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**HUDSON PLANNING BOARD  
MEETING MINUTES  
April 25, 2007**

**I. CALL TO ORDER**

Chairman Barnes called this Planning Board meeting to order at 7:03 p.m. on Wednesday, April 25, 2007, in the Hudson Community Center.

**II. PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE**

Chairman Barnes asked Selectman Maddox to lead the assembly in pledging allegiance to the Flag of the United States of America.

**III. ROLL CALL**

Chairman Barnes asked Secretary McGrath to call the roll. Those persons present, along with various applicants, representatives, and interested citizens, were as follows:

**Members**

**Present:** James Barnes, George Hall, Marilyn McGrath, Suellen Quinlan, Vincent Russo, and Richard Maddox (Selectmen's Representative).

**Members**

**Absent:** Richard Turcotte (excused).

**Alternates**

**Present:** William Cole, Brion Carroll, and Ken Massey (Selectmen's Representative Alternate).

**Alternates**

**Absent:** None. (All present.)

**Staff**

**Present:** Town Planner John Cashell.

**Recorder:** J. Bradford Seabury.

**IV. SEATING OF ALTERNATES AND ANNOUNCEMENTS**

Chairman Barnes seated Mr. Cole in place of the absent Mr. Turcotte.

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**V. MINUTES OF PREVIOUS MEETING(S)**

Chairman Barnes stated that review of the minutes scheduled for this evening would be deferred until the next meeting. He identified those as the minutes for the 02-14-07, 02-28-07, and 03-07-07 meetings, and he asked the members to be prepared for review of those at the workshop meeting of 05-02-06.

**VI. CORRESPONDENCE**

No comments were made with respect to any correspondence.

**V. OLD BUSINESS**

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| <b>A. Carpet Creations (Addition)<br/>SP# 04-07</b> | <b>Map 204/Lot 007<br/>121 Lowell Road</b> |
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**Purpose of plan: To show proposed 4,562 ft<sup>2</sup> building addition with accompanying parking and site improvements to compliment the existing 2,900 ft<sup>2</sup> Carpet Creations facility with bulk warehouse storage. Hearing. Deferred Date Specific from the 03-14-07 Planning Board Meeting.**

Chairman Barnes read aloud the published notice, as repeated above. He then noted that correspondence had been received from the applicant requesting deferral to the May 9<sup>th</sup> meeting.

Ms. McGrath moved to defer further review of the Carpet Creations Site Plan application, date specific, to the May 9, 2007 meeting, at the applicant's request. Selectman Maddox seconded the motion.

**VOTE:** Chairman Barnes called for a verbal vote on the motion. All members voted in favor, and Chairman Barnes declared the motion to have carried unanimously (7-0).

Chairman Barnes then announced that he would take up the scheduled **ZBA Input Only** item out of order.

**XII. ZBA INPUT ONLY.**

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| <b>A. Continental Paving<br/>ZI# 02-07</b> | <b>Map 100/Lot 003<br/>22R West Road</b> |
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**Wetland/Wetland buffer impact plan. Purpose of plan: To propose a 24' wide paved access drive to the upland portion of the subject parcel. Deferred Date Specific from the 03-14-07 Planning Board Meeting.**

Chairman Barnes read aloud the published notice, as repeated above. He then announced that the Planning Office also had received a request from this applicant for deferral to the May 9<sup>th</sup> meeting.

Ms. McGrath moved to defer further review of the Continental Paving ZBA Input application, date specific, to the May 9, 2007 meeting, at the applicant's request. Selectman Maddox seconded the motion.

**VOTE:** Chairman Barnes called for a verbal vote on the motion. All members voted in favor, and Chairman Barnes declared the motion to have carried unanimously (7-0).

**IX. NEW BUSINESS/PUBLIC HEARINGS**

Chairman Barnes noted that no **New Business** items were scheduled for this evening's meeting.

**X. CONCEPTUAL REVIEW ONLY.**

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| <b>A. RiverPlace<br/>(a.k.a. Green Meadows Golf Club, Inc.)</b> | <b>Map 239-001<br/>43 Steele Road</b> |
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**Pursuant to NH RSA 676:4(II)(b), the Planning Board will conduct a Design Review Phase of the subdivision roadway layout for the proposed RiverPlace Lifestyle Center, 43 Steele Road, Map 239/Lot 001. The RiverPlace Lifestyle Center is a proposed multi-use commercial development at the 375-acre Green Meadows Golf Club, Inc. property, 43 Steele Road, Map 239 Lot 001. Applicant: W/S Development, LLC, 1330 Boylston Street, Chestnut Hill, MA. Public is invited to attend.**

Chairman Barnes read aloud the published notice, as repeated above. He then gave a brief outline of how he intended to conduct tonight's meeting, stating that it would start with a presentation from the applicant outlining the proposed internal roadway layout and wetlands impact, after which the Board would hear a brief statement from the Board's engineering consultant, VHB (Vanasse Hangen Brustlin, Inc.), summarizing its analysis. He said he would then turn to members of the Planning Board for comments or questions to the applicant, saying he hoped to finish that by 9:00 p.m., at which time the Board would take a short break, after which he would accept comments or questions from the public. He noted that printed copies of some of the slides to be presented by the applicant were available to the public on the table near the doorway.

Atty. J. Bradford Westgate, of the firm of Winer and Bennett, LLP, 111 Concord Street, Nashua NH, legal representative for the applicant, W/S Development Associates, referenced Town Planner Cashell's staff report for this item, noting that he was accompanied this evening by Bob Frazier (Vice-President of W/S Development Associates); Ed Vydra (project manager for the RiverPlace project from W/S Development Associates); Jim Petropulos, PE (representing Hayner/Swanson, Inc., the project surveyor); Ron Muller, Jason Plourde, and Art Scarneo (all of Greenman-Pedersen, Inc. [GPI], the road design and traffic engineers for the project); Jim Gove and Jeff Cantara (of Gove Environmental Services, Inc., the wetlands scientist and environmental consultant); and Tim Williams, PE (of Allen & Major Associates, Inc., the project engineers), together with Atty. Jay Leonard, representing the property owners.

