



**TOWN OF SHREWSBURY**  
**Richard D. Carney Municipal Office Building**  
**100 Maple Avenue**  
**Shrewsbury, Massachusetts 01545-5398**

**April 11, 2016**

**LOCATION:** Selectmen's Room, Town Hall

**MEMBERS PRESENT:** Ron Rosen, Chair  
Fred Confalone  
Melvin Gordon  
Dale Schaetzke  
Lisa Cossette, Associate Member

**STAFF PRESENT:** Matthew Sarcione, Assistant Town Planner

Mr. Rosen opened the meeting at 7:00 PM and reviewed the procedures.

**Minutes:**

The March 21, 2016 minutes were presented for approval.

**VOTE TAKEN:**

**Motion:** Mr. Gordon moved to approve the minutes. Ms. Cossette seconded. Motion carried.

**Minutes:** The minutes of the March 21, 2016 meeting were unanimously approved.

**Sign Bills:**

None.

**Hearing 1:** *Cont'd from 12/14/15, 12/28/15, 1/25/16, 2/29/16, 3/21/16, & 3/28/16*  
**440 & 526 Hartford Tpke – Smart Growth Design, LLC**  
**Comprehensive Permit – Construct a 280-unit, multi-family apartment community**

Mr. Rosen read the legal notice into the record. Other acting Board members included Mr. Confalone, Ms. Cossette (serving for Mr. George, who recused himself), Mr. Gordon, and Mr. Schaetzke.

**Consultants Present:** Atty. Paul Haverty, Blatman, Bobrowski, Mead & Talerman, LLC (40B)

**Introductions**

- Developer Fran Zarette, Smart Growth Design, LLC, and engineer Wayne Belec, Waterman Design, were present. Also present for the appellant were Nancy Doherty, traffic engineer with Tetra Tech; Susan Hunnewell, Director of Water Engineering for Onsite Engineering; and engineer Tom Parece, AECOM (taking over for Jami Walsh, who had presented for them previously). Owner Atty. Rod St. Pierre was in the audience.

**Presentation**

- Mr. Zarette said that this past week three (3) technical meetings were held with their own engineers, the Town's peer reviewers, and Town staff members. These meetings were for Water, Sewer, and Traffic. MassDOT representatives were present as well at the Traffic meeting.

**Water Meeting Summary**

- Ms. Hunnewell reported that Onsite Engineering had prepared a letter of response to Tata & Howard's letter. At the meeting held on April 6th, the itemized list of concerns was reviewed. The Town's Fire Chief was present at that meeting. It was agreed that the necessary water flow and pressure could be achieved for both Phases 1 and 2.
- The only item that remained on the table to be resolved was the vinyl lined off-site pipe. Should the developers replace it? Should the Town replace it? Then what are the connection or mitigation fees. It was planned to be replaced in the Water Department's 2017 budget.

**Board Questions**

- Mr. Schaetzke checked that this is the pipe mentioned at a previous meeting that is being flushed regularly. Yes.
- Mr. Rosen asked if there was any update regarding the planned parallel line. Mr. Belec answered that the location had been shifted now to have it fully contained within the site.

**Abutters**

- None.

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**Sewer Meeting Summary**

- Mr. Parece reported that there were four (4) items agreed upon at the meeting held on April 8th:
  1. Average daily flows.
  2. Photos presented at the previous (March 28<sup>th</sup>) meeting.
  3. Electronic surveys.
  4. Upgrades necessary.
- They are waiting to receive the response from Weston & Sampson, then the same team that met for the technical meeting will meet again.
- Mr. Rosen said it was also his understanding that at that meeting that 80% was agreed upon by the consultants as the standard for flow/pipe capacity. Yes.

**Board Questions**

- Mr. Rosen asked what was scheduled next.
  - Mr. Sarcione confirmed that the Town had not received the response from Weston & Sampson yet, but said he would check with them.
  - Mr. Zarette asked Mr. Parece how much time he would need to respond once it had been received. Two weeks.
  - Mr. Rosen said that the next meeting was scheduled for April 25th, and that it would be preferable if it could get addressed then.
- Ms. Cossette asked if it was found that there would not be enough capacity in the large pipeline to handle the increase in capacity, how much time would be needed to prepare to address it.
  - Mr. Zarette replied that they still do not foresee a problem with capacity. If the size, condition, and slope of the large section of pipe can be verified, then it can be properly evaluated. They plan to review the photos taken, and if they see there is tuberculation, they can plan for remediation/cleaning and re-evaluate it. Also, if the Cherry St pump station is over-cycling it and causing some of the problem, the pumps and holding tank there can be adjusted.

- Mr. Rosen raised the question of issues at the Stoney Hill station. Mr. Zarette said once the figures are known, those issues can also be addressed. But the forced mains there are adequate.

### **Abutters**

- Atty. Dennis Murphy, Hill Law, who represents several abutters in the neighborhood, asked if the debate regarding peak flow vs. average daily flow had been resolved. Mr. Parece said that that is one of the recommended items they are waiting for from Weston & Sampson.

### **Traffic Presentation**

- Ms. Doherty reminded the Board that Courtney Jones, Tetra Tech, had been before them the last time traffic was discussed. She had presented two (2) options then. A signal at Stoney Hill Rd had not proved to be a popular option, due to the expectation that it would increase neighborhood through-traffic.
- Subsequently, the Board of Selectmen issued a letter to the Massachusetts Department of Transportation (MassDOT), requesting no signal there and no access onto Stoney Hill Rd, except for an emergency gate.
- Last week, on April 7<sup>th</sup>, representatives from the Town, Tetra Tech, and MassDOT met to discuss the alternative options. The MassDOT representatives indicated which options they might find acceptable.
- Ms. Doherty reiterated the data found in their study, showed each current option in some detail, and discussed the necessary improvements to be made as part of each option. The contents of her PowerPoint presentation were subsequently submitted to the Board and is labeled "The Pointe at Hills Farm: Traffic (Site Access) Monday, April 11, 2016". The "right in, right out, left in" option was her recommendation.

