

TOWN OF NEWINGTON

131 Cedar Street Newington, Connecticut 06111

Town Plan and Zoning Commission

To: Town Plan and Zoning Commission
From: Town Planner Craig Minor, AICP
Date: April 3, 2020
Subject: **Petition #07-20: Residential Subdivision at 68 Deming Street (“Peckham Farm”). Calvin Roger Peckham and Donna M. Peckham, owners; Calvin Roger Peckham, applicant; Bongiovanni Group Inc, 170 Pane Road, Newington CT, contact.**

Description of Petition #07-20:

This is an 18-lot residential subdivision at the southeast corner of Deming Street and Griswoldville Avenue, with a proposed new 850’ cul-de-sac street. It is the last significant piece of former farmland on the east side of the Berlin Turnpike. There is a farm pond in the southeast corner of the property, an 1871 house on Deming Street, and several circa 1900 farm buildings.

Staff Comments:

When the surrounding “Barn Hill Acres” subdivision was approved in 2002 the developers were not required to make any of those 80 acres public open space. The feeling at the time was that, since some amount of those 80 acres were wetlands and therefore unbuildable, no further open space was warranted (the developer did assist with the creation of a playground on Lamplighter Lane). When I began my review of these plans I expected that I was going to recommend some dedication of public open space, but the pattern of surrounding development makes that unadvisable.

I have some recommendations that have been conveyed to the applicants, as follows:

1. A sidewalk should be shown on one side of the street. Section 3.11 says that sidewalks on local residential streets are “as directed by the Commission”, and it is my recommendation that this street have a sidewalk. Sidewalks create neighborhoods. Sidewalks make it easier for neighbors to get to know each other; they give children a safe place to learn to ride bicycles and to play games; they provide public space for people to meet; etc. The applicants have proposed to construct a sidewalk on Deming Street, which is commendable, but it does not serve the needs of the future residents of “Peckham Farm” (it also leaves a gap in the sidewalk network in front of 100 Deming Street).

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2. The Grading Plan shows that a significant amount of Lots 1 and 2 are areas of 15% or greater slope, resulting in a substantial amount of cut and fill. I have suggested the applicants consider combining these two lots.

3. I recommend TPZ require a conservation easement around the existing farm pond to protect the pond habitat. Conservation easements typically prohibit any structures in the easement area, and prohibit the application of pesticides and fertilizers. Conservation easements are enforced by the Conservation Commission. It has been the practice of the Conservation Commission to include the entire 100-foot upland review area in the easement area, but that may be excessive here. I suggest the applicants direct the environmental specialists at Weston and Sampson (the consulting engineers) evaluate the pond and propose an appropriate easement area.

I would have liked to see the subdivision lot layout retain the existing 1871 house, but the house is directly opposite Deming Farm Drive, which is the optimal place to locate the proposed "Peckham Farm Drive".

Even though the subdivision will not have any impact on the pond, by Connecticut law TPZ cannot take final action on this application until the Conservation Commission has submitted "a report with its final decision" to TPZ. As of this writing the Conservation Commission has not yet met to review these plans.

As of this writing the Town Engineer has not completed his review of the plans.

cc:
BGI
Town Engineer
file