

CITY OF NEWTON

IN BOARD OF ALDERMEN

LAND USE COMMITTEE REPORT

TUESDAY, NOVEMBER 29, 2005

Present: Ald. Mansfield (Chairman), Ald. Salvucci, Merrill, Albright, Samuelson, Harney, Vance, and Fischman  
City staff: John Daghlian, Associate City Engineer, Nancy Radzevich, Chief Planner, Ouida Young, Associate City Solicitor, and Linda Finucane, Chief Committee Clerk

Consistency request re: Nahanton Woods Condominiums, special permit #565-78(2)

A recent application for a building permit to construct a guardhouse on an existing landscape island located in the private drive of the complex triggered this request from the Inspectional Services Commissioner for the committee's input as to whether the construction of a proposed not-to-exceed 8' x10' guardhouse is consistent with the approved site plan cited in the special permit. Ms. Radzevich said it is unfortunate that the only site plan found in city files is an as-built plan, not the site plan referenced in the special permit that is more vague than specific in its conditions. The condominium association explained in a letter to Ms. Radzevich that because of reoccurring vandalism it employs an outdoor security person 16 hours, 7 days a week, overnight. Currently that person uses his car and the condominium association pays for gas. The association thinks it makes more sense to provide a heated/air conditioned shelter. A member of the planning staff visited the site and reported that the proposed guardhouse would have no impact on parking or the trees located on the island.

Initially, several members felt such a small structure unseen from the street and having no impact on any abutters was not a problem and consistent with the site plan, besides being beneficial to the person running his car to stay warm. However, others disagreed, believing construction of the guardhouse, which albeit may be considered a temporary, is a structure that will require an amendment to the special permit and/or site plan.

The Chairman asked Ms. Radzevich to convey to the Commissioner of Inspectional Services the nature of the committee's discussion, but noted that the ultimate decision is the Commissioner's.

#308-05      DAVID F. MILLER, III, PRESIDENT of CHARLES RIVER COUNTRY CLUB petition for a SPECIAL PERMIT/SITE PLAN APPROVAL to replace an existing swimming pool, replace 6 existing tennis courts with 5, construct support facilities, and replace a 45 space parking facility with a 64 space facility at 483 DEDHAM STREET, Ward 8, on land known as Sec 83, Blk 36, Lot 4, containing approx 6,446,022 sf of land in a district

zoned SINGLE RESIDENCE 1. Ref: Sec 30-24, 30-23, 30-8(b)(5) and (15), 30-5(b)(4), and 30-19(m) of the City of Newton Zoning Ord, 2001.

ACTION: APPROVED 6-2 (Ald. Albright and Samuelson opposed)

NOTE:

#306-05 BRAE BURN COUNTRY CLUB petitioning for a SPECIAL PERMIT/SITE PLAN APPROVAL and to extend a NON-CONFORMING USE to make improvements to existing facilities i.e., cart storage barn, maintenance building, pool house, snack bar, paddle tennis courts, and a new maintenance yard, at 326 FULLER STREET and land off Washington Street behind Woodland MBTA station in Wards 3, 4, and 5 on land known as Sec 53, Blk 40, Lot 13, Sec 43, Blk 45, Lot 27 and Sec 32, Blk 27, Lot 1 containing approx 8,282,392 sf of land in a district zoned SINGLE RESIDENCE 1. Ref: 30-24, 30-23, 30-15 Table 3, 30-8(b)(5), 30-5(b)(4),30-19(d)(13), (17) and 30-19(m) of the City of Newton Rev Zoning Ord, 2001.

ACTION: APPROVED 8-0

NOTE: This is a request to amend previous special permits and to extend a non-conforming structure at Brae Burn Country Club. The petitioner wishes to relocate the maintenance operation from the main campus to a new building in a remote location; convert the old maintenance facility into an indoor golf facility; and demolish a small shed, renovate the cart barn, pool, paddle tennis courts, and parking facilities.

Brae Burn Country Club contains approximately 193 acres with a 27-hole golf course, a clubhouse and recreational facilities, including six tennis courts, three paddle tennis courts, and a swimming pool located in a Single Residence 1 district. The main entrance to the clubhouse is on Fuller Street. A parking lot across the street, accessed from Fuller and Commonwealth Avenue, accommodates 179 vehicles. Additional parking is located on the main campus, and an internal access driveway, west of the clubhouse, leads to parking areas for employees and users of the swimming pool and tennis courts.

The petitioner has divided the petition into two areas. The “parcel lot” includes the areas in the vicinity of the main clubhouse, where the proposal is to renovate and expand the cart barn, convert the existing maintenance building to an indoor golf facility and storage space, renovate and expand the pool house/snack bar, renovate and upgrade existing paddle tennis courts, and make improvements to the parking facilities.

The other area involves the “maintenance yard,” located to the southwest of the main campus, and currently accessed internally by golf cart or maintenance vehicle. The petitioner proposes to construct two buildings to house grounds-keeping equipment, maintenance vehicles, offices, and dorm rooms. (Interns, agronomy majors learning turf maintenance, live there in summer.) External access from a new drive connecting to the Woodland MBTA station, off Washington Street, is proposed.

