

Minutes of the Special Town Council Meeting of February 3, 2005
Public Hearing #2-Redevelopment of Naval Air Station
Abigail Adams Auditorium

Present: Thomas J. Lacey, President
Michael Smart, Vice President
Paul J. Leary
Colin McPherson
Kenneth DiFazio
Sue Kay
Michael Molisse
Arthur Mathews
Gregory Shanahan

Absent: Joseph Connolly
Gregory Hargadon

Recording Secretary: Diane T. Hachey

President Lacey called the meeting to order at 7:30 PM. He announced that this is the first of three public hearings relative to the proposal for redevelopment of the Naval Air Station. President Lacey opened the public hearing and explained that all constituent questions will be addressed this evening, even if the subject is not on the agenda

Lennar Partners, Blue Wave Strategies, and Melbar Development made a brief presentation relative to their proposed plans for the redevelopment of the Naval Air Station-topics included:

1-Open/Space and Recreation-athletic fields (soccer/lacrosse/baseball/softball)
35+ acres of passive and active recreation-playground-pavilions-skate park)

2-Housing-181 residential/retail, 2,855 housing built over 12 years

3-Jobs and Fiscal Benefits-12,500 jobs created, 2,000 light industrial jobs-completed in 3 phases

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Ken Hayes-14 Russell Road

He expressed concerns with the South Weymouth access on Union Street and the traffic ramifications. He also questioned the implementation of the golf course, and expressed concern over how the entire project will impact the water supply.

Bill Ryan of Lennar Partners stated that they have no economic interest in whether or not the Union Street access road is opened or closed.

He further stated that Tri-Town Development Corporation requested the exploration of a golf course, at this point in the project, it has not been definitely decided upon.

As far as the water situation is concerned, Tri-Town's directive to Lennar is that they need to locate an outside water source- and this is what they are currently investigating. Mr. Ryan emphatically stated that without a definitive outside water source, this proposal would not go through.

Daniel Kelliher-29 Middle Street

He suggested that the space be utilized as cemetery space, since there is a need for this, and technically cemetery allocation is considered open-space.

Bill Ryan agreed that this is a good suggestion and stated that Lennar hadn't investigated that option.

Anne Hilbert-45 Doris Drive

She addressed the issue of the cost to the taxpayers for teacher-police and fire support for the magnitude of such a project. She cited negative articles in "Barron's" surrounding an executive from Lennar who recently sold shares of stock.

She additionally commented that she is in favor of biotech industry but not in favor of embryonic research.

Bill Ryan acknowledged that Lennar is currently going through some ownership changes and confirmed that Mr. Miller-CEO did in fact sell some of his stock-due to the company changing from Lennar Partners to LNR Corporation.

John Rogers, of Tri-Town Development Corporation, spoke to the fact that it is being investigated as to building a school on the base to house the children who reside on the base. If not, Tri-Town Development would pay for the tuition for each student --at no cost to Weymouth taxpayers- to educate these students.

President Lacey acknowledged the school concern and stated that the Council has similar concerns. Mr. Wilson will be presenting his financial overview at the next Council meeting-at which time this issue will be addressed.

Bill Ryan spoke to Ms. Hilbert's comment on the type of industry to be implemented at the base. He stated that speaking from an economic, not social standpoint, that the greatest growth industries are technological and that all market studies support biotech and biomedical.

Gibson Midgley-39 Emerson Street

He expressed concern over the fact that we are voting on a concept. The unknown is disconcerting to him, and he believes that we need a contractual guarantee, promising that whatever is proposed is completed. He cited the potential of Lennar selling to another company.

Mr. Rogers spoke to the MEPA vs. entitlement issues, and the fact that a conceptual plan is needed as a starting point. If Lennar for some reason, doesn't live up to their end of the bargain, then Tri-Town and the town can legally pursue. He further stated that there is bonding and insurance coverage. The master plan, which will be voted on in March, is considered the guarantee that the project will occur.

Mary McElroy-11 Peter Road

She questioned the definition of mixed use is and if it is open-ended. She also has strong feelings that biotech industry is not feasible in this area, and that we are taking a risk in building for that industry.

Stephanie of Blue Wave Industries addressed the mixed use question. She stated that the zoning by-laws would define mixed use and that it definitely would not be open-ended, it would be clearly defined. She stated that the zoning can only take effect once all three towns voted.

Mr. Ryan again stated that research proves that biotech would be highly successful in this area, due to the location's access from the highway and the fact that research proves the need for such in this area.

David Wilson-20 Walnut Avenue

He questioned who decides the location of houses, buildings, ball fields within the confines of the area.

Bill Ryan stated that Tri-Town creates the zoning, but the 3 towns must agree on its provisions. The actual by-laws determine what can go where.

John Rogers announced that prior to a master plan approval, they will conduct a public hearing and following that, the 3 towns boards must approve.

Jodi Purdy-Quinlan-152 Middle Street

She is questioning the definition of open space-and stated that a golf course is not considered open space. She is rallying for open space as in free, untouched areas for habitat to survive.

