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***Town Planner's Recommendation***  
**Wednesday, November 5, 2014**

- IX. **Madbury Commons – 17 & 21 Madbury Road.** Clarification on type of design sought for bridge to be built over Pettee Brook. The applicant has been meeting with an ad hoc committee to discuss various details of the designs for the approved project, including the new bridge. Direction is needed for whether the bridge should have a stone veneer or if a timber bridge might be acceptable. Approved site plan for multi-unit dwellings for 525 occupants, a new street, and commercial space. Golden Goose Properties, Barrett Bilotta, Ken Rubin, and Eamonn Healey, applicant.  
**Recommended action:** Direction for the committee

- I recommend the Planning Board provide direction to the applicant and the ad hoc design committee on the approach to the bridge.

Please note the following:

- 1) **Site Plan approval.** The Madbury Commons site plan was approved on February 12, 2014. Here are pertinent conditions.

***Bridge Designs. Final engineered plans for the two bridges, with elevations, plans, and cross section(s) and samples of materials shall be presented to the Planning Board for approval. The final designs will be based upon the drawings shown to the Planning Board on January 29, 2014. (Note that the design of the spanning arch should appear to be support the arch, through use of voussoirs or other appropriate methods.) It should be verified that all components are outside the 100 year flood plain. [The Color Committee, above, may make a recommendation on the aesthetic design of the bridge.]***

***Architecture colors, materials, street furniture, pavers, glass front and IOL lettering. Final colors and materials, street furniture, pavers [See condition 5, below] the exact design of the glass front above the IOL entrance, and the IOL lettering shall be approved by the Town Planner (An ad hoc committee, including two Planning Board members, shall be formed to work with the applicant, architect, and Town Planner on this). The siding is to be cementitious fiber or***

*equivalent and the trim is to be cellular PVC or equivalent, or as approved by the Town Planner. [The Committee may also make a recommendation on the aesthetic of the bridge design, below.]*

- 2) *Various design items.* The committee has been working with Ken Rubin on these items. I believe we are finished (or nearly finished) with all of the items except for the bridges. We are tentatively planning to present the other items (except for the bridges) to the Planning Board on November 12 for the board's okay/acknowledgement, as appropriate.
- 3) *Practicality of stone bridge?* Ken Rubin has researched the bridge and says that he has not been able to find a design and a contractor that would be workable for the type of bridge presented to the Planning Board, with the stone face. He is suggesting that a timber type bridge be used instead. Neither I nor the committee members have independently researched whether building a stone bridge is practical. I think it is understood that the bridge reviewed by the Planning Board had a stone veneer and was not built entirely of stone. A stone veneer would likely be placed over concrete.
- 4) *Timber bridge.* Ken and the committee have spent some time talking about a timber bridge, whether it would be appropriate, and what sorts of details might be included. However, since this type of bridge is different from the stone bridge reviewed by the board, the committee needs direction from the board. The committee is only making a recommendation on the bridge, but since the committee is able to spend considerable time working closely with the developer, it can be of great assistance to the Planning Board in determining the specifics of the bridge. It is understood that the second bridge will be much simpler and cheaper. We have not discussed that bridge much yet. In an email sent to me, Ken Rubin stated:

*"...Regarding the bridge, we were and remain committed to constructing a great looking, durable and solid bridge befitting the entranceway to Madbury Commons. To this point, I have reached the conclusion that our landscape architect designed a bridge concept that can't practically be built. The reality is that people just don't build stone bridges in the 21st century. We have spent months researching all options and have not identified anyone who we can send a bid specification to without getting exotic. Our general contractor, Procon (who is the largest and most experienced in NH) is at a loss and encouraged us to go another direction.*

*"I proposed an alternative timber bridge that Michael Behrendt likes as do many of the Design Committee members. The bridge is not a cost saver over the budget we stated in the Planning Board Meeting. It is gorgeous, expensive and highly appropriate for our application albeit different from what was shared at the PB. I*

*also proposed a second alternative bridge that conforms to the concept presented at the PB but is made out of prefabricated concrete with faux stonework that hasn't been well received. I believe our architect was a little over zealous in conceptualizing a bridge that cannot be built. My central messages is that we are not cheapening the bridge but trying to find a workable and more practical solution than our architect conceptualized in the abstract.*

*"I genuinely appreciate the work and commitment of the Design Committee and I have established good relationships with the membership. We have followed the will of the committee with very few exceptions..."*

- 5) Committee. The members of the committee are Barbara Dill, Beth Olshansky, Walter Rous, and Nancy Webb, as well as Andrew Corrow and David Williams (who have not been able to make a number of the meetings). The committee and I have met a half dozen times with Ken Rubin and Shannon Alther, Madbury Commons architect.
- 6) Options. I think the board's options are to: a) require that the bridge be a stone bridge, comparable to the type reviewed by the board; or b) ask the committee and developer to come up with the optimal bridge in its opinion, whatever the type, including any appropriate details, given all of the constraints. I would recommend the board provide the latter direction for the committee given the complexity of developing this design and the valuable position of the committee in being able to evaluate the various issues carefully and in concert with the developer. We have been successful in reaching consensus on the other items.
- 7) Renderings. See the enclosed renderings/photos, discussed in order:
  - a) Color rendering by Robbi Woodburn. This is the image of the two bridges that the Planning Board review. It was very well received when submitted.
  - b) Color rendering – Madbury Commons. This is the most recent iteration of a timber bridge that Ken Rubin presented to the committee. This approach was fairly well received by the committee but certainly with some hesitation about this type of bridge vs. a stone veneer bridge (in terms of which is a more attractive bridge, a more appropriate type bridge at this location, and appropriate given the Planning Board's approval). If the committee proceeded with this type of bridge there would be numerous details to be worked through. One issue that has been central in our discussions is incorporating an arch (or "crown" or

“camber”) to the bridge. This is very desirable but uncertain whether it can be accomplished with the short span and the grades.

- c) Bridge concept sketch by Robbi Woodburn. This sketch was presented to the Planning Board months before the approval and was a precursor to the color rendering, above.
- d) Drawing of Stone bridge submitted by MJS Engineering. Mike Sievert shared this bridge a few months ago.
- e) York Bridge Concepts – photo taken from the deck of the bridge. This is a view of a possible timber bridge, close to the one above but from another perspective.
- f) York Bridge Concepts – photo of the railings, taken at angled view.
- g) Photo of metal railing. This type of railing is possible.
- h) York Bridge Concepts – photo with curvilinear railings. This was an earlier photo submitted by Ken Rubin. It was not as well received by the committee as the later ones.
- i) York Bridge Concepts – photo with bench. This was an earlier photo submitted by Ken Rubin. It was not well received by the committee.
- j) Photo of concrete bridge with stone impressions. Ken Rubin submitted this recently as a possibility. It looks like a DOT issue bridge. I think the intent of the original rendering was certainly for real stone facing rather than stamped concrete.
- k) Photo of old stone bridge. I took this photo recently in Ireland. It is centuries old and composed entirely of stone. Clearly, construction of a full stone bridge today would not be practical.