Atty. Westgate referenced the 03-28-07 meeting, noting that he had subsequently filed the so-called conceptual preliminary subdivision application, in accordance with the Town's subdivision regulations for preliminary subdivision applications. He noted that a number of documents had been submitted to the Community Development Department on 04-06-07, identifying two of these as the two plans that were the so-called **Conceptual/Preliminary Subdivision Plan** set, consisting of 18 pages, prepared by Hayner/Swanson, Inc., establishing the seven existing parcels and showing the proposed conversion into seven new parcels, as well as the layout for the proposed rights-of-way for the roadway design. He noted that another document submitted at that same time was the so-called **Conceptual/Preliminary Roadway and Traffic Signal Improvement Project Plans**, prepared by Greenman-Pedersen, Inc. (GPI), consisting of 26 pages. He then identified the other documents in the submittal package as being the actual preliminary application form; a letter from Jim Petropulos outlining four waiver requests; a narrative from Hayner/Swanson, Inc.; a 2-page letter from GPI giving an overview of the roadway concept; a more detailed package called the **Alternative Analysis**, prepared primarily by Gove Environmental Services, which detailed how the plans had changed; and an abutters' list—noting that notices were sent to all the listed abutters, as well as to the planning boards and boards of selectmen in adjacent towns, the appropriate officials of the City of Nashua, and the relevant regional planning commissions.

Atty. Westgate outlined what other speakers would present, stating that this was their first chance to explain both to the Board and to the public the detail level of the site work that had been done. He then asked that the Board keep in mind (1) that the roadway system for the site had been designed for the full build-out of the site, not a partial build-out, (2) that the rights-of-way as detailed on the plans also had been designed with the full build-out in mind and were side enough to handle the full build-out, and (3) that the nature and types of the wetlands that were proposed to be impacted by the proposed road design should not substantially change, even if there were changes in the road design, itself—contending that the size of the impacted wetlands might change if the road were shifted, but that it would not be a qualitative difference.

Mr. Petropulos, of Hayner/Swanson, Inc., using a PowerPoint display system, showed a high-altitude aerial photograph of the property and surrounding areas of southern Hudson and Nashua, describing the area locale and identifying the existing roads. He then displayed a lower-altitude close-up view, identifying the seven original

parcels comprising the property under review, including the two lots that made up the Green Meadows Golf Course, amounting to 275 acres; the adjoining 13.7-acre Friel property (noting that this was not part of the RiverPlace development but would be impacted by the roadway layout), the Golf & Ski Warehouse property (also part of the project area but not a part of the proposed development); Lot 240-13, the 12.5-acre Braccio property, which was being purchased to facilitate the roadway network; Lot 240-12, a 1-acre single-family home site owned by the Fourniers; and Lot 240-14, a small triangular piece of property, also owned by the owners of the Golf & Ski Warehouse.

Mr. Petropulos said the whole area, as marked by the yellow-line perimeter on the displayed slide, amounted to about 450 acres. He then displayed the existing conditions plan, commenting on details of surveys of the area, noting that most of the property was zoned G-1 but with a Business district extending into two areas and with the Fournier property being zoned as Residential. He said access to the Green Meadow property currently came by Steele Road, adding that the property was served by Town water but with individual septic systems. He noted that there was variable topology across the area, with a steep bank along the river and several high points, as well as rolling hills. He also pointed out that there were some wetland areas, including Limit Brook with a 50-foot setback marked on the plan (as well as the 250-foot Shoreland Protection setback along the river bank), together with several man-made water hazards. Displaying an aerial close-up view, he then discussed the proposed roadways, including an interchange with the Sagamore Bridge Road and a 100-foot-wide boulevard-type road extending from that interchange to River Road, along with a connection extending from Vectron Drive with a minimum width of 75 feet.

Mr. Petropulos discussed the Phase 1 development, outlining the internal roadway layout and pointing out that Steele Road was not a part of this plan and would have to be terminated. Mr. Petropulos then displayed a conceptual preliminary subdivision plan, saying it would be adjusted if changes were made to the roadway layout.

Mr. Art Scarneo (Senior Vice-President of GPI, the road design and traffic engineers for the project) stated that his firm specialized in roadway design and traffic-light design, and he described his firm's familiarity with the area, noting that the firm had had a branch office in Nashua for the past 20 years. He displayed a list of the agencies his firm worked with, noting regional impacts of some of the past projects. He reviewed the history of this current project, showing and commenting on the original plans, and explaining why the layout had been changed during the course of the past two years. He declared that the preferred bypass layout was not designed to maximize the development but to create a safe and efficient flow along the corridor.

Mr. Ron Muller, also of GPI, displayed an aerial view of the property, saying the basic idea was to take traffic off Route 3-A, by taking much of the traffic coming up River Road to the Sagamore Bridge off Route 3-A. He showed and reviewed sketches of earlier past roadway designs for the interconnection design and the connector road, stating that the design was still evolving, with ongoing discussions with the State Department of Transportation (NHDOT) and the Planning Board's engineering consultant. Stating that the NHDOT had said an access off the Sagamore Bridge Road was feasible so long as the developer could show a benefit, he noted that one of the

first designs contemplated an ON ramp and an OFF ramp in an area that was roughly level with Sagamore Bridge Road and did not impact any wetlands, but this road had not met the NHDOT's requirements and ASHTO's standards, as the ON ramp would have an 8% to 10% slope in order to cross over the Sagamore Bridge Road. He said changing the road to address those standards pushed the access road further to the east, which impacted half an acre of the wetlands, but still did not provide proper ramp operation, based on full build-out traffic volume. He showed a different design, involving ramps that would go under Sagamore Bridge Road but impacted 1.55 acres of wetlands. He then showed the latest design, as most recently submitted to the NHDOT, which provided separate left and right On-ramps and a two-lane Off ramp to meet NHDOT weaving requirements and provide appropriate acceleration/deceleration lengths—noting that this called for a 3.35-acre wetland impact, and saying this most likely would be the maximum amount of wetland impact, even if the design changed again.

