

Ashland Planning Board  
Meeting Minutes  
July 10, 2013

Call to Order

Chairman MacLeod called the meeting to order at 7 PM.

Members Present

Fran Newton, Susan MacLeod, Alt. Norman DeWolfe, Philip Preston,  
Cheryl Cox, Liz Cody, Alt. Anthony Randall

Absent with Notice – Gordon McCormack Jr.

Pre Application Consultation – Soldier On

Presenters – Taylor Caswell, John Downing, Jennifer McCourt, Jim  
Scalise, Tilman Lukas

John Downing – CEO of Soldier On

- Project is permanent housing for veterans
- Owned units
- Tax generated
- Designed and built sustainable units
- Always remain with veterans
- Soldier On delivers all services to the owners [vans for transportation is provided]
- Residents have no dependents
- Soldier On is the largest provider of services outside the VA on the east coast
- Object is to prevent veterans from being homeless
- Soldier On receives grant monies

Jim Scalise – Project Manager

- Property located on Riverside Drive
- 9.3 acres
- Surveyed by Roy Sabourn
- Proposed 4 buildings totaling 50 one (1) bedroom units
- Over 50% of the land would be open space
- Limited traffic in or out of the complex
- Lighting would be downcast
- 100% of project is affordable housing

- Units are 100% accessible
- Meet life safety codes [sprinkler systems]; turnaround fits fire truck
- Heating would be propane
- Public water and sewer
- Property is in Rural Residential and Village Residential Zones
- Current density would allow 32 to 33 units
- Units about 450-500 square feet

*It would be conceivable that the application to the planning board would be denied and sent to the Zoning Board for various variances.*

Public Comments/Questions

- What about runoff? No answer at this time although there are ways to prevent problems
- Why not cut the project in half? Case managers with HUD funding are 2 for every 25 units.
- What about foot traffic? History is that there is very little foot traffic; residents use the van to access outside
- Residents usually like to be part of the community; some work part time
- Soldier On provides services [health etc]; VA helps the residents
- Timeline is based on funding; if it is approved it could be up to two years before completion
- Comments included liking the project and some did not agree that this would be the right fit for Ashland
- What would the view from the road be? Proposed trees and vegetation along the entrance to the units
- Benefits to Ashland – affordable housing, paying taxes and for services; good neighbors; support Vets
- Are the same hurdles found in other venues? Yes
- What defines affordable? Federal sources define as less than 60% of area medium income

Old Business

EHFAR LLC – the Notice of Decision was done in January awaiting the corrected plans; letters have been sent to prospective engineers asking for quotes to review the plans and monitor the project; the original decision included the possibility of this project review as a condition subsequent instead of requiring a bond.

*The Chair and Board Secretary signed the mylars.*

MASTER PLAN – following discussion ***motion to adopt Chapter 8  
Economic Development – Newton; second – Cody; vote 4-0 in favor***

*The Board needs to write the implementation chapter. Chapter 4 [Natural Resources] is being outlined by the Conservation Commission.*

DISPOSITION OF MINUTES

***Motion to approve minutes of June 5, 2013 – Preston; second –  
Cody; vote 3-0-1 (FN)***

***Motion to approve minutes of June 26, 2013 with spelling  
corrections- Newton; second – Cody; vote 4-0***

NEXT MEETING – July 24 - Town Hall – 6:30 PM - with Mark Scarano as guest  
from Grafton County Economic Development

*Motion to adjourn at 9:15 PM – Newton; second – Preston; vote 4-0*

*Taken by Patricia Tucker*