

**Planning Board
July 29, 2008
Meeting Notes**

These meeting notes are not verbatim – they are the secretary’s interpretation of what took place at the meeting. – Open Meeting Law – Section III.

Board Members: Marc Garrett, Malcolm MacGregor, Paul McAlduff, Larry Rosenblum, and Bill Wennerberg

Staff Members: Lee Hartmann

Recording Secretary: Eileen Hawthorne

MEPOD II – Community Outreach

Marc Garrett thanked the Board members, Bill Abbott (for coordinating the meeting), Staff, High School Staff, Plymouth Rock Studio representatives and residents for attending the meeting. Mr. Garrett announced that the Board of Selectmen was invited to this meeting, but their agenda had been scheduled prior to this meeting. Mr. Garrett stated that the purpose of this meeting was to provide a forum for Town wide participation in order to address comments and concerns of the abutting neighbors and Town residents regarding land use planning, zoning and development issues for the proposed Plymouth Rock Studios. The public workshop process with the Planning Board will begin on Wednesday, July 31, 2008.

Plymouth Rock Studios (PRS)

Kevin O’Reilly began the presentation by PRS by introducing a short video made by PRS interns from various colleges. He noted that they are still working on a lot of the details of the site, but wanted to listen to comments and concerns of the residents before they move forward with the site plan and design guidelines.

Bill Wynne, PRS Project Manager, reviewed the new studio location which is the 240 acre site currently known as the Waverly Oaks Golf Course and Clubhouse. The complex would be LEED certified and consist of 14 sound stages and related production facilities, an educational component, hotel, housing, and a small retail area. The goals are to create a project that would provide commercial viability, sustainability, stewardship of the land, a state of the art production facility, a memorable brand of design, design connections and a signature destination. Mr. Wynne presented several maps showing the location of the site and surrounding area as well as a schematic plan showing how the site may be developed. They would preserve the existing clubhouse and there would be no development near the wetland areas or the existing well site. PRS plans to utilize the contours of the site for visual buffers and set the buildings at the lower points of the site. The preliminary design is a work in progress. There would be a new access road that would provide access to Plymouth South Middle and High School and then continue along parallel to Route 3 to the studio site. The road would loop around through the site to provide access to the education complex, the hotel and studio amenity area in the northern part of the site, the theater and production area, parking facility, and the sound stages. The sound stages would be located where the driving ranges are currently located. The residential buffer along Long Pond Rd would be maintained and the existing gate would be only be used by the ten residential lots and for emergency access. The site will be fully LEED certified, have minimal environmental impacts, and rainwater will be collected and reused.

David Kirkpatrick introduced the not for profit entity “The Rock Educational Cooperative” (TREC) in an effort to support and facilitate job training. They are looking to educate and empower through an innovative media and arts program and expose students to a wide range of industry trades. They are working with the schools to incorporate the vocational programs (carpentry, electrical, plumbing, cosmetology, etc). They are also looking at apprenticeship and work force training programs for production assistants, grips, lighting specialists, electricians, etc. TREC will be setting up a program in the fall to review job descriptions for the production jobs.

Marc Garrett reminded the residents that now that a new site is being considered, the Board and the Studio representatives wanted to hear their comments and concerns and opened the floor for questions.

Jeff Wallace asked what the process would be for the rezoning and what would be allowed on the site if the business model failed.

Mr. Garrett replied that the same process will be followed as was outlined for the original filing on the 1,000 acre site. The Planning Board, with Staff, will draft and review language to create an overlay district in the Zoning Bylaw. There will be public workshops held and a public hearing. Once the Planning Board has made their recommendation on the bylaw language, it will be forwarded to the Board of Selectmen, the Advisory and Finance Committee, and the Precinct Chairs for their review prior to Town Meeting's vote.

Mr. O'Reilly explained that the intent is to work with Town staff to create a Zoning Bylaw that would only allow a movie complex on that site. If the business is not successful, the only thing that would be allowed would be another studio. Any other use would require another zoning change.

Joe DeSilva, 11 Bowsprit Lane, asked for an indication of the noise that would be generated and the lighting that would be visible; whether the success of the studio hinges upon tax breaks from the State; and how viable is the business model.

Mr. Wynne explained that there are several factors that will impact the noise and light emitted from the site. The residential lots and buffer along Long Pond Rd will remain, the sound stages are designed to contain the light and sound and the decibel limitations set forth in the proposed zoning bylaw will require notification to abutters of any major noise events. In addition, the lighting will comply with the Town's Dark Sky Bylaw. In general, movie studios are fairly quiet especially during filming.