Mr. Muller then showed a series of plans showing the evolution of the connector road design, discussing the technical reasons for the various changes. He noted that a connection to the Sam's Club site had been abandoned because of the interchange-road design and the need to improve the connection with Route 3-A (River Road), with the original River Road path converted into a cul-de-sac. He discussed the location of turning lanes and traffic lights, commenting on the road widths, and noting that future turning lanes could be added as subsequent development occurred in Phases 2 and/or 3. He then concluded by stating that the design of the road network and interchange had been intended to minimize the impact on the wetlands while providing the functionality needed: a bypass to the Route 3-a corridor and access to the site.

Mr. Jeff Cantara (of Gove Environmental Services, Inc., the wetlands scientist and environmental consultant) displayed photographs of one of the developers' existing life-centers. Saying he wanted to say what the plan did for natural resources, he then displayed an aerial photograph, identifying several wetland systems on the site, and he discussed the wetland process, stating that application to the New Hampshire Department of Environmental Services (NHDES) had been accomplished in January of 2007, including information for local review (available at the Hudson Town Hall) and also on the W/S Development Associates Website. He noted that NHDES had a 105-day review period for this size project, to allow local input, but the developers had granted NHDES an extension, so the NHDES decision was not expected until some time in the fall of this year, at which time the U.S. Army Corps of engineers would get involved in the process. Mr. Cantara said there were approximately 42 acres of wetland on the site, with the present proposal impacting 6.75 acres (associated primarily with the public road), leaving 35.2 acres of wetlands untouched for a conservation easement. He clarified that 82% of the proposed impact pertained to the public connector road, with the remaining 18% being associated with lot development, including parking lots—adding that a full third of the impact pertained to wetlands that had been created on the site as water hazards for the golf course, which he characterized as “lower-functioning wetlands.” He clarified that the man-made nature of these wetlands had been established by review of historical fly-over photographs taken in 1952 and subsequently.

Mr. Cantara said there would be another 1.52 acres of wetland impact for Phase 2, stating that NHDES treated the accumulative input of the whole build-out. He then discussed the distinction between roadway impact and development impact, after which he displayed a series of slides listing other developments that had been approved by the federal and state government agencies in the past in other communities, noting that some projects of much smaller size had been approved with much larger wetland impacts than were being proposed in this case. He then talked about wetland functions and values, commenting on the benefits of the existing wetlands, and he displayed a sketch of 12 wetland "complexes" on the site, discussing what he referenced as "wetland functional value assessment" (Section 14 of the application). He listed the ranking of those wetlands, noting that 70 acres of wetlands were being proposed for conservation easements, along with a 50-foot buffer along the river that would be completely undisturbed except for a walking trail along the river. He then displayed a close-up aerial view of the northeast corner of the area, saying he felt that a nice scrub wetland could be created in this area as a mitigation component, complementing the stream—adding that they were looking into providing offsite mitigation and would welcome any inputs with respect to such possibilities.

Mr. Cantara stated that the wetland areas being discussed were mostly overgrown agricultural areas and scrub areas, which provided wildlife habitat, adding that many of these occurred right in the middle of the existing golf course, as part of what was and had been a highly-manipulated system for the entire history of the golf course, which was mowed every week. He said 19.34 acres of the wetland impact were in a scrub forest, adding that all of the impacts were detailed in the NHDES application and that interested persons would be welcome to participate in upcoming sitewalks.

Chairman Barnes noted that Vanasse Hangen Brustlin, Inc. (VHB), the Planning Board's engineering consultant, had provided a report, which had been distributed to Planning Board members by Town Planner Cashell. Mr. Marty Kennedy, of VHB, said he would ask his associate, Mr. Jake Ginnis, to summarize that report, adding that he would recommend that the Planning Board schedule a workshop meeting at which he and Mr. Ginnis could review tonight's presentations by the developers and answer any questions. Mr. Ginnis referenced the report, stating that it appeared to be the case that the wetland impacts had been minimized with respect to the Sagamore Bridge Road intersection but that this might change if the roadway shifted further to the east; that VHB felt alternatives of the western alignment of the connector road could reduce impacts of that roadway; and that a similar reduction in impact could be realized with respect to Vectron Drive if that roadway were shifted 300 feet or so to the north—adding that VHB wanted to review the materials provided this evening and come back at a workshop meeting to discuss these with the Planning Board.

Chairman Barnes asked for comments from members of the Board.

Mr. Hall stated that it would be helpful if the existing topography could be added to the roadway and traffic design plans, saying it was difficult to go back and forth between two sets of plans. He then referenced HTC §289-18 D, noting that this regulation required all sideslopes to be constructed outside of the right-of-way, which meant that the developers would need to request a waiver, based on the plans presented—adding that the same was true with respect to HTC §289-28 G, which

required a sidewalk on all new Town roads. He suggested that it also would be pertinent to discuss bicycle paths on some of these roads being proposed. He noted that a number of stormwater detention basins were called for in the design, with quite a few of them handling the stormwater from the roadway network—adding that he assumed the developers would expect the Town to maintain those basins, but no easements were shown on the plans for those basins outside of the right-of-way, and there did not seem to be any way to physically access those basins in order to maintain them, which could also impact wetlands and/or wetland buffers.