The public hearing, at which there was no public comment, opened and closed on October 11, 2005. Residents at 1670 Commonwealth Avenue submitted via mail a letter in favor of the petition. The club arranged two visits to accommodate committee members who wished to tour the site.

#### Working Session

At the public hearing, there a question of whether or not the city engineer had had the opportunity to review the most recent plans and drainage reports prior to the hearing. Subsequently, Associate City Engineer John Daghlian completed his review, which resulted in the submittal of revised plans. Mr. Daghlian, who was present this evening is satisfied. Initial concerns re the hydrology analysis methodology have been addressed in the modified drainage calculations, which are calculated for the 100-year storm event. Because the soil is not conducive to infiltration, runoff will be retained on site with the overflow draining into the two ponds on site. All the other items noted in his revised memo of October 27, 2005 are building-permit-stage items.

Brae Burn Country Club is located within a Wetland Resource Area as well as the city's Floodplain/Watershed Protection District. All construction within the wetland, floodplain, and the 100' buffer require review by the Conservation Commission. The commission held two meetings, one prior to the public hearing and one after. Further review was required in part because parking approved in a prior special permit was never constructed. It was determined the parking was located too close to wetlands anyway, and would have had to be pulled back. The commission has since issued an affirmative order of conditions.

At the hearing, the committee requested a revised comprehensive site plan. The petitioner submitted a revised plan that Ms. Radzevich reviewed with the committee. There are few changes proposed. The actual area affected in the proposal is approximately 2 acres. A small addition to the old maintenance building will allow access to the proposed indoor golf facility located there. A proposed addition to the pool house/snack bar will expand the locker and rest rooms. The revised site plan also indicates the unpaved area where the previously approved parking was never constructed. To reduce pavement, portions of the internal drive decrease in width from 20' to 18'. A hut adjacent to the heated paddle courts will be relocated and expanded with a deck for paddle court users. The aboveground propane tank will be removed and underground gas running from Fuller Street will be installed to provide heat. (An underground oil tank near the cart barn will be removed as well.) Twenty parking spaces in the parking lot adjacent to the paddle tennis courts will be striped.

The proposed relocated maintenance operations will centralize those operations and move them away from abutters and members. Deliveries, trash removal, etc., will be via a new driveway that will connect to the MBTA controlled access drive for the Woodland T station garage currently under construction. The petitioner has an easement agreement. Swinging gates will control access. The proposal moves the herbicides and pesticides, currently stored in the "parcel lot" area near a pond, to this more remote area adjacent to the Woodland MBTA station and into a dedicated secure storage unit. Some discussion

ensued about the visibility of the operations from Arborpoint and Golda Meir House, but the topography of this area is a natural bowl surrounded by dense trees, shrubs and bushes that provide natural screening. There is a string of evergreens between the area and the MBTA garage to screen Arborpoint. A small amount of re-grading will occur here and on the parcel site. There is ample landscaping both existing and proposed, e.g., more shrubs and ornamental trees are proposed, and four trees will replace two trees slated for removal. A review of the elevations indicated the cart barn now shows a second dormer to match the existing one; cupolas are another architectural feature.

At the hearing, there was suggestion that the petitioner comply with the city's Integrated Pest Management Plan (IMP). Although Brae Burn has participated for seven-years in the IPM Task Force, the petitioner explained that the needs of a golf course differ from those of the city's parks. While aeration and vertical cutting help reduce the use of pesticides, fungus is the major problem. The pesticides used by the club bear the label "caution" not "hazardous." It appears that for the same reasons, city-owned Commonwealth Golf Course does not comply with the city's IMP.

Ald. Samuelson moved approval, finding the relocation of the maintenance facility and pesticides storage and removal of the underground tank away from the pond protects the wetlands area; relocation of the maintenance facility to the more remote area near the Woodland MBTA station property will benefit the residences along Fuller Street and improve internal pedestrian and vehicular circulation; increased landscaping at the main entrance will improve the view of the site from Fuller Street; the four dormitory rooms at the maintenance facility are an appropriate accessory use to a golf course to allow summer interns to live on-site while learning hand-on methods for grounds-keeping; improvements to parking areas improve internal vehicular circulation;

Changes in grade will allow for improvements to the parking facilities; drainage systems at both site locations have been designed to accommodate the 100-year storm event; reduction in the driveway width, from 20 to 18 ft., will allow for a reduction in pavement while still providing for safe vehicular access; and the waiver to the number of stalls required for the use will actually be reduced from 24 to 21 stalls as a result of the proposed improvements to the parking facilities; the expansion of the cart barn building within the front setback will not be substantially more detrimental than the existing cart barn building because the addition has been designed to be consistent with the existing structure; the structure will be screened from the public way due to the natural topography of the site, which is lower than the level of Fuller Street; and the expanded structure will be replacing an old metal shed, which is being demolished. Amendments to the site plans are appropriate because there will be improved site circulation and safety associated with the relocation of the maintenance facilities, away from the swimming pool, paddle courts, and new indoor golf facility by separating the maintenance vehicle traffic from the general pedestrian and vehicular traffic; and the parking facilities and new structures will be sufficiently screened from the public way and abutting residents.

Respectfully submitted,  
George E. Mansfield, Chairman

