

Kim DeNigro

From: Actonians AIR [aair00@gmail.com]
Sent: Friday, February 29, 2008 6:34 PM
To: Corinne Hogseth
Cc: Planning Board; Board of Selectmen
Subject: Re: Indian village / Barbara's Way

Corrine,

One of our goals is to help people navigate through the processes and committees.

Our #1 piece of advice is to not just bash hard working volunteers on our town boards. We tried to get that across in our first message to you.

Our next effort would be to provide advice on how to use the process and work with it, which we also tried to do in our first message.

When you are ready to listen and work with people who can help you, maybe we can then assist you.

Good luck in your efforts.

AAIR

On Fri, Feb 29, 2008 at 2:48 PM, Corinne Hogseth <corinnehog@verizon.net> wrote:

To the Member(s) of Actonians AIR –

I considered setting up an anonymous gmail address, just for fun, but decided it was a waste of time. I'm not such a coward that I won't sign my name to my own words.

I am including the Board of Selectmen and the Planning Board on this distribution to share my thoughts on this subject with them.

1. While AAIR criticizes our "complete lack of understanding" of this process, it is my belief that this lack of understanding should always be the assumption when fielding questions from citizens on any issue before any board. (A couple members of the Planning Board were very polite and informative in response to residents' questions and comments.)
2. While I frequently disagree with many of the decisions made by our town boards, I do appreciate the time and passion all of these people bring to their posts. I couldn't do it, and I don't know how they do.

3. That being said, I have no more respect for the Chairman of the Planning Board than he showed to those of us who made our feelings regarding this subdivision known before the board. He was arrogant and disrespectful. He talked over citizens trying to make comments. He suggested to me that if I wanted to keep the land as it was, I could have purchased it myself.

(In fact, the neighborhood did try to purchase this land, but the sellers' agent bought the land himself, and for considerably less than the neighborhood representatives offered. He also lied outright at the Tuesday night meeting when he suggested that the new homes were likely to be in the range of 2600-2800 square feet. I learned the next day that plans for these new homes already exist they will average over 3000 square feet.)

The Chairman did *not* refer me to other departments – he told me that if I don't like the current laws that I should contact my state representatives. The fact is, our local Planning Board *can* write by-laws to limit development, but they don't. And one doesn't need to be clairvoyant to realize that people all over town are fed up with our Planning Board rubber-stamping development plans which are having detrimental effects on the character and safety of our neighborhoods. One only needs a subscription to the Beacon.

4. My concern regarding traffic is not the impact of two additional houses. My concern is the cumulative effect of adding a new home here and two more over there, all over the neighborhood. This will undoubtedly bring more traffic into the neighborhood. Adding new homes at the intersection of Seneca and Agawam, where so many of our children walk and ride to school, is an even greater safety concern.

And yes, I am also concerned with speeding in the neighborhood, but Actonians AIR should not presume to tell me how to address that concern. I hosted a neighborhood meeting in my home 4 years ago on this very issue, which was attended by an Acton police officer acting in his official capacity. While we did succeed in adding a few more stop signs, the UPS guy still rockets by my home every day. There is *no* enforcement of speeding laws in Indian Village, and I understand that we simply don't have enough officers and cruisers to provide adequate enforcement in all of the neighborhoods. Some speed humps would be nice, though.

These are facts: Indian Village is the oldest neighborhood in town. We have some of the smallest houses in town. We have the best location in town, within walking distance to West Acton Village and several schools. We have no neighborhood association (like Minuteman Ridge), so we have no control over the destiny of our own neighborhood. Together, these facts leave our neighborhood more vulnerable to development than other areas in town. Please tell me what I can do to limit development in my neighborhood, and I will get the ball rolling.

Sincerely,

Corinne Hogseth

61 Seminole Road

-----Original Message-----

From: Actonians AIR [mailto:aaair00@gmail.com]

Sent: Friday, February 29, 2008 7:23 AM

To: corinnehog@verizon.net

Subject: Fwd: Indian village / Barbara's Way

Corrine,

Since we are not authorized to send email to the indianvillage group, we are sending this to you.

----- Forwarded message -----

From: **Actonians AIR** <aaair00@gmail.com>

Date: Thu, Feb 28, 2008 at 4:15 PM

Subject: Indian village / Barbara's Way

To: pb@town.acton.ma.us, indianvillage@yahoogroups.com, bos@town.acton.ma.us

Good Day,

This message has come to the attention of AAIR (Actonians Against Intrusive Regulations)

Fran, Corrine,

Your message here shows a complete lack of understanding of the role of the planning board and disrespect for someone who puts in many hours for the town. To suggest that because the Chairman of the Planning Board is staying within accordance with state laws and town bylaws he is "cowtailing" to developers is ludicrous. To further suggest that you wish to hold the Chairman of the Planning Board responsible for whatever town by laws we have or don't have is equally ridiculous. Then you even continue by suggesting that the Chairman of the Planning Board erred by telling you which town departments to deal with for which issues goes all the way to stupid. The real issue here is you just want to prevent a specific land owner from exercising his right to develop a particular piece of property for reasons not upheld by current laws or by-laws, and you want the Chairman and / or the planning board to make some up to support your cause.