Referring to the “Preferred Alignment” diagram, which he asked to be displayed on the projection screen, Mr. Hall expressed concern that access was only being provided to and from the west, implying that anyone living east of the Merimack River would have to go to Nashua in order to utilize the interchange. He said the interchange would be extremely expensive to build, meaning that there would be less money for other offsite improvements, and would be expensive to maintain—suggesting that Hudson DPW trucks would have to make several trips to Nashua just to plow the roads or do other maintenance. Noting that the middle ramp had been added since the last discussion of the roadway design, he said it appeared that this ramp would eliminate any possibility of constructing a bridge over Lowell Road—adding that the NHDOT now had no intention of doing that, but the Town of Hudson had an interest in constructing what was to have been the southern section of the Circumferential Highway. He said that the Town would like to extend the Sagamore Bridge Road up to Route 111, but the best way to get it done quicker would be to build it cheaper, without a bridge but with signal lights. He then asked what alternatives existed other than the proposed interchange, questioning why so much money should be spent to build this interchange just so that vehicles could get to the signal light a little faster. He then suggested that one better alternative would be to get the Sagamore Bridge Road reclassified, so that the speed limit would be lowered, with a simple signal intersection, providing access to both the east and the west—adding that he would like to see comments from VHB as to any other alternatives. He said that everyone needed to explore and be comfortable with what was being proposed before accepting the given ramp design.

Mr. Hall then expressed concern about the wetlands near the Vectron Drive connection, adding that he felt the roadway was under-designed and should have four lanes, especially if subsequent development of the property was going to add numerous driveways along that roadway. He then expressed concern about the River Road access, pointing out that two-thirds of the traffic on Lowell Road came up from and went down Dracut Road, and he expressed a belief that all of that traffic pertaining to the proposed development would be using the back roads to connect from Dracut Road to River Road—including people from the northeast, who would travel down Musquash Road and then come down either Pine Road or Philbrook Street or Winslow Road, or even Lakeview Avenue down in Tyngsborough, in order to get to the River Road intersection with the proposed bypass road, so that all the traffic would be traveling on neighborhood roads. He expressed a belief that the River Road intersection should be redesigned to keep the traffic moving on the main roads.

Mr. Carroll said all of the roadways had relevance only with respect to what the applicant felt the traffic flow would be. He said the applicants believed they knew how much traffic would be traveling these roads, but the path of least resistance was what



most people used, and he did not know that the roadways had been laid out to take into account the real traffic flow. He said he did not understand the proposed flow, which he said did not take into account the reality of the flow on those roads, adding that traffic from Dracut Road to the bridge did not have a bypass. He concluded by stating that there must be a way to set it up so that Hudson would not die if the road designers turned out to be wrong. This produced extended applause from the audience, and Chairman Barnes asked that such response be kept under control.

Selectman Maddox said there was no way to get from Route 111 to this property, stating that offsite improvements would be needed to deal with the effects of this site. He expressed a belief that the applicants would be building an attractive nuisance, saying the Planning Board would need to look at all the impacts from the additional sites that would come in because of this development.

Selectman Massey asked who would be responsible for the ramp roads, and he questioned whether the bypass road would be Route 3-B or a Town road, and whether the State would be responsible for the off-ramps. He then expressed a belief that the proposed cul-de-sac made from the original River Road connection was a "nonstarter," saying he did not want the Town to have to maintain that cul-de-sac. He suggested that this was not a bypass road so much as a road to access a commercial development, saying he would expect to see some kind of mitigation for the increase of traffic on the neighborhood roads and that he wanted to see how traffic to and from the east would be handled. He then concluded by saying he wanted to hear how the developers would cope with the wetlands and how snow removal would be handled, especially in the wetland areas.

Ms. Quinlan said she would like to have the VHB engineers comment at the next meeting about the statements that certain aspects of the access road were still being reviewed by NHDOT, saying she would like to know what sort of changes the Planning Board could expect, as she did not see how the Planning Board could grant any approval if this were not the road that would exist. She then concluded by saying she would like some assurance as to what the road that the Town would get actually would be, saying that until they this was all just talking.

Ms. McGrath asked if widening of the Sagamore Bridge roadway were being anticipated, saying she traveled that way twice a day, going to and from work, and it became stacked up pretty solid at night. She then asked if VHB were getting materials in parallel with receipt of those things by the Planning Board and Town staff, saying this should happen if it were not happening. Referring to earlier statements by others that there was little traffic on River Road, she stated that, as a resident of River Road, she felt there was ample traffic for the south end of town and she felt there would be a lot more following this development.

Mr. Carroll noted that he did a lot of traveling, saying a lifestyle center really worked well in the southwestern parts of the country, but he questioned whether it would work as well in the northeast, during the winter, and he expressed concern about this lifestyle center becoming a "ghost town" after the businesses went out of business. He asked if there were models or if New England's inclement weather had been considered.

No other member coming forward, Chairman Barnes stated that he also felt traffic coming to this site from the east would have a problem getting to the development, saying all of this traffic would be forced onto Lowell Road.

Chairman Barnes declared a break at 8:58 p.m., calling the meeting back to order at 9:10 p.m.

Chairman Barnes opened the meeting to the public, asking for the focus of any questions or comments to be on the roadway layout, as presented this evening—adding that each speaker would be limited to about three minutes, and noting that some questions might not get answers until the next meeting.

Ms. Quinlan asked if the public could give specific concerns, rather than general complaints—noting that the Planning Board members needed specific complaints in order to advise the applicant to change things.