Mr. Kirkpatrick stated that the 25% production tax credit would still be in effect. Production credits relates to anything that shoots in Massachusetts or is labor intensive here.

Massachusetts has a tremendous diversity of landscape including mountains, lakes, and ocean and is attractive to film makers. The sunset clause on earlier tax credits expires in 2023. By that time, the studios should be a viable entity.

Mr. O'Reilly explained that the recent articles in the newspapers were regarding the bill for an additional construction tax credit which would provide a 20% tax credit related to the building of a movie studio. The bill made it through the House of Representatives, and is now before the Senate. Senate President Therese Murray is very supportive of the proposed bill and has facilitated with many State officials, but had some questions. Senator Murray would like the Studio to go through the permitting process and prove they can build the complex before any additional tax credits are granted. The Studio plans to move forward with or without the construction tax credits and work to tighten up the language to bring the bill back before the legislature.

William Abbott stated that this is an exciting project, but preferred that a special permit process be included in the Zoning Bylaw.

Mr. Garrett explained that the proponents have made a bold move by asking for an "as of right" use. They will be required to provide sufficient information regarding proposed mitigation prior to the Board making any recommendation.

Richard Rothstein, 32 Webster Reach, asked if the proponents have met with MEPA yet and if they have triggered the need for a MEPA permit.

Mr. Garrett replied that they met with the Secretary of Environmental Affairs last week. The golf course has already gone through the MEPA process, so the studio would receive some credits from that review. The studio is in active negotiations with the Secretary of Environmental Affairs and the MEPA office on that matter.

Matt Muratore asked about the number of employees that would be working during the day and night hours and how the access road and traffic flow would work.

Mr. Garrett stated that the proposal is to construct an access road off Clark Rd that would parallel Route 3, provide access to the schools and to the studio site. This access road will help

to minimize the traffic on Clark and Long Pond Rds. The specifics of the road will be part of the traffic presentation. A modified interchange is a possibility, but not in the near future.

Mr. O'Reilly stated that their traffic engineer will be doing a full traffic review prior to Town Meeting.

Mr. Garrett stated that Jeffrey Dirk from Vanasse Associates has been hired as the traffic engineer for this project and has also reviewed the traffic for the A.D. Makepeace project, so he is very familiar with the traffic needs.

Eric Nemes was generally supportive of the concept. He asked if the sewer lines were brought to the high school and this site, would the residents in the area be required to connect to the sewer lines.

Mr. Wynne replied that the studio has been working on a solution that is comprehensive for the environmental impact on the ground water, the Eel River Watershed, the wastewater, the use of reclaimed water from the Town's sewer plant and the reuse of rainwater. The proposed sewer line would run from the high school, along Rte 3 to the treatment plant and will eliminate the package plant. This will help protect the Eel River Watershed and the aquifer.

Eric Nemes asked if written documentation that would outline the studio's partnership with the high school would be available before Town Meeting.

Mr. Kirkpatrick replied that they would have documentation, but they are still working with the school department to develop the partnership.

Barry Wood asked what portion of the buildings would be seen from Route 3 and what style buildings would be constructed.

Mr. Wynne replied that they would present a comprehensive plan for what the studio will look like that would comply with the proposed design guidelines. They would like to carry on the theme of the existing clubhouse which has a New England style of architecture.

Mr. Garrett stated that the design standards would be completed prior to Town Meeting.

John Peter Rooney commented that the school traffic is a major issue on Long Pond Rd and if creating a new road would make Long Pond Rd safer, it would be greatly appreciated. He also stated that the intersection of Long Pond Rd and Clark Rd needed improvements.

Andrea McMillan, 491 Raymond Rd, was supportive of the concept as the proposed project would increase the value of homes, would boost the economy, and help with the schools.

Janet Young asked if the proposed access road would be over Town land or Wildland's Trust land.

Lee Hartmann explained that the land adjacent to Clark Road where the access road would begin is Town owned land with a conservation restriction held by the Wildland's Trust. The conservation restriction has a provision to provide an access road for the Town. The access road would then continue through the school property to the Waverly Oaks site.

Ms. Young asked if construction of the access road would require a match of land taken out of conservation restriction.

Mr. Garrett replied that if the restriction allows for an access road, it can be constructed without taking additional land.

Ms. Young asked if the proposed wastewater treatment line that will run along Rte 3 and through the Town owned property to the sewer treatment plant would allow expansion of the high school.

