

MINUTES OF Laing & Linden MEETING – 5th November 2002

In attendance : Colm Lennon (chair), Jim Dennis, Jeremy Smith, Ivan Ball, Steve Lavers, Andreas Markides, Cllr Jayne Marks, Cllr Pauline Searle, Nigel Horton, Ian Godfrey, Peter Gunner & Maureen Bell

Agenda : Tylehost. Commercial Section, Johnston Walk Environmental Improvements, Community Building, Pig Alley, Buses

The meeting opened with Colm Lennon (CL) explaining that the Commercial Section was again coming up to the Planning Committee on the 26th of November and without approval, this part of the development, which has only one interested developer, Terrace Hill, might not proceed. Both CL and Jim Dennis (JD) stressed that therefore this meeting was extremely important as without the Commercial Section, the land would lie derelict and could ruin the whole development – this would be a huge negative for all residents.

It is understood that no progress has been made with regard to attracting doctors to the site despite both their efforts and those made by GBC. Ian Godfrey (IG) pursued the need to exhaust all possibilities.

1. Tylehost and the Commercial Section : The developers showed great concern that the residents of Tylehost still have objections about the through route into the site which could prove critical if they cannot be persuaded. Andreas Markides (AM) explained that when alternative access to the site was explored, the Health & Fitness owners were displeased and threatened to pull out – a letter to this effect was passed around. JD and Nigel Wakefield both left the meeting for a short private discussion. Peter Gunner (PG) and Nigel Horton (NH) both argued on behalf of the Tylehost residents, pointing out that on the basis of what they had been previously promised and the bus service changes, they have every right to feel as they do. IG pointed out that Wood Street parents would definitely drive through the site en route to Northmead. When JD argued that the project would fail unless we could alter these objections, Cllr Jayne Marks (JM) immediately reacted, stating that GBC could not and would not be blackmailed. With Cllr Searle being part of the Planning Committee team, they had considered long and hard whether it was appropriate for her to attend as a committee member of STAG. PG pointed out that STAG is equally in a difficult position with the residents, many of whom consider STAG to be the mouth-piece of the developers. Nigel Wakefield (NW) then took up the argument that the commercial section would not have worked commercially as originally planned and it was his input which now makes it viable. NH then asked what benefits would there be for the residents of Tylehost and Johnston Walk. A discussion about the cost of rents ensued, with NW explaining that rents are not chosen by developers but are set by the value of the buildings. NW and AM were encouraged to and did leave the meeting for a short time to consider whether there were any other options.

CL then admitted that credibility is a real problem at present and must be solved. IG and PG argued that the benefits of planning gain are not being directed to Stoughton.

2. **Buses** : Ivan Ball (IB) explained that they had had extensive talks with a number of bus companies and Arriva had offered the best solution in that by enhancing their bus service to every 20 minutes the service would be sustainable and the only difference would be that Arriva would take 17 minutes whilst a shuttle bus to the Station would take 14 minutes. The proposed Zip bus would end at the end of the 5 year subsidy and also, if it ever existed, would diminish the trade of Arriva. IG and Cllr Pauline Searle (PS) did not agree. IB also stated that the new buses he wanted for this route would attract more passengers and it was planned that this new service would begin in April 2003 – this raised debate that new residents if they became used to using their own car would not wish to alter this habit at a later date. When asked why PS had never been asked to attend any of the meetings with bus contractors, IB apologised at this omission. PS was then invited to a meeting the following day, which she was unable to attend.

3. **Community Building** : gratitude was shown by STAG members for the work which has been done on this and IB pointed out that not all of the requested facilities were possible and that these plans were only a starting point. When asked what STAG's opinion was, Maureen Bell (MB) said that the mailing had come too late for the committee to discuss them – a meeting was scheduled for 7th – but the concerns were mainly about the location in that as planned the building is too far away from the so called Rural Village centre. MB queried IB's letter stating the design was to compliment the mixed use building and STAG as yet has not seen an acceptable design for that. CL advised this has now been designed by J Thomson and has met with GBC approval. It was agreed that MB would get back to the developers.

4. **Pig Alley** : IB explained that the developers prepared a plan and a costing of £25k but GBC said they wished to do it themselves. Matthew Jessop at GBC then produced a costing of £75k. On examination it was found this plan incorporated a number of other items so currently another costing is being prepared and is hoped to be completed by Christmas. MB then raised the timetable as printed in the Summer 2000 Newsletter. Following discussions with SCC Highways it is known that because it is their fault, SCC have given the developers the leeway to have 50 dwellings occupied before the various junctions are completed. Tylehost and Johnston Walk improvements are to be completed by Christmas. Salt Box Road signalled, Johnston Walk junctions and the pelican crossing at Byrefield Road are to be completed in January.

In conclusion, JD said he was very disappointed by the outcome of the meeting which he had hoped would have given them a more positive attitude. He felt that three problems were continually raised – the improvements to Johnston Walk and Tylehost – which Dave Barton had indicated he had a large wad of written complaints, the opening up of Tylehost making it possible to drive through the site, and the buses, continue to be a problem. It was his intention to offer back something to the community and he was now prepared to increase the sum to be spent on the community centre to £200k and to gift the land free of charge. No comment was made to this announcement. On the advice of JM, JD will write to lobby all of the GBC Planning Committee members and to each of the Tylehost residents. He requested JM's assistance with this.

MB then showed the developers the GBC letter posted the previous day, inviting inspection of an application for 77 houses. This is the second such error on letters bearing Carol Humphrey's signature. CL was having a meeting the next morning with Dave Barton and requested the letter to show him.

Prior to the meeting, IB provided STAG with the original Phase Map, not previously seen by STAG

Amendments

Approved

Date