Atty. J. Bradford Westgate noted that Chairman Barnes had said direct access to the site was to be the focus of this meeting; he then stated that the applicant was mindful of all comments and concerns, however, including other intersections about the town that would be impacted by traffic to and from this site.

Mr. Jeff Dawan, Planning Director for the Town of Pelham, New Hampshire, encouraged the Planning Board to declare this development to be a project of regional impact, expressing concern about the impact to Pelham from traffic going to and from the site via Sherbourne Road.

Ms. Jena Hunt, 5 Bruce Street, said she found it difficult to turn right into Bruce Street under existing conditions because of traffic behind her, saying she was concerned about possibly worse conditions after this development became built.

Mr. Paul Martinage, 10 Forest Road, said he was a resident of the north end of town but felt that traffic from this site would also impact his area. He questioned where water runoff from the paved areas of this development would go, as well as the road salt that would be used here during the winter.

Mr. Ross Hergenbahn, 18½ Burns Hill Road, said he had not found tonight's presentation very exciting. He expressed a belief that it was the duty of the Planning Board to address the issues of environmental impact and other issues of the project, adding that it was much easier to be negative and pessimistic than to view this project as an opportunity of a lifetime for the Town of Hudson. He said there were thousands of people counting on the Planning Board to make it happen and to protect the Town, while being prudent. He said the Town of Hudson would change, inevitably, but how it changed was in the Planning Board's hands, and there was no doubt in his mind that the RiverPlace project could be overwhelmingly positive.

Mr. David Briand, 110 Belknap Road, said he had two concerns about this project. Noting that the main road was planned to be about 100 feet wide with four lanes on both sides, he pointed out that Lowell Road was only two lanes on both sides, and he asked where all this additional traffic would come from. He then questioned which roads the engineers had done their surveys on, asking if any of the back roads or "cut-

across” roads had been considered—declaring that the road he lived on was already a highway and he did not want it to become an interstate because of this project.

Mr. Matt Harper, 5 Butternut Street, said no count had been given as to how many of the wetlands were man-made. Stating that he drove on Lowell Road every day, he said it was backed up every night and that he felt that Vectron Drive would not handle the flow. He then closed by expressing a belief that this would make Lowell road comparable to Daniel Webster South, saying he would like to know what was going to be done to keep that from happening.

Mr. Carl Provencher, Watersedge Drive, asked what the impact would be with respect to the people traveling from north to south on Lowell road to get to the Sagamore River Road, noting that it was bumper to bumper at this time,

Mr. Ed Thompson, 22 Burns Hill Road, said he would like to know why the Planning Board was not addressing some of the other developments that were already on the agenda, including Nottingham Square, Hudson Village, the Lowes store, the prospective lifestyle center now planned to be built behind the Old Navy store in Nashua, and others—asking how a traffic study could be done without taking these into consideration, or the planned hotel and other developments for Phase 2 of this project.

Me. Mike L’Italian, 6 Birdie Lane, said he thought the preceding members of the public had done a terrific job of describing the traffic as it existed today, but he wanted to talk about other projects in which W/S Development Associates had been involved in and the traffic issues with those facilities. He then quoted from an article concerning The Shop At Blackstone, saying the selectmen had reported that traffic was their only real complaint. He then quoted from a Massachusetts transportation plan, saying there was a question about residual traffic on the edges for the Millbury site, with the cut-through traffic having increased to the point that residents could not safely exit from their own driveways. He then commented about the Park Square development in Reading, MA, saying the Planning Board had worked with M/S Development for more than two years but then had rejected the plan because of inability to reach an agreement about the traffic study. He then concluded by stating that he was not sure that W/S Development Associates had the right traffic folks to do this job. Members of the audience broke into applause.

Mr. John Stevens, 43 Adams Drive, said he would be interested in knowing what traffic models were employed, what the basic rationales for using those models were, and what the future projection was, as well as what was the basis of the model for those projections—adding that it looked to him as if there might have been some miscalculations. He said he had not heard Mr. Cantara say anything about an archeological survey.

Mr. Campbell Gibson, 31 Fairway Drive, noted that the four-lane boulevard that was the bypass road was going to be dumping into River Road, which was a two-lane road, and he asked if there were any plans to make River Road wider, saying there otherwise would be backed-up traffic all over the place—adding that the traffic was already horrendous when attempting to get out of Chalifoux Road when the BAE plant was getting out, and this plan was adding another traffic light, just up the road.

Mr. Rick Lavourdais, 23 Fairway Drive, displayed an article about the Blackstone Valley store, saying it was focused on the traffic problems brought to the local roads, as previously mentioned by Mr. L'Italian, and he read a paragraph from that article, stating that the focus was on consumers going to the mall, with no regard for the local homeowners. He questioned what the vision was for the traffic studies, asking what the picture was for traffic coming from and to the east, north, and south, which he felt was being ignored, and he asked what the burden would be on the intersections. He expressed doubt that there was an answer, saying he could not picture the Planning Board wasting another year or two of the residents' lives on this issue, declaring that it did not make sense—noting that the proposal was for 2,000,000 ft<sup>2</sup>, when the Blackstone Valley shop only had 800,000 ft<sup>2</sup>.

Ms. Kathryn May, 335 Fox Hollow Drive, said her experience in driving to the Sagamore Bridge over the past year had become increasingly frustrating, noting that the two lanes were being backed up so that the left-hand lane could get into the right lane to access the ramp to the bridge. She declared that this project was like trying to land a whale in a rowboat, and this project was too big for the small area of Hudson. Members of the audience broke into applause.