Mr. Hartmann stated that there are two constraints for expansion of the school on this property; one is the well that requires a 400 ft. radius for protection and the wastewater plant. This project will save the Town millions of dollars by having the water and sewer lines run through to the school land.

Andrew Sessler, 27 Cabernet Lane, asked what limitations would be in place to keep the project from turning into a religious organization that would then become tax exempt.

Mr. Hartmann stated that we are in the preliminary stages, but have been discussing a Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) that would require that they provide the access, water, and wastewater and would be executed and recorded prior to Town Meeting. Mr. Hartmann is anticipating that language will be negotiated and included in the MOU that would require Payment In Lieu of Taxes (PILOT) if there are tax exempt uses on the site.

Loring Tripp was confident that the proposed access road would be beneficial to the traffic flow in the area. He had some concerns that the sewer line may not allow for additional connection. He suggested that the project could be partially "as of right" with a special permit for the height of the buildings.

Cully Gufstason asked about what type of jobs would the project create and how people could get involved. He was excited about the association and mentorship programs with the schools. Mr. Kirkpatrick stated that during the production phase the projection is that 1,000 jobs in labor and construction would be needed during the peak of construction with an estimated \$175 million dollars of payroll. Long term there would be an estimated 200 jobs with a salary of approximately \$75,000 for studio staff and the production cycle jobs would employ approximately 1,800 to 2,000 people for various lengths of time depending upon the project. There will be training opportunities for those wishing to be employed by the studio.

Barry Meltzer was concerned with the access road and the traffic flow.

Mr. Wynne stated that the studio is in the middle of evaluating the traffic pattern and flow within the site and off site. They will propose and offer alternatives with the pros and cons and work to create a number of solutions for review. They do not want to make the traffic worse.

Julie Campbell, Mark Campbell Productions, Hull, Mass, who is an independent film maker was excited about the project as it would offer an opportunity for her to create her television and film productions at a local venue.

Robert Alpern asked if the presentation included the full proposal or if this would be a phased project.

Mr. Wynne replied that the presentation showed the full proposal. Mr. Wynne also stated that with the changes in technology, there may be a chance that the studio would not need as many sound stages in the future.

Therese Silva was concerned with the level of noise that will be audible from the back lot filming. She stated that she can hear the high school band practicing from her house.

Mr. Kirkpatrick said that there are protections for noise included in the proposed bylaw and that back lot noise is different than the noise created when filming on location. In his experience there have no explosions filmed on the back lot and lighting has not been an issue.

Mr. Wynne responded that there are two areas in the bylaw that address the noise and lighting. A noise study will be submitted as part of the approval process and will be available to answer questions. The studio will also comply with the dark sky bylaw. There is also a notification process for any one time event that will create excess noise where the town and area residents will be notified in advance.

Mr. Hartmann stated the language in bylaw is technical for a field; therefore, an outside consultant was hired to review and add protections for the neighborhoods to the proposed bylaw.

Cheryl Dempsey asked if the access road would be constructed first.

Mr. Wynne confirmed that the access road would be installed first.

Mr. Garrett stated that the access road would be used for construction traffic.

Ms. Dempsey asked if the Town does not approve the access road for the site, what the studio would do. She also asked how the Town would benefit from the project.

Mr. O'Reilly responded that the studio would have to consider another site.

Mr. Wynne replied that the economic study will be presented to the Planning Board and is a preliminary outline of the benefits to the state and town. The benefits to the state relate to payroll, payroll taxes, retail spending, state income taxes, etc. The Town will benefit through property taxes will be paid to the Town. The studio will be asking for Tax Increment Financing (TIF).

Cherrie Thorne asked if the walkers and teachers would be using the access road and would there still be a crossing guard at the high school and middle school to assist those that walk to school along Long Pond Road.

Mr. O'Reilly responded that all the traffic issues regarding the schools need to be addressed with the school department and that dialogue has begun. The access road will be a public road and provide public access with a possible bicycle/walking path next to the road.

Bob Dawson had some concerns with the proposed access road. Mr. Dawson asked what the possibility of having slip ramps from Route 3 directly to the site for access and egress. Mr. Wynne stated that there have been ongoing discussions about access to the Route 3. Mr. Garrett thanked the Planning Board, Town representatives and Plymouth Rock Studio representatives for their participation and announced the meeting scheduled for Wednesday, June 30, 2008 at 7:00 p.m. at the Town Hall.

The meeting adjourned at 9:00 p.m.

Respectfully Submitted,

Eileen M. Hawthorne

Approved: August 11, 2008