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Planning Department

INTERDEPARTMENTAL COMMUNICATION

To: Planning Board **Date:** June 23, 2006
From: Kristin K. Alexander, AICP, Assistant Town Planner *KKA*
Subject: Subdivision Rules and Regulations – Recommended Minor Revisions – Part II

Below are more recommended changes to the Subdivision Rules and Regulations (Rules) based on Planning Board and staff input. The text is straight from the Rules and the proposed changes are highlighted. A summary explanation is provided in italics after each text section. You will be receiving probably two more memos over the next couple of months with recommended changes to the Rules regarding Low Impact Development (LID) and stormwater management. Please review the recommended revisions and decide whether you think the Rules should be changed accordingly.

(5.3 CONTENTS of DEFINITIVE PLAN)

5.3.4 Existing and proposed lines of sidewalks, STREETS, WAYS, LOTS, EASEMENTS, public and common areas, flood plain boundaries, zoning and zone lines including all overlay districts within and abutting the SUBDIVISION. if the construction of the proposed sidewalks, STREETS, WAYS, etc. would involve the removal of a public shade tree or a scenic road stone wall, show their location, type, and size of the public shade tree on the definitive plan. In the case of a shade tree, contact the Tree Warden. A scenic road hearing may be required.

Staff thought it would be a good idea to give the applicant a "heads up" that another public hearing is required if the project involves removing a public shade tree.

5.3.24 The locations, logs, and results of deep observation hole tests and percolation tests for groundwater recharge facilities consistent with Department of Environmental Protection Stormwater Management Policy.

The Engineering Department needs this information to determine whether all proposed infiltration basins, trenches, etc. would comply with town and state regulations and function properly.

5.3.25 Location of all existing and proposed above ground and underground structures, including but not limited to, buildings, foundations, wells, septic systems, and underground storage tanks, within the SUBDIVISION and within one hundred and fifty (150) feet of the perimeter of the SUBDIVISION.

In staff's opinion, above ground structures should also be shown on the definitive plan. Staff and the Planning Board look at proposed subdivisions in relation to the general area, but we're usually most interested in how proposed subdivisions could impact structures directly adjacent to the subdivision. Requiring all structures within 150 feet to be shown on the plan seems to be overkill. Staff recommends reducing the distance to 100 feet because septic systems cannot be within 100 feet of any well.

(8 DESIGN STANDARDS

8.1 STREETS

8.1.18.1 e) The STREET approaching the loop turnaround shall be a minimum distance of 85 feet measured from the sideline of the intersecting STREET.

8.1.18.2 d) The STREET approaching the turnaround shall be a minimum distance of 85 feet measured from the sideline of the intersecting STREET and shall be straight for a minimum distance of 60 feet.

Planning staff added this standard for cul-de-sac loop turnarounds and T-shaped turnarounds to ensure that no one proposes just a turnaround with hardly any street straightaway and tries to argue it's a street according to the Rules (for frontage purposes). The turnaround diagrams on pages 31 and 32 of the Rules would be changed accordingly.

(9.6 SIDEWALKS, PEDESTRIAN WAYS, CROSS WALKS and BICYCLE PATHS)

9.6.3 In general, sidewalks shall be constructed within the STREET layout ~~at a line that is one (1) foot away from the sideline of the STREET layout.~~ The sidewalks shall be a minimum of five (5) feet in width and constructed in accordance with the requirements of the Massachusetts Architectural Access Board, the typical structural cross section (see Appendix) and with Sections 701.20, 701.40, 701.60, 701.62 of the ~~Mass. Highway Department~~ Commonwealth of Massachusetts "Standard Specifications for Highways and Bridges", unless the BOARD authorizes different design to respond to local topography or other circumstances. Sidewalks should be designed around public shade trees and may meander around streetside utilities and equipment such as hydrants, mailboxes, utility poles, etc., if necessary. On ARTERIAL AND COLLECTOR STREETS, where possible, a green strip shall be provided between the edge of pavement and the sidewalk to separate pedestrians from vehicular traffic.

~~9.6.4 A green strip shall be provided between the edge of the pavement and the sidewalk. The green strip may vary in width but shall generally be not less than five (5) feet wide (4 feet in low intensity LOCAL STREETS). The Green Strip shall consist of six (6) inches of bank run gravel (or equivalent) covered with three (3) inches of processed grading gravel. The gravel base shall be covered with six (6) inches compacted depth of good quality loam and shall be seeded with turf grass seed or sodded and planted with STREET trees where appropriate in the opinion of the BOARD.~~

As requested by the Planning Board, staff removed the requirement that the sidewalk be constructed one foot away from the edge of the road layout. Planning Board members discussed removing the green strip requirement on new subdivision streets because often the strip is not maintained and turns into weeds and dirt. When the frontage of a new subdivision is along an older, narrower road, usually there isn't even much room to construct the pavement of a new sidewalk, never mind a grass strip. Sidewalks without grass strips would have more vertical curbing. On the other hand, sometimes sidewalks need to weave to avoid important natural and manmade features, thereby creating a grass

strip. Also, with heavily traveled roads (collector and arterial roads), sometimes a strip is preferred to separate the pedestrians from the vehicles. For these reasons, staff still kept in the Rules some flexibility to weave the sidewalk when necessary and a requirement to provide a grass strip on arterial and collector roads wherever possible. The Typical Roadway Section in Appendix B of the Rules will be changed accordingly.

Does the Board think sidewalks should be wider than 5 feet given that on 5 feet you can't pass 2 wheelchairs?

10 OPTIONAL RESIDENTIAL COMPOUND PLAN

10.1.1.8 A private way maintenance agreement and covenant for the STREET and all its appurtenances, including an operation and maintenance plan for the drainage system, shall be recorded prior to or simultaneously with the recording of the approved Definitive Plan.

Whenever the Planning Board approves a private way, there is always a condition in the decision requiring the applicant to record a private way maintenance agreement and covenant. Since this is a standard condition, staff decided to specify it in the Rules.