Ms. Nancy Molnar, 4 East Hill Drive, asked if the development company had ridden or would ride on Lowell Road at commuting time to get a feel as to what the town's residents were going through now, and thus for the fears for the future. She said she was also concerned about the safety for the schools in the area, saying she did not see any provisions or any type of communications with regard to the schoolchildren.

No one else coming forward from the public, Chairman Barnes said he would give the applicant an opportunity to respond to these questions, but he noted that some residents might have been reluctant to speak out in a public forum such as this and he urged any who had felt that way but still had questions to submit them at any time to Town Planner Cashell, who would pass them on.

Atty. Westgate said he thought the best approach would be for the development team to internally analyze all the comments and questions and come back at the next meeting, which he hoped would be in another four weeks, at which time they could respond in detail.

Chairman Barnes noted that staff had raised a question about the NHDOT evaluation of the ramps, and he asked if Atty. Westgate had any idea when NHDOT's decision would be made. Atty. Westgate said GPI could communicate with NHDOT and provide an answer in four weeks. He noted that both the Planning Board and the public at tonight's meeting believed that traffic generation and offsite impacts were major issues, saying the applicants had data and he felt it would make sense for the team to explain how that data was being interpreted at the next meeting.

Selectman Maddox noted that the Planning Board was charged with a difficult task, in that it must respect the rights of the landowners while addressing the concerns of the abutters, stating that the Board needed to listen to the entire process and to ask the difficult questions. He said the traffic consultant needed to be looking at the halo-effect impacts of other projects that would be developed around this project. He noted that a multitude of buildings were planned for this project, with one of them being a 300,000

ft<sup>2</sup> building (noting that this would be the equivalent of six Stop & Shop stores in one building).

Mr. Carroll said he wanted an answer to the question of how the developers were going to mitigate the traffic impacts, or to mitigate the risk of what the developers were going to put in for roads—adding that this would mean showing the full cost of the project if the Town had to pick up the tab.

Ms. Quinlan noted that VHB would be looking at other roads as well as the ones proposed for this project. She recalled that Mr. Kennedy had said these roads, such as Sherbourne and Wason, probably would never reach capacity, because the traffic would be moving along. Stating that she also lived in the southern part of town and drove daily on these roads, she asked for information as to at what point these roads would be regarded as being in failure—such as how many light changes in delay, so that the Planning Board could make decisions as to what was acceptable and what was not, in order to make intelligent decisions about requirements for offsite impacts.

Chairman Barnes commented that he thought for the next meeting the talk would be about traffic and expanding the discussion to other areas in the vicinity.

Selectman Maddox noted that the VHB consultant had wanted to meet with the Board in a workshop-type meeting, and he asked if this needed to occur before the Board met with the applicants again. Mr. Kennedy confirmed that this was his suggestion. Town Planner Cashell said the agendas for both the May 2<sup>nd</sup> workshop and the May 9<sup>th</sup> meeting were pretty full, suggesting that VHB should come in for the May 23<sup>rd</sup> meeting, unless the Board wanted to defer some of the planned workshop items so that VHB could come in on the following week. Mr. Kennedy expressed a belief that he would need two or three weeks to prepare, saying these were big issues.

Ms. McGrath asked if VHB were receiving the materials at the same time that the Board was, as she had asked earlier. Mr. Kennedy said he thought they were, in general, except that they had received the latest information only a week before this meeting. Ms. McGrath said VHB would need more time, in the future. Mr. Kennedy expressed agreement.

Chairman Barnes suggested that the Board should meet with VHB at the June 9<sup>th</sup> workshop meeting. Atty. Westgate said he was not totally clear as to what the scope of the items to be discussed at that meeting was. Chairman Barnes said the June 9<sup>th</sup> meeting would be mostly for VHB, to discuss roadway impacts, etc. Atty. Westgate said the applicants wanted to be present, and he suggested that one of the fundamental goals of the preliminary subdivision process was to get a sense of what would be the appropriate roadway design for the project, but the Planning Board and many members of the public believed that an understanding of the traffic generation was implicit in that design. If the workshop meeting expanded into discussion of how offsite improvements should be handled, he said, that was a different question from first understanding the traffic data that drove the design of the project's road layout. He expressed a belief that the Board should first come to an understanding of how GPI analyzed the existing data and correlated it to the proposed design. He said he would be happy to do that four weeks from now, saying he did not think that was in conflict with what the Board was going to discuss and might be an aid in the Board's understanding of the dynamics.

Selectman Massey said the road layout was predicated on premises that GPI had made relative to traffic counts, and it was his understanding that those traffic counts assumed that something in the vicinity of 75% to 80% of all the traffic would be coming from the Nashua side of the river. He said there appeared to be a difference of opinion about this, and in his mind the design of the entire layout was impacted by whether the majority of the traffic was coming from Nashua and Route 3 or whether a significant portion of it was coming from the northeast and south ends of Lowell Road. In order for the Board to get a handle on whether this was the right road design for this project, he argued, the Board needed to understand whether the traffic counts specified by GPI were more appropriate than the ones that VHB thought were appropriate.

Atty. Westgate expressed agreement, but stated that to get to that question it would make sense to have GPI explain what its data was, what its methodology was, and what it had generated for information, so that the Board would know what the data was and how they correlated it to the design. He said the data existed, the traffic counts existed, and the so-called gravity models existed, and he felt the Planning Board would have a better sense of why the road design was as it was if the Board members were informed about these things, and the Board could better critique the design if the members had that information.

Mr. Carroll said it was great if GPI had traffic flow information to determine traffic flow and where people would come from, and gravity flow was taken into account in its model. If the determination of how vehicles got to the three intersection points discussed tonight had been calculated by a blind division of traffic flow outside the site, however, he continued, the numbers would be wrong, because people would go in other ways if they were being held up by traffic delays, and the traffic model would be wrong. He said the traffic consultants would have to look at the real numbers associated with what the real flow of traffic was going to be after the drivers involved found how long it was going to take to get to and from the site.

