

NORTHAMPTON BOROUGH COUNCIL

PLANNING COMMITTEE

Tuesday, 6 April 2010

PRESENT: Councillor Collins (Chair); Councillor Meredith (Deputy Chair);
Councillors Church, J. Conroy, Golby, Lane, Malpas, Mason,
Matthews and Woods

1. APOLOGIES

An apology was received from Councillor M Hoare.

2. MINUTES

The minutes of the meeting of the Committee held on 9 March 2010 were signed by the Chair.

3. DEPUTATIONS / PUBLIC ADDRESSES

- RESOLVED:** (1) That M Wright, J Pidgen and Councillor Hollis be granted leave to address the Committee in respect of application no. N/2010/0162 – Installation of 2 no. 10 metre high floodlights at MUGA, Bondfield Avenue.
- (2) That Mr R Miller be granted leave to address the Committee in respect of application no. N/2008/0502 – Boat Restaurant and Bar and associated access at Midsummer Meadow, Bedford Road.

4. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

Councillor Collins declared a personal interest in application no. N/2010/0162 as his partner was a Ward Councillor.

Councillor Woods declared a personal and prejudicial interest in application no. N/2010/0162 as a proponent of the scheme.

5. MATTERS OF URGENCY WHICH BY REASON OF SPECIAL CIRCUMSTANCES THE CHAIR IS OF THE OPINION SHOULD BE CONSIDERED

None.

6. LIST OF CURRENT APPEALS AND INQUIRIES

The Head of Planning submitted a report and elaborated thereon. The Head of Planning reported that since publication of the report the appeals in respect of applications N/2009/0156, 2009/0644 and 2009/0650 had been dismissed by Inspectors appointed by the Secretary of State. An appeal in respect of application no. 2009/0230 had been allowed.

RESOLVED: That the report be noted.

7. OTHER REPORTS

None.

8. NORTHAMPTONSHIRE COUNTY COUNCIL APPLICATIONS

None.

9. NORTHAMPTON BOROUGH COUNCIL APPLICATIONS

(A) N/2010/0045 - ERECTION OF TEMPORARY HOARDING AT THE JUNCTION OF EASTERN AVENUE SOUTH AND KINGSTHORPE GROVE

The Head of Planning submitted a report in respect of application no. N/2010/0045 and referred to the Addendum which indicated that further consultation with neighbouring residents was being undertaken and that this consultation had not yet been completed. It was recommended that determination of the application be delegated to the Head of Planning subject to there being no objections received on land use planning grounds.

The Committee discussed the application.

RESOLVED: That subject to no objections on land use planning grounds being received the determination of application no. N/2010/0045 be delegated to the Head of Planning.

(B) N/2010/0046 - ERECTION OF TEMPORARY HOARDING AT THE JUNCTION OF KENMUIR AVENUE AND WALLACE ROAD

The Head of Planning submitted a report in respect of application no. N/2010/0046 and referred to the Addendum which indicated that further consultation with neighbouring residents was being undertaken and that this consultation had not yet been completed it was recommended that determination of the application be delegated to the Head of Planning subject to there being no objections received on land use planning grounds.

The Committee discussed the application.

RESOLVED: That subject to no objections on land use planning grounds being received the determination of application no. N/2010/0046 be delegated to the Head of Planning.

(C) N/2010/0162 - INSTALLATION OF 2NO. 10 METRE HIGH FLOODLIGHTS. MUGA, BONDFIELD AVENUE, NORTHAMPTON

Councillor Woods left the room in accordance with his declaration of interest.

The Head of Planning submitted a report in respect of application no. N/2010/0162 and referred to the Addendum which referred to a further letter of objection from the original objector.

Mr Wright, a local resident, commented that his main objection to the proposal was the potential increase in anti-social behaviour. He noted that people already congregated around the existing shelter which was lit and remained there drinking until the early hours of the morning. He commented that elderly people lived in the nearby bungalows and that youths used the gravel from the drives to throw at satellite dishes. His preference would be for a different route to gain access to the MUGA. In answer to a question Mr Wright commented that there were four points of access to the MUGA. In answer to another question Mr Wright indicated that he was unaware of the local Safer Community Team.

