes. C. Harris said we need to start saying no to people when they  
262 bring us plans and ideas and ask us what we think. M. Peterman said we don't have the design  
263 guidelines. C. Mailloux stated those are an initiative for 2016 in the community development  
264 department.

265

266 G. Leedy asked what action is needed by the board. C. Mailloux said at the January meeting the board  
267 put a condition to come back for additional discussion. No vote or action is needed other than agreeing  
268 that this plan was submitted and that it satisfies the condition.

269 A. Rosenblatt so anything submitted is ok? No, but they were to come back for discussion.

270 M. Peterman said let it be clearly stated that there have been times when businesses have worked with  
271 the board to give the board more of what they are looking for.

272 A. Rosenblatt asked if the board needs to do anything. C. Mailloux needs a consensus that these plans  
273 can be signed off and that the condition has been satisfied.

274 G. Leedy asked what the comments were during that January meeting. Based on C. Mailloux's reading of  
275 the minutes, the comments were that the building did not meet the character of the area. G. Leedy  
276 asked the applicant, how have the changes that you're proposing make this building more in conformity  
277 with the character of the area?

278 Mr. Ferris stated they believe it fits in well with the stretch of 101A, the buildings in the complex and  
279 across the street. They cleaned up the front. It was more cluttered before. He himself was not here at  
280 the January meeting either. There were specific comments about the bottom left elevation so some  
281 changes were made there. There will be landscaping along the back side as well as the road side.

282 G. Leedy said absent specific direction to the applicant, it's not fair to just say we hate it.

283 S. Wilkins stated she recalled the board talking specifically about the colors, the flat roof and the glass  
284 and making it be less southwestern and less like every other commercial strip and asked for something  
285 more creative and New England. What they got back looks practically the same.

286 S. Wilkins stated the consensus is they hate it but don't want to see it again because the applicant is not  
287 willing to work with us. She further stated she is tired of people putting that stuff on 101A and  
288 defending it by saying it looks like Walmart.

289  
290 **7. Regional Impact**

291 None

292  
293 **8. Approval of Minutes: May 6, 2015**

294 Line 4 add *Selectman* after J. D'Angelo

295 Line 38 change razed to *raised*

296 **M. Peterman moved to approve the minutes of May 6<sup>th</sup> as corrected. C. Harris seconded.**  
297 **The motion carried.**

298  
299 **9. Other**

300 A. Rosenblatt brought up design guidelines.

301 C. Mailloux stated it was her understanding that last year there was a planning iTrac grant through NRPC  
302 that was going to be used to work on design guidelines, but was used to fund the village strategic plan.  
303 So now we don't have funding for a full NRPC consult, but we do have some funds that will allow us to  
304 work on it. She has a committee to review design guidelines also doing housekeeping with  
305 nonresidential site plan in general and adding design guidelines.

306 S. Wilkins asked if she has a copy of the proposed revised parking plans that they did about five years  
307 ago. If not, they will get her a copy.

308 M. Peterman asked to get a copy of Bedford's design guidelines because we don't have to reinvent the  
309 wheel.

310  
311 A couple of members of the board volunteered to be on that subcommittee: A. Merriman and G. Leedy  
312 with M. Peterman as an alternate. C. Mailloux expects it to be a yearlong process.

313 The committee will not be looking at signs. That is a zoning ordinance item.

314 M. Peterman stated this should rise to the top. This is something we have wrestled with for years. She is  
315 really dismayed that the grant was given for the village strategic purpose. C. Mailloux believes it may  
316 have happened in the transition period between staffing.

317  
318 C. Mailloux stated at a future work session we're looking at housekeeping and possible discussion of  
319 zoning amendments. Out of the village strategic plan there were lofty recommendations- and some are  
320 controversial. There is a citizen considering a citizen's petition and may want to come in and talk to the  
321 board.

322  
323 The board discussed member availability in July and August. They determined there will be no work  
324 session in July, but there will be one in August.

325  
326 **G. Leedy moved to adjourn at 8:42pm. S. Wilkins seconded. The motion carried.**

327  
328 Respectfully submitted,  
329 Jessica Marchant