Selectman Maddox reiterated that the halo effect needed to be examined, saying that VHB and W/S Development Associates both needed to be looking at what had happened elsewhere, such as at the Pheasant Lane mall. He stated that information on the Internet suggested that there would be an additional 1,500,000 ft<sup>2</sup> built around every 1,000,000 ft<sup>2</sup> developed for the site, so the traffic considerations needed to take a look at what the other developments were going to create as far as traffic was concerned, and the traffic consultants needed to consider this.

Town Planner Cashell said he had spent the previous week at the American Planning Conference in Philadelphia, which had been attended by 6,000 planners. He said he had talked with many of them, finding that all of the people he had talked to were experiencing a tremendous amount of growth, with every community working on plans expanding the capacity of the infrastructure of the community. Noting that he had been in the planning field for 22 years, he stated that the litmus test of every large project was to make sure that all of the roadways were adequately dealt with to the extent possible, and the litmus test that W/S Development Associates had to live by was that every critical roadway intersection would have to be mitigated so that it would at least equal the no-build scenario of the level of service that existed today. He noted that there were many other issues involved with this site, such as the proposed housing

that was not allowed in this zoning district, and he predicted that the applicant and the public would have to endure a lot more meetings.

Atty. Westgate noted that the focus for this evening had been a design review of a set of plans for the roads, stating that the applicant wanted to continue that process—and noting that the Planning Board had a period of sixty days in which to give a thumbs up or thumbs down decision for a design review. He said the applicants had started the design review process and he thought that needed to continue—noting that members of the Board and of the public had said tonight that there were offsite impacts that must pertain to how the road system had been designed. He agreed that this was true, saying the applicants had analyzed significant data and incorporated the results in the design, and they wanted to show that to the Board, but this would further the design-review process that had been started this evening. He said he did not think that having a work session with VHB would preclude that, but he was suggesting that the review should continue under the timeline in the Town's regulations for reviewing a preliminary application. He then expressed concern about the need to address those questions while everything was fresh in everyone's mind, saying the best way to do that would be for the applicants to come back in four weeks' time and that this would ultimately lead to going before the Zoning Board of Adjustment for a Wetland Special Exception, and he expressed a fear that going too far afield on more theoretical types of issues might mean that they could not pull themselves back in time to a "nuts and bolts" review, so he felt they should come back at the same time as the VHB review.

Selectman Maddox demurred, saying he wanted the Planning Board to talk with its consultant prior to the applicants' coming back. He then moved that the Planning Board schedule its consultant (VHB) for the Board's May 23<sup>rd</sup> meeting and then have W/S Development Associates come in on June 6<sup>th</sup>. Ms. Quinlan seconded the motion.

Mr. Carroll questioned if VHB had all the material and information it needed. Mr. Kennedy said he was all set.

Mr. Cole asked if VHB would be ready to go from soup to nuts by May 23<sup>rd</sup>, noting that DES used the term "accumulative impact" and that he felt the Planning Board should be in that same mode, rather than just looking at on-site issues. Mr. Kennedy said VHB would not have an evaluation of secondary impacts by that time, saying that would be an involved study. Chairman Barnes asked if that were what Selectman Maddox was looking for. Selectman Maddox said he wanted some indication of whether the numbers he had quoted (1.5 million ft<sup>2</sup> of halo development for every 1 million ft<sup>2</sup> of project) were correct. Mr. Kennedy said he could have a discussion about what VHB had at this time, but the Planning Board might want more later—adding that there was a big difference between that and a more detailed secondary-impact study, which the Board might or might not want. Selectman Maddox responded that he felt the Board would need to receive some documentation prior to the meeting, so that the members could be prepared to ask questions.

Mr. Hall asked if Mr. Kennedy would be in a position to give an opinion on each of the three interconnection points at the May 23<sup>rd</sup> meeting, saying he felt Mr. Kennedy would need all of the GPI documentation that had been referenced by Atty. Westgate in order to do so. Mr. Kennedy answered in the affirmative, saying VHB would be

prepared from a general perspective—but expressing doubt that the Board would want VHB to go through all the numbers pertaining to thirty intersections, saying he would suggest that the applicant's traffic consultant needed to do that. He said VHB could tell the Board what it thought was going to happen, so that the Board could figure out what it would need at the major intersections. Mr. Hall said he was just talking about the three intersections of the internal system at this time—the adequacy of Vectron Drive, whether the River Road intersection was the right thing to do, and the loop system connecting to the Sagamore Bridge Road. He then noted, with respect to the last, that both VHB and the applicant had heard the comments from the Board about that latter connection and the inability of traffic from the east to use that interconnection. Noting that Atty. Westgate had alluded to needing an answer within 60 days, Mr. Hall said that answer would have to come from VHB in order for the Board to make some sort of decision, so the Board would need some hard information. Mr. Kennedy concurred.

Mr. Carroll referenced the halo effect, saying he felt the applicant was not responsible for the extra traffic, but the Planning Board had to take it into consideration.

Mr. Russo said he thought it would be prudent to listen to the developers' explanation as to why they had made choices, before discussing alternatives. He said he felt the Planning Board should be talking to W/S Development Associates first. Town Planner Cashell said there would be plenty of time to look at all of the other intersections, but the Board should stick to the game plan. He suggested that both VHB and the applicant needed to brainstorm to figure out how to better manage the Dracut Road traffic flow and bring it into the site—and also what to do with the southbound traffic accessing the site from Lowell Road, adding that he thought a better answer was needed than Vectron Drive.

