House

Continued from page 1

will be about 9,800 square feet and the new lot will be about 8,400 square feet.

The private road will be 200 feet long, 25 feet wide, and will run on the south side of the plot, according to the proposal. Eighty feet of the 200-foot driveway satisfies the zoning requirement. The road will be made of an eight-inch compact gravel base and two-inch crushed sea shell surface, according to the plans.

Ventrone pointed out that the private status frees the road from town public-road requirements, and he said he feels the town is compromising the intent of the law.

"There is something wrong with that logic," Ventrone said. "We are looking for a loophole to do this." He said the town should get rid of the zoning requirement and approve it as a driveway, and the road changes the character of the town. He also said there could be problems with water and sewer access with a road that big. Those concerns would be eased with public-road requirements, Ventrone said.

"I feel that I'm circumventing the law by allowing this," Ventrone said. "I feel that's slippery. I just do."

The private road is only five feet shy of meeting public road width standards. Bryer said if it were proposed as a public road, "We would not even be having this discussion."

John Andrews, a surveyor and certified expert witness who spoke on behalf of the plot owners, said the driveway aspect is beneficial to the town. A public road would require curbing and different restrictions which would cause ground water problems, and it preserves the rural quality of the town, Andrews said.

"In this one situation, and there may be others, it is actually a benefit, not a liability to the town," he said.

Ventrone was virtually alone in his ethical concerns with the private road. Commission Member Alexandra Nickols said the proposal allows more land per two houses than would be allowed if the road were a driveway. Nickols said an affordable housing principle was at work.

If the current house on 35 Howland Ave. were to be torn down and replaced with a duplex, the frontage issue would be relieved. But, Nickols pointed out, that would do more to change the character of the town than a 200-foot private road would do.

"In essence, you have created two more affordable units," Nickols said. "I think that is what we're trying to do in terms of increasing density."

Commission member Nancy Bennett inquired about tree destruction. Andrews said the only major threat was a cherry tree in the front of the plot, and several others in the bank were probably safe. Bennett said she had no problems with the road.

"I would much rather see it fit into the neighborhood character than to throw out the zoning," she said.

The commission, including Ventrone, concluded that the public will be allowed to decide if the private road will be allowed. Bennett said she hopes to hear from neighbors of the plot

Hollister among pianists in festival

A concert featuring many of the young pianists from the Piano Extravaganza! 2009 Festival Competition at the University of Rhode Island will be held at the Warwick Public Library at 600 Sandy Lane on Saturday, April 25, at 2 p.m.

Samuel Hollister of Jamestown will be among the performers.

Each participant in the annual festival competition for pre-college age piano students was required to perform a 10-15 minute solo of advanced repertoire from memory before an audience and a panel of judges in the URI concert hall in early April.

For more information, contact Associate Professor Dr. Manabu Takasawa, who coordinated the piano festival and is arranging the concert, at 874-2790.

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