Ms J Pidgen, the Neighbourhood Management Officer acknowledged the comments that had been made by Mr Wright. She commented that the issue of providing lighting to the MUGA had been highlighted both by the Police and the youngsters themselves. She noted that some of the facilities had only been available since the previous March and funding had only recently been made available to provide more. The issue of youths gathering outside the Newnham Road shops was a long standing problem and the facilities provided by the MUGA had been those wanted by the youths themselves. The Police had indicated that they would step up the level of patrols and preferred to manage the issue around the MUGA rather than at the shops. J Pidgen noted that bins had been ordered for the area and would be emptied as part of the normal rubbish collection rounds. She noted that Councillor Hollis had agreed to fund two years of the street football project. Local residents had agreed that something needed to be done to tackle the issue and had agreed that the MUGA was the best way forward. In answer to a question J Pidgen commented that the flats immediately adjoining the area would have fencing provided which would allow tenants to form their own gardens which had been welcomed.

Councillor Hollis, a Ward Councillor for the area, commented that the status quo was not acceptable. The St Davids Management Area had been working hard to provide facilities for young people and had been working in partnership with the Police. She noted that some fencing in the area had already been carried out. Currently there were no facilities for young people and they themselves had been surveyed and requested the MUGA and lighting. She noted that the County Council had closed the youth club and football club some years previously. In answer to questions Councillor Hollis noted that there was no similar facility in St Davids and that the issues of anti-social behaviour that Mr Wright had raised should be referred to the Joint Action Group for the Police to take action.

The Committee discussed the application.

RESOLVED: That the application be approved subject to the conditions set out in the report as the proposed floodlights were considered to be of acceptable appearance and would not unduly harm the living conditions of nearby residents and would provide a valuable leisure facility for the local community particularly young people during evening hours in the winter months. For these reasons proposals were considered to accord with saved Local Plan Policies L1, E20 and E40 and the Planning Out Crime SPD.

NB. Councillor Woods rejoined the meeting.

10. ITEMS FOR DETERMINATION

(A) N/2008/0502 - BOAT RESTAURANT, BAR AND ASSOCIATED ACCESS AT LAND AT MIDSUMMER MEADOW

The Head of Planning submitted a report in respect of application N/2008/0502 and referred to the Addendum which set out further correspondence from the Wildlife Trust and the planning officer's response. The Head of Planning clarified that the boat was technically a barge as it had no motorised power of its own so as to be able to manoeuvre. He also noted that a boardwalk to the car park would be created.

Mr Miller, a representative of the gay community and a journalist with the Lesbian and Gay Foundation commented that he believed that this matter was a big story. He did not believe that the Planning Committee was the right forum to be discussing this issue which he felt was more one of social and community cohesion. He commented that this part of Midsummer Meadow had been an established area for some fifty years for gay and homosexual people to meet. This proposal would substantially change the use of the area and perhaps move this section of the community on to another location. He commented that he did not feel that the Committee had an understanding of the issues and believed that the matter required far more extensive community consultation. Mr Miller commented that he believed that the report was homophobic and contrary to existing legislation and believed that the actions of the Committee would be challenged. In answer to a question Mr Miller commented that the gay community would not welcome the provision of a restaurant as it would destroy the anonymity of the area as a secluded meeting place.

The Chair adjourned the meeting which reconvened at 19.10 hours.

The Borough Solicitor commented that the Committee had to consider the application before them in its planning context within planning policies.

The Head of Planning in answer to questions confirmed that waste disposal and safety in case of flooding would be controlled through conditions.

The Committee discussed the application.

RESOLVED: That the application be approved subject to the conditions set out in a report as the proposed barge restaurant would enhance the River Nene Valley environment as a leisure destination which was in keeping with its surroundings and posed little or no threat to the vitality and viability of the town centre. The ecological and flood risk impacts could be suitably managed to avoid any harm to users who come from the local or wider environment complying with PPS25 – Development and Flood Risk, Saved Northampton Local Plan Policies L16, L17 and L29. The proposal was in a sustainable location and not unduly dependent on car borne trips in accordance with PPG 13 Transport. The proposals accorded with National Policy and Guidance the Development Plan and Emerging Local Policy Documents.

11. ENFORCEMENT MATTERS

None.

12. APPLICATIONS FOR CONSULTATION

None.

The meeting concluded at 19.13 hours.