Corrine,

I do applaud you for suggesting that an appropriate way to approach this is to work to propose a by-law so that the planning board has something to work with. It is the planning board's job to look at by-law suggestions the public brings forward and provide recommendations for the drafting, and to provide legal review. It is not the planning board's job to be clairvoyant however, and to think, draft, and propose all by-law recommendations. I suggest thinking of it as the "clearing house". Also, in reference to your idea about large homes, keep in mind, the planning board does not issue building permits. Although the subdivision may be approved, the particular houses are not. That's a separate process through another town organization.

Fran,

As for your traffic issue, two houses worth of traffic is probably not your problem. If it's speed, or reckless

3/7/2008

driving, then clearly you are addressing the wrong group. I don't see how you get from planning to law enforcement.

Selectman,

It is my opinion that the Chairman of the Planning Board did an excellent job officiating the Barbara's Way public hearing. He did a superb job informing the public of the bounds of the hearing and of the planning board as well as providing good referrals to the citizens so they could address their concerns with the appropriate departments.

Actonians Against Intrusive Regulations (AAIR)

A public service organization

From: indianvillage@yahoogroups.com [mailto:indianvillage@yahoogroups.com] **On Behalf Of** Francesca
Sent: Wednesday, February 27, 2008 11:09 AM
To: indianvillage@yahoogroups.com
Subject: Re: [indianvillage] Any interest in new zoning bylaws?

Corrine,

Bravo Corrine,

I too came away from last night's meeting completely frustrated. The Chair of the Planning Board (which is a voluntary position) totally cowtails to developers to avoid any sort of lawsuit for the Town of Acton. He hides behind state law and other Town Departments. I think it is in the Planning Board's (basically the Town of Acton) best interest to get a new Chair for the Committee. Incidentally, There is a meeting tonight where we can talk directly to the Selectman and I think that might be an effective route. I will find out more about this and post.

I agree with you that the most effective way to change things long term is to become active with Zoning and trying to change that.

As a result of last night's meeting I am going to talk to Tom Tidman in Conservation and also find out about the Traffic Issue.

Fran
Mohegan Road

P.S. Dakota...ARGHHHHHHHHHH HHHHHHHHHH!

Corinne Hogseth & Mark Albano <corinnehog@verizon.net> wrote:

Hi All --

The town website says that the Planning Board "has the primary responsibility for the writing of zoning by-laws, which must be approved by Town Meeting." After last night's meeting on Barbara's Way (now to be called Dakota Drive), I left with the impression that

the Planning Board is not taking a long view of the cumulative effects of these individual projects (e.g. the chair refused to discuss traffic issues). Maybe they need to be pushed to do so.

If you're interested, attached are 3 Globe articles on the subject of efforts to restrict oversized homes in other communities. I would also like to see restrictions on tree removal. A tree here and a tree there doesn't concern me; clear-cutting entire lots does concern me.

Of course, nothing can be done in time to stop the Dakota Drive subdivision, but perhaps we can prevent further damage to Indian Village. Anyone else interested?

Corinne
Seminole Rd

First article: Describes initiative in Wellesley to curb the construction of huge houses. Mentions a couple other Metrowest communities who have had success in passing such bylaws.

http://www.boston.com/news/local/massachusetts/articles/2007/09/26/little_appetite_fo

Second article: Wellesley passes bylaw requiring "large house review"

http://www.boston.com/realestate/news/articles/2007/11/11/how_will_mcmansions_rul

Third article: SJC has upheld the right of local officials to prevent smaller homes being torn down to be replaced by much larger ones. Seems to me that if other towns can do this, there ought to be a way for Acton to enact a similar bylaw.

http://www.boston.com/realestate/news/articles/2008/01/08/top_court_backs_towns_in

--

--

Actonians Against Intrusive Regulations (AAIR)

Actonians Against Intrusive Regulations (AAIR)
A public service organization
serving the town of Acton

Kim DeNigro

From: John S. Greenland Jr. [jsgjnr@gmail.com]
Sent: Wednesday, February 27, 2008 10:15 AM
To: Planning Board
Cc: indianvillage@yahogroups.com
Subject: 24 & 26 Agawam

To Whom It May Concern:

We have recently reviewed the plans regarding the subdivision proposed for the lots currently known as 24 and 26 Agawam, and although there have been many concerns raised in the neighborhood, my overriding issue is safety.

We live at 40 Agawam (just down the street, at the intersection of Quabog and Agawam), and our mailbox has been taken out 3 times in the last 2 years. I suspect this has to do with the fact that cars drive too fast down Agawam and that when cars turn on to Agawam from Quabog the intersection can appear somewhat blind depending on how fast traffic is moving on Agawam. This is of great concern, especially since our kids are regularly up and down our driveway, and could be in the area near our mailbox the next time this happens. Adding any houses on Agawam (as is proposed in the current plans) would be irresponsible (and possibly liability inducing) until a study has been completed to assess mitigating safety and speed issues on Agawam Road.

If you need more info from me re: safety or speed issues, I can be contacted at the return email address or at our home phone: (978) 263-5883.

Thanks for you consideration,

-- John Greenland (40 Agawam Road)