Bill Ryan stated that open space is set forth by National Park and Service guidelines and are in fact “open”.

Carol Fletcher-371 Union Street

She expressed concerns with the traffic potential on Union Street and the impact this project will have on the neighborhood. She also wanted to know if the housing figure proposal is firm.

President Lacey answered that the housing figure is general at this point. Three months ago-it was proposed at 5,000 homes, now it is more manageable at roughly 3,000.

Edward MacDonald-17 Granite Street

He questioned if the peer review participants were familiar with this type of proposal and if they were from this area. He further cited in the plan that other biotech industries were mentioned, and he questioned if Lennar did the proposals for these redevelopments. He also wondered if Lennar had been in contact with the communities cited to see if the situation has been beneficial.

He further questioned the turning over of the land to Lennar and why we weren't investigating leasing the land. He finally mentioned that there were many unanswered questions, and couldn't foresee a vote without these answers.

Bill Ryan commented that he is not aware of who the peer reviewers spoke with in conducting their analyses.

Bob Lundquist of Tri-Town spoke to the intent of the peer reviews-which were in fact funded by Lennar. They were a non-interested group of individuals whom Tri-Town wanted to decipher and evaluate Lennar's proposal.

James Cunningham-58 Lake Shore Drive

He believes that the water/sewer should be in place before housing is developed. He suggested that we investigate the possibility of having our own sewer plant on the base, prior to the housing implementation. He also questioned the attraction for biotech companies to come to the town of Weymouth. He additionally commented on the current traffic issues on Union Street and Route 18-before the base is even developed. He feels strongly that these and all important issues must be addressed prior to any development occurring.

Bill Ryan answered that they plan on having 90% of the water/sewer and traffic issues resolved, if not, the project will not go forward. He stated that biotech industries are attracted to this area because Cambridge-the closest biotech area-has no additional room, and companies are looking elsewhere. The caliber of work is in this area, and they desire to stay in the greater Boston area. Bill further stated that the Village Plan encourages walking versus driving and this would result in fewer vehicle trips.

Dominic Galluzzo-86 Candia Street

He stated that the public has not been involved in the process of redeveloping the airbase, and if so, there wouldn't be so many unanswered questions. He further spoke to the following:

- Smart growth
- Route 18 traffic congestion
- Wetlands protection
- Golf course-type and fees involved
- questioned the types of retail
- % of housing versus roads and/or open space
- impact on project if biotech backs out
- back-up plan development

Bill Ryan stated that developments of the project were advertised via newspaper and mailings. He acknowledged the current congestion on Route 18 and stated that studies are currently underway. He said that the golf course fees and type are currently being explored. The types of retail are along the lines of a Johnny's and drugstores- all other retail would be "mom and pop".

Stephanie Pollack spoke to the intent of having zoning maps, available for public review, within the next 2 weeks. If biotech backed out, then Lennar wouldn't benefit, they feel strongly that the industry is going the way of biotech. If something should change in the market, they would re-investigate the situation.

Bob Casimiro 617 Broad Street

He stated that he does not support stem cell research. He also asked if all the housing would be owner occupied.

Bill Ryan confirmed that all housing would be owner occupied.

Steven Marks- 16 Cavern Knoll Way

He feels that the plan does not create sufficient jobs and that the fire, police and schools must have their own support on the base. He further feels that the soccer and baseball needs are insufficient for three towns. He stated that baseball and softball field are not interchangeable as presented earlier in the evening. He feels that an indoor pool is needed and questioned the inclusion of football fields.

Bill Ryan addressed these concerns by stating that the plan would supply residents with more recreational fields than they currently have.

Paul Barrett from Melbar---clarified that the baseball and softball fields are not interchangeable between each other and as plans evolve they may add football fields if warranted.

Senator Hedlund

Senator Hedlund confirmed that he has studied the peer reviews. He gave his assurance that water would not be an issue, as related to this project-if so, the project doesn't go forward. He hopes that the deadline by the Navy doesn't have an effect on the decision of the towns. He acknowledged the traffic issues on Route 18. The peer reviews indicate that the plan

encourages less vehicles trips due to public transportation and the walking factor. He cited that the MBTA is experiencing problems and they may or may not be able to handle additional riders as due to budget restrictions, are dropping stops. He asked the Council to contemplate the impact of the commuter rail on this project.

Bill Ryan assured all that they are working with the MBTA at the state level-he can't comment right now as they recently began this investigation.

Chris Rockwald-504 Broad Street-I Care CEO

He cited that he previously wrote to Weymouth, Rockland and Abington Boards- looking at obtaining 50 acres of land from the base, to build much needed athletic facilities. Unfortunately, he never received responses.

President Lacey thanked all participants for their time and valuable input as this information is imperative to the Council in their evaluation of the Lennar Proposal.

There being no further business, Councilor Smart motioned to continue the public hearing until February 17, 2005, Councilor Leary seconded and unanimously voted.

Respectfully submitted,

Diane T. Hachey

Approved,

Thomas J. Lacey, President