

Technical Review Group (TRG)
Tuesday, April 21, 2020
Town Council Chambers
NOTES OF MEETING

GERRISH DRIVE SUBDIVISION – DESIGN REVIEW

TRG members present:

Michael Behrendt, Town Planner
James Bubar, Planning Board Representative
Audrey Cline, Building Official
Dave Kurz, Police Chief
Jessica Plante, Fire Department
Christine Soutter, Economic Development Director
April Talon, Town Engineer

Applicants present:

Mike Sievert, design engineer
Robbi Woodburn, landscape architect

Mike Sievert presented the plan and reviewed the updated drawings for the design review phase. He said the plans are enhanced from the conceptual phase. There is an updated table. They are using land in Madbury toward the density. This will be a senior project but that allows 20% to be not seniors. Michael said the density bonus applies only based on the number of units that are seniors (i.e. 80%). There will be seven single family houses and three duplexes for a total of 13 units plus the existing house in the southerly section of the lot. The smaller houses may have a drive under. Stormwater runoff will go to the open area in the center. Mike thinks NHDES is okay with filling the finger of wetlands for the road.

Mike said they are still thinking of the road in the right of way being a Town road. Michael said this question will need to be determined. The common open space in the middle will be owned and maintained by a homeowners association or some other entity. The other open space could be owned by the HOA or another entity. There will be minimal disturbance to the other open space other than for trails.

Mike said Robbi Woodburn designed the main part of the subdivision with the houses and green space in the middle. The green is 150-200 feet long. It is steeper on one side. The average width is 60-90 feet. There will be minimal cuts and fills. Parts of it could be left natural. Michael said the green should be a landscaped area and should not be left natural unless there is a section that is not conducive to landscaping for some reason. The bulk of the parcel will be left in a natural condition. Mike said there will be patios and decks in the back adjacent to the green.

Mike said the road in the right of way will hug the northerly side of the right of way. There will be a significant retaining wall there, 4-5 feet tall with guardrails.

Michael said it may be appropriate to have a third party review the drainage and hydrology for the area within the road right of way since there is so much water and wetlands there now and neighbors have expressed concern about this area.

Mike said he has an alternative design but he needs to speak with some neighbors first. If it were approved they would not need the retaining wall and could straighten out the road. They can build within the right of way if needed though [as now designed]. They will clean up some drainage in the area at Gerrish Drive and Ambler Way.

Mike said there is an opportunity to tie in to Town sewer. The plan now shows combined septic systems but they could put in a low pressure line on Gerrish Drive. The existing sewer ends at Canney Road and Sumac Lane. He said tying in would be pretty easy. He will talk with April Talon and Mike Lynch about this. The current ordinance requires abutters along the new line to tie in if notified to do so by the Town. Michael said if the sewer is extended we should talk with the Town Administrator about whether to require tying in as there would likely be opposition from neighbors. Audrey said they should at least be required to tie in if their leach field fails. Mike said the cost is comparable tween the two approaches. There would be some cost for the Gerrish Drive section since the road is already built.

Chief Kurz asked about putting a sidewalk in the right of way section. Mike said this could fit or they could do a path. Widening the pavement there was also suggested as a possibility. Michael said putting a sidewalk in this section could be a good idea. He said if it is done a sidewalk separate from the road should be built. Mike said there might not be room for that.

Mike said the road in the right of way will have a cross section of 10 foot paved lanes and 4 foot gravel shoulders: 4-1-1-4. The private roads would have a 16 foot paved section and 2 foot gravel shoulders: 2-16-2. There was a question whether the 16 foot section would be paved or gravel. Michael said it really should be paved as we have had problems in the past with gravel private roads. The road in the right of way is about 300 feet long.

Mike said the convergence of the private roads is set up to allow for fire trucks, plow trucks, and other trucks to turn around.

Audrey asked if the houses will have sprinklers. They are not required for single family nor duplex houses. Mike said they have not discussed this.

Audrey said there should be no parking on the main road. There was some discussion whether there should be parking on the private roads. It was noted there should be room for visitors to park somewhere. Chief Kurz said this is like Fitts Farm and they have not had problems with visitors parking. Some of this issue would be dealt with privately in the homeowner association documents.

There was a question whether homeowners could expand given they will have patios and decks in the rear adjacent to the green. This will need to be discussed how to handle that.

Mike said he understands they will need to deal with various issues including keeping boars, RVs etc. Michael said this conservation subdivision is predicated on having small houses close together and a very specific design. There may not be room on sites for boats and RVs and buyers should understand that. If somebody wants a big house on a big lot this is not the place to purchase.

Christine said this is a great plan.

The meeting adjourned at 11:10 am.

Respectfully submitted,
Michael Behrendt, Durham Town Planner/TRG Chair