

TOWN OF NEW LONDON
PLANNING BOARD SUBCOMMITTEE
HARBORVIEW SUBDIVISION
(Stonehouse Road/King Hill Road Intersection)

In attendance:

Karen Ebel, New London Planning Board Chair
Dana Bisbee, Applicant's Legal Representative
Lou Caron, LC Engineering
Dale Conly, New London Planning Board Member
David Eckman, Eckman Engineering
Kim Hazarvartian, TEPP LLC
Richard Lee, New London Road Agent
Jessie Levine, New London Town Administrator
Jay Lyon, Captain New London Fire Department
Ken McWilliams, New London Planner

Planning Board Chairman Karen Ebel opened the meeting at 1:40 p.m., and invited Attorney Bisbee to begin the discussion with a brief review of recent history relevant to the proposed Harborview subdivision, particularly with respect to the intersection in question and the portion of Stone House Road that lies in New London.

Dana Bisbee, attorney for owner/applicant Jonathan Feins, reminded the subcommittee that the application for this subdivision was filed with the Sutton Planning Board a year ago, was tracked, and that version presented to the Sutton Planning Board in January of this year (2006), was deemed by the SPB to be complete. He noted that since then, they have gotten hung up on the scenic road designation process. They will be meeting with the Sutton Planning Board tomorrow night at 8:30 (after meeting with the NL Planning Board). The current subdivision plans do show a second access to the subdivision. The proposal is for 35 lots, but they have offered to reduce that to 33.

He reminded this subcommittee that although New London can respond to the proposal as an abutter, the New London Planning Board really comes into play over the issue of the outside access, i.e. the approximately 1000 feet of Stonehouse Road that is in New London, and the intersection of Stonehouse Road with King Hill Road. He said they have not had much discussion regarding the 1000 feet of road there, but subsequent to the July 18 meeting of this subcommittee and the July 25 meeting of the full New London Planning Board, they have gone back to the drawing board over the intersection. Those discussions included NH DOT representatives and Engineer Lou Caron.

By now New London Planning Board members have received TEPP's and Eckman's November 13th packet of information regarding the sight distance assessment for that intersection, along with the addition of profile drawings, aerial photographs and plans, as well as a two page letter from TEPP to DOT regarding a three-way stop (neither TEPP nor DOT recommend this). An additional, separate sheet provides the numbers relative to New London's ordinance. More recently (today by email), members of this subcommittee received DOT's November 17 response to the TEPP/Eckman packet.

Attorney Bisbee went on to say that his take on this is that the New London Planning Board is only looking at this under the Sole Access Statute. That gives the NL Planning Board the regulatory authority to look at the adequacy of the outside access. Again, New London has the right to comment as an abutter, but the regulatory authority is per the Sole Access Statute, and the task of the New London Planning Board is to look at "adequacy" of this offsite access.

- o What does this mean? What must the Planning Board take into account in determining adequacy?

The consensus is that DOT's 400 foot rule (that is, 400 feet of sight distance from the intersection) should not apply here, and Attorney Bisbee said it is his opinion that the sight distance requirements in New London's subdivision regulations should not apply either; this is not a New London subdivision.

- o What is "adequate"?
Consensus is that the AASHTO guide is the best frame of reference to use here. Of the two sets of sight distances included in AASHTO: Intersection Sight Distance (ISD), and Stopping Sight Distance (SSD), the former are usually required for brand new intersections. This is an existing intersection, and the SSD numbers should be considered adequate. David Eckman added that based on geometric constraints, implementing ISD would not be real feasible. Subcommittee members noted that in his November 17 memo, DOT's Bill Oldenburg also concludes that implementing ISD would involve a great deal of work, as well as an impact on private properties.

Kim Hazarvartian and David Eckman distributed figures 3 and 5 from the TEPP/Eckman packet. Figure three shows the current Y intersection and the existing sight distances as they compare to both the ISD and SSD requirements. Figure 5 shows the proposed T-intersection showing the same data. With the proposed T-intersection improvements, the sight distances would exceed SSD requirements for both 30 mph and 35 mph, to and from all directions with the exception of those making a left off King Hill Road onto Stonehouse Road, where, if the speed limit remains at 35 mph, the sight distance would fall one mile short of SSD requirement. (The diagram shows that sight distances for the proposed T-intersection for a 35 mph road, would fall short of the higher ISD numbers.) David Eckman clarified that they are working with low volume road profile and guides. There will be a 4% approach grade here. Kim Hazarvartian pointed out that their recommendations include the addition of an advisory speed limit sign (Bill Oldenburg seconds this recommendation in #4 of his November 17 memo), and they feel that with this and the reconfiguration of the intersection, it will be safe, adequate and functional.

Lou Caron said that the T-intersection would provide or exceed the required Stopping Sight Distances, meaning that drivers on King Hill Road will have adequate time to see someone pulling out of Stonehouse Road. He noted that on the charts, the Intersection Sight Distances are not adjusted for the grades. With those, the requirements would drop 10%. Nevertheless, he noted that even with that 10% reduction, this would not meet the ISD requirements for a road posted at 35 (it would for a road posted at 30 mph). He agreed with the recommendation of an advisory speed limit sign.

