

Town of Hill  
Hill Planning Board  
Minutes  
20 July 2017

In attendance: Bob Helmers, Mike Brady and Marshal Bennett  
Hill Baptist Church: Dan and Sandy Boyce, Keith Hemmingway (?planner for project)  
Abutters: Steve LaRouche, Joe Mahoney  
Public: Dawn Reynolds, Anson Libby, Berla? Libby, Ken McGoon, Judy Brady, Lisa Seymour,  
Tom Seymour, Bob Dupuis, Michele Munson

Meeting opened at 7:00 pm.

The purpose of the meeting was to provide an opportunity for the Hill Bible Church to present a proposal for subdivision and purchase of town owned land and expansion of the church and to get some sense of public reaction before the Hill Bible Church proceeds with expensive land survey.

The meeting was lightly attended and about half of the public were church members. Following introductory remarks by the Hill planning board chair, Mr. Boyce presented the plans to the public.

The proposal:

The Hill Village Bible Church currently owns two lots which are separated by about an acre of town owned land which is part of a larger town lot which includes the park, school and town house. They would like the town to subdivide the town owned lot, splitting off the approximately 1 acre portion which separates the church's two lots. They would then purchase the smaller subdivided lot and merge with the two church lots to create one larger lot. This would enable the church to build an addition to their current structure, mostly to add space for Sunday school and church functions. Additionally, a parking lot would be built north of the church where a driveway to the back lot is located and which is also used as access to the Jennie D. Blake School parking lot, a portion of which overlays church property.

Brief summary of response and discussion:

Discussion began with concerns about drainage in the "proposed" parking lot and along Crescent Street. Abutter asking if impact statement had been or would need to be done. Abutters noting that poor drainage already occurs after heavy rains. Mr. Hemmingway noting that plans would be designed to meet state street standards and have adequate drainage and catchbasins. Concerns were raised about the impact on the school parking lot, about half of which currently sits on church property. Church representative assured parking areas would be available for public use. Some discussion ensued regarding the need for expansion of the church, current (140) and proposed (200) seating in the church, building dimensions, location of building extensions and anticipated uses. Currently no plans for Christian day school but Mr. Boyce could be option in future. Mr. Mahoney questioned the need for the parking lot north of the church, but Mr. Hemmingway noted that it would get parking off the street, which is a concern, especially in the winter when high snowbanks force pedestrians into the roadway. There was some discussion as to the lease the church currently has for the septic system located on town land in the portion that the church would like to purchase. Mr. Brady believed that the lease would be void with transfer of property. There were concerns that a bidding war could occur when the the town puts the land up for sale and that the church would be out-bidder or refuse the asking price. There were also concerns about

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the fate of the right of way that currently exists on the town owned property that accesses the school parking lot and the abutting property to the north (church owned). Mr. Boyce noted an alternative to the proposed subdivision and purchase of town property is to place a structure and parking lot on the church owned property to the north, but that this was less desirable because of the distance and the need for a second building. Mr. Mahoney brought up concerns about visual aesthetics of the parking lot and the removal of a copse of trees, noting that he liked the village setting and did not want to be affronted by a parking lot. Mr. Boyce noted that there could be optional locations for parking, following which an exchange between public regarding aesthetics of the village setting and location of the proposed parking lot. There were concerns regarding the septic lease, the right of way and the process of sales opened up for public auction and Mr. Mahoney asked if town counsel had been consulted. Mr. Helmers suggested that was premature as the purpose of this meeting was to inform the public and for the church to get a sense of public reaction. Should the Hill Bible Church choose to proceed, the aforementioned legal matters would need to be resolved.

Meeting adjourned at 7:43 p.m.

Robert Helmers  
Planning Board Chair  
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