



TOWN OF DURHAM
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Town Planner's Recommendation
Wednesday, November 5, 2014

VIII. ***Public Hearing - Edgewood Road and Emerson Road Subdivision.***

Subdivision & Boundary Line Adjustment for 4-lot subdivision. Jack Farrell, applicant. County Line Holding, LLC and Mark Marong 1991 Trust, owners. David Vincent, surveyor. Map 1, Lot 15-0. Recommended action: Discussion and continuance to December 10.

- I recommend the board seek to clarify the required width and general design of the Class 6 road leading to the subdivision, then to continue the public hearing and design review to December 10.

The key issue that everybody has been wrestling with is what should be the width of the Class 6 road. Please note the following:

- 1) * Guidance. Likely, the best guidance for the minimum width should be provided by the Fire Department. The applicant has been in discussions with John Powers, Deputy Fire Chief. They may require 20 feet, but this standard may be mitigated due to the road being an existing road. If the Fire Department can accept something narrower, say 14, 16, or 18 feet of pavement, or the existing pavement width with new gravel shoulders, with one or two turnouts, then that may be appropriate. If the applicant sprinkled the new houses this might allow for a narrower road. See below.
- 2) Edgewood Road. The applicant proposes that there be no physical improvements to Edgewood Road, at any point from the intersection with Emerson Road northerly alongside the parcel, other than creation of one (or more) turnouts so that vehicles can pass each other. The Class 6 portion is now about 10-1/2 feet wide.
- 3) TRG. This project has been discussed by the TRG on several occasions but there has been no consensus on this question.
- 4) Site walk. The Planning Board held a site walk on August 28. A key item the board looked at was the design of the existing Edgewood Road though there was no consensus on appropriate design.
- 5) Road Construction Regulations. Durham's regulations (which are a separate document but treated like the Subdivision and Site Plan Regulations) set the

following minimum standards, but these are intended for new Class 5 municipal roads. The board can waive/adjust these standards as it reasonable determines for an existing Class 6 road. 50 foot right of way, 20 foot pavement width, 4 foot shoulder width. If the applicant were proposing a new development and building a new road, it would likely need to be at least 20 feet in width.

- 6) Other developments. The applicant provided examples of other subdivisions in Durham that have narrow roads. He states that there is a market for narrow, unpaved, rural roads that are privately maintained.
- 7) Narrow roads in general. The planning community, to a significant extent, decries pervasive requirements for unduly wide roads. Too many municipalities have requirements for new roads to be built to excessive DOT standards such as 24, 28, 32 feet of width of pavement in small new subdivisions on cul de sacs, sometimes to a greater width than the collector roads providing access to such local residential streets. The current paradigm, is to a certain extent, “the narrower the better” for local residential streets, particularly in urban or village areas. Many existing streets in cities and towns are even “yield streets” where there is parallel parking on both sides and a very narrow passage through which cars much pull over and wait for each other to pass. Road widths should be determined based upon the nature of the road, location, amount of traffic, number of lots served, and other factors. It is desirable to keep this existing road fairly narrow and wooded. Conventional road requirements would obliterate the character of the road.
- 8) Plan link. I asked fellow planners on the Plan-link list serve for suggestions. Here are three responses.

Our regs in Fitzwilliam require 20'. Do you have a min.? Fire Dept. Might have concerns. *Fitzwilliam*

In Penacook there is a bridge called the "Sewalls Falls Bridge" nicknamed "the most courteous bridge in NH" and people do just what you are talking about, pulling over and waiting for an oncoming car to pass. I drive it each day and rarely run into someone discourteous. It is on a pretty significant connector road with much more traffic than your potential subdivision...I say go for it! ... but I determine among the Planning Board what you feel would be the threshold where it would get too congested if there is potential for future subdivision.

That being said, I would be much more worried about how to get a fire apparatus down the road. Perhaps have the applicant pay for a small study on the two matters. *Penacook*

Seems like the road should be at least 16'. I bet fire dept will want 20, or the homes to be sprinklered. *Dover*

- 9) Private road/shared driveway. Once the question of the width for the Class 6 portion is resolved we will need to determine the appropriate width and design for the new shared driveway leading to the lots.
- 10) Access to 3 lots. The applicant has requested a waiver from Subsection 9.03 A. of the Subdivision Regulations which limits access to private driveways to 2 lots.
- 11) Wetland buffer. A conditional use for the driveway in the wetland buffer will be needed. The applicant met with the Conservation Commission and said the commission was supportive of his plans.
- 12) Fire Requirements. Here is an excerpt of information that John Powers sent to the applicant:

The specific requirements are set forth under RSA 153-5, Saf-C 6000, and can be found under NFPA 1 – Chapter 18.

Here's the expert from the code book (2009 edition); I did my best to make it a little more reader-friendly:

18.1 General. Fire department access and water supplies shall comply with this chapter.

18.2.3 Fire Department Access Roads.

18.2.3.1.1 Approved fire department access roads shall be provided for every facility, building, or portion of a building hereafter constructed or relocated.

18.2.3.1.2 Fire department access roads shall consist of roadways, fire lanes, parking lot lanes, or a combination thereof.

18.2.3.1.4 When fire department access roads cannot be installed due to location on property, topography, waterways, nonnegotiable grades, or other similar conditions, the AHJ shall be authorized to require additional fire protection features.

18.2.3.2 Access to Building.

18.2.3.2.1 A fire department access road shall extend to within 50 ft (15 m) of at least one exterior door that can be opened from the outside and that provides access to the interior of the building.

18.2.3.2.1.1 Where a one- or two-family dwelling is protected with an approved automatic sprinkler system that is installed in accordance with NFPA 13D, the distance in 18.2.3.2.1 shall be permitted to be increased to 150 ft (46 m).

18.2.3.2.2.1 When buildings are protected throughout with an approved automatic sprinkler system that is installed in accordance with NFPA 13, NFPA 13D, or NFPA 13R, the distance in 18.2.3.2.2 shall be permitted to be increased to 450 ft (137 m).

18.2.3.4.1 Dimensions.

18.2.3.4.1.1 Fire department access roads shall have an unobstructed width of not less than 20 ft (6.1 m).

18.2.3.4.1.2 Fire department access roads shall have an unobstructed vertical clearance of not less than 13 ft 6 in. (4.1 m).

18.2.3.4.1.2.1 Vertical clearance shall be permitted to be reduced, provided such reduction does not impair access by fire apparatus, and approved signs are installed and maintained indicating the established vertical clearance when approved.

18.2.3.4.2 Surface. Fire department access roads shall be designed and maintained to support the imposed loads of fire apparatus and shall be provided with an all-weather driving surface.

18.2.3.5 Marking of Fire Apparatus Access Road.

18.2.3.5.1 Where required by the AHJ, approved signs or other approved notices shall be provided and maintained to identify fire department access roads or to prohibit the obstruction thereof or both.

18.2.3.5.2 A marked fire apparatus access road shall also be known as a fire lane.

18.2.4.1.1 The required width of a fire department access road shall not be obstructed in any manner, including by the parking of vehicles.

18.2.4.1.2 Minimum required widths and clearances established under 18.2.3.4 shall be maintained at all times.

18.2.4.1.3* Facilities and structures shall be maintained in a manner that does not impair or impede accessibility for fire department operations.