Chairman Barnes noted that the motion on the floor was to hear from VHB on May 23<sup>rd</sup>, in a workshop environment, and then meet with the applicants on June 6<sup>th</sup> to discuss the traffic model and the answers to questions raised at this meeting.

Town Planner Cashell said he agreed with Mr. Russo; he then asked Mr. Kennedy if he felt it made more sense to listen first to W/S Development Associates' discussion about the traffic models, with Mr. Kennedy in attendance to hear what they had to say, and then to have VHB come in at a later meeting. Mr. Kennedy expressed agreement with that approach, saying it was typical to let the applicant present all of the facts first—adding that VHB could come in to talk with the Board at any time.

Mr. Carroll expressed confusion, noting that he had asked before if VHB needed more information. If GPI had documentation that VHB had never seen, he said, he would prefer to hear what VHB had to say about GPI's information and then hear VHB's information. Mr. Kennedy said the applicant had prepared all the information, and VHB had that information, but W/S Development Associates had not yet presented it to the Board and there was no reason not to let W/S Development Associates come in first, as would be done with any other project.

Ms. Quinlan moved the question, and Chairman Barnes called for a hand vote on the motion.



**VOTE:** Selectman Maddox and Mr. Cole voted in favor; all other members seated voted in opposition. Chairman Barnes then declared the motion to have failed (2–5).

Mr. Hall moved to reverse the order of those meetings, with the Board to meet again with the applicants in this same format and then meet on June 6<sup>th</sup> with VHB. Ms. Quinlan seconded the motion.

Selectman Maddox said he thought Mr. Kennedy had wanted a workshop meeting but now Mr. Kennedy was saying to wait until after the Board had heard from W/S Development Associates again. Mr. Kennedy said the Board had hired VHB to be the Board's consultant, meaning that the Board could bring VHB in at any time, saying he could come in at any time in a workshop-type format. He suggested that the Board should let the applicant speak first, adding that he felt the Board should not limit the discussion to one meeting.

Selectman Maddox asked why Mr. Kennedy had not been prepared to discuss it this evening. Mr. Kennedy said his firm had been asked to come in and address the wetlands impact, but there were much bigger issues, as had been brought up by the Board members this evening, and this was what he wanted to come talk to the Board about.

Mr. Cole questioned what the Board would do with the data. He said he had thought the intent was for Mr. Kennedy to come in and say what he thought about what the applicants had presented tonight. He said he was not interested in having the applicants come in on May 23<sup>rd</sup> and drop an whole bunch of data on his desk that he would not understand, but that he was interested in hearing what Mr. Kennedy thought about what the applicants had said tonight. He said the only questions he wanted to hear the applicant answer on May 23<sup>rd</sup> were the questions that had been asked by the audience. He noted that one of the things he had heard was that this project was too big, and he wanted to hear if that were a fair question, as well as the question of why a four-lane highway was needed to dump cars on a two-lane road. He said he was not interested in a data dump, but he was interested in hearing what the Board's consultant thought about what he had heard tonight.

Mr. Hall said he also wanted to hear answers to the questions he had asked, along with the questions that the public had asked. He said he did not expect the applicants to come in with a bunch of numbers that would put everyone to sleep, which would not accomplish anything, but he would hope that they would respond to some of the questions the Board had raised, in a rational manner—adding that this would give Mr. Kennedy a chance to rebut that input two weeks later, and to give his feedback.

**VOTE:** Chairman Barnes then called for a hand vote on the motion. All members present voted in favor except for Mr. Cole, who voted in opposition, and Chairman Barnes declared the motion to have carried (6–1).

Chairman Barnes said both of these meetings (May 23<sup>rd</sup> and June 6<sup>th</sup>) would be held in this same fashion and location, at the Hudson Community Center.

Mr. Russo asked if there would be public input at these meetings. Chairman Barnes answered in the affirmative.

**XIII. ADJOURNMENT**

All scheduled items having been addressed, Ms. McGrath moved to adjourn; Selectman Maddox seconded the motion.

**VOTE:** Chairman Barnes called for a verbal vote on the motion. All members voted in favor.

Chairman Barnes then declared the meeting to be adjourned at 10:33 p.m.

Date: July 2, 2007

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James Barnes, Chairman

J. Bradford Seabury, Recorder

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Marilyn McGrath, Secretary

**-- FILE COPY --**

**The following changes were made in accordance with the Planning Board's review at its 08-22-07 meeting:**

Page 6, 1<sup>st</sup> line — Changed text string “ram” to “ramp,” so that the phrase now reads “an ON ramp and an OFF ramp.”

Page 6, 3<sup>rd</sup> line — Corrected spelling of “requirements.”

Page 6, 1<sup>st</sup> paragraph, 8<sup>th</sup> line — Changed mistyped comma in measurement to a period, so that the phrase now reads “1.55 acres.”

Page 6, 3<sup>rd</sup> paragraph, 5<sup>th</sup> line — Corrected misspelling of “New Hampshire.”

Page 8, 2<sup>nd</sup> paragraph, 3<sup>rd</sup> line — Corrected misspelling of “Merrimack.”

Page 8, 2<sup>nd</sup> paragraph, 5<sup>th</sup> line — Changed mistyped word “go” to “to,” so that the phrase now reads “would be extremely expensive *to* build.”

Page 8, 2<sup>nd</sup> paragraph, 14<sup>th</sup> line — Changed mistyped word “down” to “done,” so that the phrase now reads “best way to get it *done* quicker.”

Page 11, 4<sup>th</sup> paragraph, 1<sup>st</sup> line — Changed mistyped “Hlll” to “Hill,” so that Mr. Thompson's address is shown as “22 Burns Hill Road.”

Page 11, 5<sup>th</sup> paragraph — Changed mistyped “Me.” at start of sentence to “Mr.”