

Green Infrastructure Site Plan Review A Planning Board Role Play

Presented by the Stormwater Coalition of Albany County

Local Government Planning and Zoning Workshop
Capital District Regional Planning Commission and Partners
June 20, 2012

AUDIENCE HANDOUT

Scenario:

This 10 acre site is located in Dreamsville, population 10,000. The municipality is about 3/4 built out, as are adjacent municipalities, with vacant buildings scattered here and there. This site is in the built out portion of the municipality. The site has an abandoned warehouse, with vacant land in the back, adjacent to a stream with steep slopes. The stream is partially piped, and the site straddles both sides of the stream, with 1 acre on one side of the stream; 9 acres on the other. The warehouse is located on the 9 acres. On and near the stream bank is a dump site which contains minor construction, non-hazardous debris. On the 9 acres, there are Army Corp of Engineer wetlands (~1/2 acre) near the stream corridor and the soils are a mix of well drained Type B soils and urban, unmapped soils, which contain debris.

The Dreamsville Middle School is next door to the property and students have started to congregate around the warehouse using it as a hang out after school and at night. The warehouse built in the 1930's, does have historic architectural elements beneficial to the existing streetscape of the community, but is not listed on the National Register of Historic Places, nor is it eligible for listing. It's location near a bus line, roads, and a commercial strip makes this an attractive site and the school district has a solid reputation. Currently the property is considered an eye sore. Like many municipalities, Dreamsville is facing budget cuts, yet despite the economy, there has been steady, if limited development activity.

The original proposal, called Happy Acres I consisted of 20 single family homes. Now the proposal, currently called Happy Acres II, is to reuse and renovate the warehouse, with neighborhood retail on the ground floor (café, cleaners, small variety store, and professional offices) and 4 apartments on the second floor. Architectural elements of the warehouse will be preserved. One company will own the warehouse building. Towards the back of the property, closer to the stream, the plan calls for 8 owner-occupied town houses (2 units per building) with the common areas to be managed by the Happy Acres II Homeowner's Association.

Various green infrastructure practices will be proposed for Happy Acres II, as follows:

- 1) Green roof on a small utility shed used to store landscaping equipment and road salt for the warehouse building owner
- 2) Tree planters which are below grade and collect runoff from the warehouse parking lot

- 3) Porous asphalt on Type B soils which straddle both the warehouse and Townhouse parking lot
- 4) Rain garden which collects runoff from the warehouse roof
- 5) Rain garden for each Townhouse
- 6) Disconnected downspouts with lot swales graded to the rear.
- 7) Conservation of natural areas at three locations, each with a conservation easement administered by the municipality
 - a. Small tree stand in front of warehouse
 - b. Stream buffers along both sides of the stream
 - c. Community garden on the other side of the stream (1 acre portion)
- 8) Stream daylighting of some of the piped portion of stream, with the intention of restoring the natural hydrology of the stream and creating a small footpath bridge which connects the 9 acre portion of the site to the 1 acre site, providing access as well to the community garden.

Scene:

This is a routine Planning Board meeting. The developer, Good Brothers, LLC owns the property and the current site plan, Happy Acres II, has been looked at by municipal staff, engineers, and planning staff. It is thought to be ready for preliminary approval by the Planning Board. The plan complies with existing zoning code and SEQRA has been addressed (unlisted). It is submitted as a Planned Unit Development/rezone (PUD), also known as a Planned Development District (PDD). Planning Board members recently attended a day long Green Infrastructure Workshop and they are familiar with the stormwater regulations and these practices.

Goal of Meeting:

To discuss the most recent changes to the site plan submitted by the applicant's engineer; discuss green infrastructure practices, as required by the updated NYSDEC Stormwater Management Design Manual; and decide if the project is sufficient and ready for final site plan approval.

Handouts:

- 1) Audience Handout (Scenario)
- 2) 3 -11 x 17 Site Plans
 - a. Existing Conditions
 - b. Concept Subdivision (Happy Acres I; 20 single family homes)
 - c. Preliminary Plan (Happy Acres II PDD; mixed use; some new development; some redevelopment; green infrastructure practices noted)
- 3) Green Infrastructure Practices from NYSDEC Stormwater Management Design Manual 2010 (powerpoint handout)

“DREAMSVILLE, NY” PLANNING BOARD MEETING ROLES

Planning Board Chairman

Name: Ace Lowe aka Mike Lyons

Profile:

Ace has been a Planning Board member for 10 years and chair for 3 years. He is a local business owner, environmentally aware, a member of the Chamber of Commerce, and owns the local hardware store. He is also a volunteer firefighter. He got involved with planning when Smart Growth first was introduced to NY government as part of their Quality Communities initiative. He understands the “business bottom-line” and is a father of 5.