### **Abutters**

The following abutters spoke in the following order (sometimes more than once) with their concerns, questions, anecdotal observations, and suggestions: Dave Mercuri, 28 Stoney Hill Rd; Dale Martin, 6 Pheasant Hill Dr; Steve Danielson, 75 Stoney Hill Rd; Peter Reilly, 19 Pheasant Hill Dr; Joe Taylor, 132 Stoney Hill Rd; Liu Yu Xiang, 83 Stoney Hill Rd; John Vedder, Maurice DePaolo (Selectman), 18 Willard Ave.

- Was MassDOT OK with removing the access from Stoney Hill Rd?
  - Ms. Doherty replied that MassDOT has no authority regarding a Town road such as Stoney Hill.
  - Mr. Haverty added that whenever possible MassDOT's default position is that they prefer not to have access on the State highways.
- The peak times of the neighborhood study were questioned, and alternate times were suggested.
  - Ms. Doherty, however, responded that the neighborhood is actually very consistent in its timing.
- The queuing data was also questioned. It was argued that the wait time is long now and would be unacceptable from the neighborhood perspective. It was suggested that the neighborhood suffers at the peak times, not necessarily at the average times.
  - Ms. Doherty reminded them of the actual vehicle queuing counts and that there are larger timeframes when not one (1) car is seen, e.g., in forty-two (42) minutes.
- There were also safety-related concerns expressed regarding pulling out onto Route 20, including mentions of sight distance and speeds on Route 20. There were also mentions of examples such as waiting to turn onto Stoney Hill from Route 20, with concern that vehicles don't wait but go around them instead in the breakdown lane at high speeds; unprotected u-turns and alternate u-turns on Cherry Stand Gold St; and pulling out during adverse winter (icy) conditions. Some wished

MassDOT could reduce the speed limit in that area to forty (40) mph, as it is near Flynn's, as well as to synchronize the Centech and Flynn's lights to reduce congestion.

- Ms. Doherty acknowledged that the 85<sup>th</sup> percentile of speed on Route 20 was 52mph.
- Also, there are traffic guidelines for sight distance; however, with more speed involved, more sight distance is needed.
- MassDOT usually coordinates signal lights when they are more or less approximately 1,000 feet apart in order to be effective. She thought that perhaps MassDOT could look at those particular lights.
- There was also a concern expressed that since this proposed housing would be apartments, with the possibility of more transient residents than neighborhood owners, they would be uninitiated and more likely to make uneducated risks, like pulling out onto Route 20 when they shouldn't. The current long-term residents are more experienced in the dangers regarding the traffic in this area. It was believed that some of the low data collected reflects this – that some residents know it is unsafe to try certain maneuvers at certain times, so they don't. It was also thought that young adults who were new at driving, might feel pressured to take unnecessary risks.
  - Mr. Rosen asked Ms. Doherty if she knew of any studies that reflected these anecdotes about drivers feeling pressured to pull out when there were vehicles queued behind them. She knew of none.
- Some thought it would be helpful to have sidewalks on Route 20; others thought they may be too risky to have their children use them.
- It was thought that school bus stops were not properly considered in the traffic study. If there was driver frustration regarding traffic jams, there might ultimately be more risk to the children.
  - Ms. Doherty said that would need further study.
- Were there plans for more discussions with MassDOT?
  - Mr. Haverty said it was unlikely to have more at this time, only at the end of the process. He added that in the end MassDOT will not approve an unsafe option. The Board's written decision will reflect the final option chosen. MassDOT will then have to approve it. It is also worth the Board to deciding on a second best traffic option just in case MassDOT does not approve their first option.
- It was suggested that the density of Phase 1 be reduced even more.

#### **Appellant Response**

- Mr. Belec expressed some frustration at what he felt were mixed messages from the neighborhood regarding safety vs. their preferences for convenience. He believed that Ms. Doherty was presenting the safest plan to them as the recommended one.
- Mr. Zarette asked what would happen if MassDOT did not approve the Board's recommendation.
  - Mr. Haverty said that is why he suggests they choose a second option too. If MassDOT does not approve either, then there would be follow-up with the Board and post-permitting work.

#### **Board Response**

- Mr. Rosen reminded residents that there will always be some amount of queuing. No decision will eliminate that.
- Mr. Rosen and Ms. Cossette said they looked forward to hearing the Town's traffic peer reviewer's assessment.
- Ms. Cossette summarized and clarified that the biggest traffic concern is safety first, and convenience/queuing concerns second.
- The "straw vote" of the majority of the Board was the "right in, right out, left in option".
- The next steps were discussed with the appellant, including the expectation that revised site plans would be submitted to the Town based on last week's discussions (additional fire hydrant, etc.)
- As there were no additional comments from the public, the hearing was closed.

**VOTE TAKEN:**

**Motion:** Mr. Gordon moved to continue the hearing for the Comprehensive Permit for 440 and 526 Hartford Tpke to the next regularly scheduled meeting. Mr. Schaetzke seconded. Motion carried.

**Hearing 1:** The hearing for 440 and 526 Hartford Tpke was continued to April 25, 2016 at 6:30PM in the Selectmen's Room in Town Hall.

The meeting adjourned at 8:42PM.

Respectfully submitted by,

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Michele M. Bowers, Administrative Assistant

Reviewed by,

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Matthew Sarcione, Assistant Town Planner

Approved by vote of the Board,

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Paul M. George, Clerk