Ken McWilliams asked about the grade of Stonehouse Road there. Lou Caron said that with the improvements, there will be a 4% platform there. (Right now, it is 7%, and there is an existing pocket into which right turning vehicles fall.) If they reduce the grade further—to 2% or 3%, the platform would be pushed down too far, presenting other serious issues.

Subcommittee members expressed some concern that with the proposed T-intersection, King Hill Road does not meet the ISD requirements for a road posted at 35 mph. Applicants agreed, but pointed out that even with the additional traffic from the new project, this is a low traffic volume road, and they found no history of accidents. The lower standard, SSD, should be used. Jay Lyon clarified that there have been one-vehicle accidents there during inclement or icy weather.

At Chair Ebel's request, Lou Caron summarized DOT's comments on the plan. Lou Caron said the recommendation is to not consider lowering King Hill Road (to meet the ISD requirements for the posted 35 mph). Nor does DOT recommend a three way-stop there, but does recommend the "additional advance intersection signage, including advisory 30 mph speed limit down postings." In his summary paragraph, Bill Oldenburg clarified that there should not be much focus on meeting ISD requirements in this case. This is an existing, not a brand new intersection. Lou Caron added that there are always different rules for existing intersections, and they have to balance cost, environmental impact, and traffic volume. In conclusion, the consensus seems to be that DOT can live with the lower standard (SSD), as this is a low traffic volume intersection. Chair Ebel questioned the statement in Bill Oldenburg's memo, that "The proposed T-intersection

does provide 35 to 40 mph SSD.” Everyone present at this meeting agreed that it appears that the proposed T would not meet the SSD for a road posted at 40 mph. Lou Caron also stated that the sight distances in the tables do not take into account the grade which might improve the sight distances by 10%

Chair Ebel asked how these numbers relate to New London’s standards. Lou Caron said they do not relate. New London’s ordinance uses a higher eye position—7.6 feet. That is higher than a passenger car. New London’s regulations require sight distances 13-times whatever the posted speed limit is. So that would mean that for a road posted at 35 mph, the required sight distance would be 465 feet. Jessie Levine pointed out that is for higher vehicles. Lou Caron said he does not know where that number, 13, comes from. Dana Bisbee added that the numbers compared to New London’s requirements are on the separate sheet.

Chair Ebel asked if the table can be adjusted to take into account the grades as well. Lou Caron and David Eckman discussed current grades there, and proposed grade changes. Chair Ebel said she would like to see real numbers for the full Planning Board meeting on Tuesday night.

Referring to figure 6, Richard Lee suggested the two culverts ought to be hooked together. David Eckman assured everyone that they will be; that is not clearly shown on the plan. Richard Lee also suggested that the culvert on King Hill Road could be lowered. Lou Caron agreed that the goal should be to catch as much run off as you can before it crosses King Hill Road. Richard Lee asked about the drains to King Hill Road. David Eckman said the intention is to have runoff go into the catch basin there. Richard Lee was provided with the cross sections for Stone House Road. Dale Conly, who is the Conservation Commission’s representative to the Planning Board, said that drainage issues are very important at the intersection and the road because of the impact of runoff on nearby water bodies.

Ken McWilliams asked if the portion of Stonehouse Road in New London will be paved. Dana Bisbee said that is not proposed in the current plans. Sutton wants its portion paved. At this meeting, subcommittee members agreed that the New London Planning Board would probably want its portion to be paved as well, and Jay Lyon said the Fire Department would like it to be paved. He said that Sutton will have the water supply, but New London will probably be first responders to that intersection. They do have a good mutual aid agreement in effect.

Ken McWilliams asked about the fieldstone retaining walls shown on the plan. David Eckman explained that those are to create a level shelf for more snow storage.

Chair Ebel asked if Lou Caron finds the proposed T-intersection adequate. Lou Caron said he finds the proposal to be adequate and reasonable; it is better than what is there today. Ken McWilliams asked about the advisory yellow sign plus an intersection sign, versus reducing the speed limit. Lou Caron said that considering the low volume of traffic, they would probably not get a reduction in the posted speed limit there. Ken McWilliams confirmed that DOT and the Planning Board’s engineer Lou Caron worked with TEPP and Eckman on this, and found this to be the most reasonable solution. Chair Ebel added that it seems that other than paragraph 3 in Bill Oldenburg’s November 17 memo that recommends additional catch basins, the State is okay with this proposal.

Chair Ebel concluded by saying that for tomorrow night’s Planning Board meeting, applicants will come in with numbers taking into consideration the grade changes, the sheet showing New London’s requirements, and at that meeting they will also hope to have the Police Department’s comments. Lou Caron clarified that by Tuesday’s full Planning Board meeting, he would be able to recommend the proposed T-intersection, but the 1000-feet of Stonehouse Road that is in New London are still under discussion. Richard Lee also wanted to have an opportunity to review the Stonehouse Road proposal, but wasn’t sure he would have time by the PB meeting since he’d just gotten the information.

Chair Ebel informed applicants that the Planning Board will not have a second meeting in December, but will meet on the first and fourth Tuesday of January. It has not yet been determined whether they will meet on the second Tuesday of that month as well, as they normally do. Dana Bisbee thought that they would like to come on January 2nd, but would confirm that at the PB meeting.

Meeting adjourned at 2:45 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

S.A. Denz
Recorder

DATE APPROVED _____

CHAIRMAN _____