Planning Board Member #1

Name: Winnie Gekko aka Leslie Lombardo

Profile:

Winnie has been Planning Board member for 3 years. She has 3 kids and 2 are enrolled in the middle school next door. She’s a real estate broker and volunteers with the school and the senior citizen center. She has a degree in marketing and is generally indifferent to environmental concerns, but very aware of local markets and needs of business community. She is married to a computer programmer, who is well known among local software businesses.

Planning Board Member #2

Name: Teresa Huggert aka Maggie Alix

Profile:

Teresa has been a Planning Board member for 6 months. She lives in neighborhood, near the proposed site. She is a member of the Sierra Club and author of “Hiking in Dreamsville”, which is selling well at Barnes and Noble. She is self employed as a private consultant in communications technology.

Planning Board Member #3

Name: Elizabeth Moule aka Nancy Heinzen

Profile:

Elizabeth recently relocated from Portland, Oregon where she served for 3 terms as the Region representative to Metro Council, an elected regional government which serves more than 1.5 million residents in 3 counties and 25 cities in Portland, Oregon area. As Councilor she was instrumental in having Metro adopt a Green Building Policy for new construction and major renovations, as prioritized in their Sustainability Plan. Her region included 5 cities, and a portion of the City of Portland. Prior to her elected position, she served on the Metro Water Resources Policy Advisory Committee.

Based on this experience she was invited by a well-regarded agency here in New York State to research the value and plausibility of a similar regional form of government. She is an employee of this agency, working for the Special Task Force on Sustainability and Governance. She is an attorney by training, and having grown up in the New York area and attended Law School at Fordham University, is qualified

to practice law in both New York State and Oregon. She has served on the Dreamsville Planning Board for two years.

Planning Board Member #4

Name: Michelle Mulligan aka Monika King

Profile:

Michelle has been a Planning Board member for 6 years. She works for a design/build construction company as a Professional Engineer. She is a third generation community member and has one child in elementary school and a preschooler.

Planning Board Attorney

Name: Scout Finch aka Melissa Ashline-Heil

Profile:

Scout is a partner in a private local law firm which represents both developers and municipalities, with a specialty in commercial real estate. Several of her private clients are local developers, known for their LEED certified projects. She has been the Planning Board attorney for 8 years and lives and practices in the community. She has two children, one in middle school, and the other in high school. She also teaches yoga.

Stormwater Management and Code Enforcement Officer

Name: Harry Callahan aka Glenn Hebert

Profile:

Harry was assigned to represent the Engineering Dept (Water, Sewer, Highway) at Planning Board meetings. He has 25 years of experience as a code enforcement officer, and was recently assigned additional duties as the stormwater management officer to enforce local stormwater laws. He has extensive training in stormwater management and is an active member of the local fire department. He has grandchildren in local schools.

Applicant Engineer and Presenter

Name: Bobbie Johnson aka Maryella Bell

Profile:

Bobbie is a seasoned presenter. She is LEED certified and has extensive experience in both design and construction and her firm is a well-respected engineering-build company. They have designed and built several successful projects in the community. Her firm was recently hired by the Good Brothers, LLC, the developer and brought in to salvage the project. The firm's goal is to balance green infrastructure with a reasonable return on the investment and the developer is very interested in getting an approval, quick. The developer is in the middle of difficult negotiations with the bank and their investment is on the line.

Interested Resident

Name: Steven Young aka Dave Dressel

Profile:

Steve lives across the street from the project. He’s a student at the local community college in Building Systems Technology and works part time, 4pm to 10pm at Wendy’s. His parent’s moved to Nevada, and left him the house. He rents 2 rooms out to students, mostly to cover the taxes. He’s been looking at the vacant lot for most of his life and wonders if the neighborhood is getting better or worse. Many of his friends have left town. He has heard a little bit about green infrastructure at school, but doesn’t know much, and just found out about this project. He came to the meeting because his aging uncle couldn’t get out of the house due to a recent hospitalization and he wanted Steve to tell him what’s going on.

ROLE PLAY CAST

Ace Lowe, Planning Board Chairman

Michael Lyons, Town of Colonie

Winnie Gecko, Planning Board Member #1

Leslie Lombardo, Albany County

Teresa Huggert, Planning Board Member #2

Maggie Alix, Village of Green Island

Elizabeth Moule, Planning Board Member #3

Nancy Heinzen, Stormwater Coalition

Michelle Mulligan, Planning Board Member #4

Monika King, Town of Bethlehem

Scout Finch, Planning Board Attorney

Melissa Ashline-Heil, City of Cohoes

Harry Callahan, SW Mgmt/Code Enf Officer

Glenn Hebert, Village of Voorheesville

Bobbie Johnson, Applicant Engineer/Presenter

Maryella Bell, City of Albany

Steven Young, Interested Resident

Dave Dressel, City of Watervliet

Technical Support

Patricia Shultis, Stormwater Coalition