

Village of Tivoli
Planning Board
Draft Minutes
October 1, 2020

Present

Mike Billeci; Chairman
Pamela Morin
Lisa Schwarzbaum

Also Present

Jennifer and Stephen White

The special meeting was held in the Historic Watts de Peyster Village Hall. It began at 7:03 PM.

Feroe Site Plan

Mike Billeci stated that the board had approved the site plan for the new house on Feroe and the foundation has been poured recently. He called the meeting because the foundation is taller than what was approved in the drawings on the site plan. The builders had submitted new details for the foundation in August which the BIZEO accepted without flagging a change to the site plan. There was a meeting with the BIZEO, the mayor, the owners, the builders and Mike Billeci in which options were discussed. A stop work order was discussed but as the discrepancy was on the village's part, and no fault of the owners, the owners should not be harmed by the holes in the village's procedure. The house is due to be delivered on Monday, October 5, and a delay would be costly. The owners planned to house the mechanicals in the crawl space but upon excavation discovered that the water table was too high. The solution was to raise the foundation higher.

Pamela Morin asked if the foundation had been poured yet and how high was the foundation originally proposed to be. Yes, it has been poured and it had been proposed to be at grade.

Mike Billeci stated that the solution discussed is to amend the site plan. There is a deck added to the back, more steps to the front porch and stairs and a landing for the side door.

Stephen White stated that the family will mostly be using the side door and it will have a small porch/landing. Jennifer White commented that she didn't want their comments to be binding because they were still in consultation with their engineer and architect.

Mike Billeci read a list of requests he made to the applicants. He said the house being built was not the one represented to the public in the drawings. The neighbors were expecting a lower house.

"The following should be submitted to the planning board for amended site plan approval:
- an explanation of how the grading plan won't adversely affect surrounding properties

- water runoff mitigation plans including gutters/leaders that move water to the west side of the property
- elevations of all 4 sides of the house in at least 1/4 scale showing:
 - final grading
 - detailed drawings of front porch and stairs, side porch and rear deck
 - on the front elevation, in addition to the final grade line, please indicate the street level, so we can evaluate how this house sits on the lot relative to the street
- site plan showing house including porches/decks and location of driveway

The front elevation is very important in the historic district since this is how the house presents itself to the community. Please submit drawings that express thoughtful design and a nod to historical details that are prevalent in the village of Tivoli. In addition, since the house is higher than anticipated, please include any architectural, hardscaping or landscaping details that you can employ to make the house look lower from the street. The exact details are left to the designer/applicant. “

Jennifer White commented after the first point that their professionals said that the height of the foundation will have no effect on grade. She asked whether landscaping needed to be finalized because she would like to be able to pick her shrubs when it is planting season.

Stephen White commented that they did want to adhere to the one or two step high front porch but that the property didn't allow for it.

Mike Billeci commented that landscaping and hardscaping decisions can be made to make the house look lower and should be included on the plan. He said that it is not unprecedented for a foundation to be this high. The situation exists because it was not what was approved. The amendment should not be a difficult process as long as the details are shown. There is not a rush.

Jennifer White commented that the landscaping and hardscaping were not in the builder's contract. It will be done later. She is unhappy with the height of the porch herself and has been researching how to make it look lower. She doesn't want anyone to have the expectation that the landscaping will be done on the day that they move in. The brick walkway and landscaping will not be done.

Mike Billeci commented that if there is hardscaping done, those details will need to be resolved earlier because it will effect where the bottom step falls and meets the ground. The planning board needs something in a plan that can be approved, everything that needs to be built, not planter boxes. The planning Board needs to know where the stairs will land.

Jennifer White said she just can't run to the nursery and put in shrubs. Pamela Morin said that it isn't planting season. No one expects them to plant now anyway.

Jennifer White said that she has never owned a house and she just wants to enjoy the process of choosing her landscaping. They understand that the drawing needs to be amended and to be on file.

Mike Billeci commented that the foundation plan from August doesn't show any footings for the side entrance and asked if any were poured. Jennifer White said that she isn't sure.

Mike Billeci asked for any other questions or comments.

Lisa Schwarzbaum reiterated that the plan should show how the house sits on the ground, not the landscaping or pathway. Pamela Morin said it should reflect what is really there.

Mike Billeci said that there are two more meetings scheduled for October, so they can be added to the agenda when they have something to submit.

Pamela Morin asked the reason the foundation was poured higher. Mike Billeci said they planned to put the mechanicals in the crawl space which they did not represent in the site plan, but they didn't realize that the Tivoli soils were not amenable to it. Their solution was to build higher. That is not the only solution, but no one consulted the Planning Board.

Lisa Schwarzbaum asked whether the BIZEO was consulted. Yes, the plan was submitted to the office and forwarded to the BIZEO but not to the Planning Board. They chose this path, submitted the change and poured the foundation. There are multiple inspections for the foundation but the Planning Board is not a part of that process.

Mike Billeci commented that he is going to work with the mayor on the process with the BIZEO to close holes in the process. If anyone else from the board wants to participate, they should let him know. If the change had been presented to the Planning Board, we might have deliberated and approved it, but the board did not get a chance to give alternatives. The Planning Board had requested that the house be close to the street to be like others, but with a higher house it might have been more appropriate to move the house farther back. The board didn't get a chance to deliberate.

Pamela Morin made a motion to close the meeting. Lisa Schwarzbaum seconded. All in favor. The meeting was closed at 7:28.

The board continued to discuss the repercussions of having a delay to the delivery of the house. It would cost the owners a lot.

Pamela Morin commented that if it is landscaped properly, it will not look bad.

Mike Billeci said that the front porch will require 6-7 steps; it will be 58" from the ground to the bottom of the door. Pamela Morin asked if there will be enough room for those steps. Mike Billeci answered yes, and if the details are thoughtful, it will not look bad.

Pamela Morin asked if the full board can be included in all Planning Board communications.

Respectfully submitted,

Laura Gail Tyler
Deputy Village Clerk