

**Town of Gorham  
Planning Board Meeting  
December 7, 2020**

**Item 5 - Pre – Application Discussion – Plowman, Brian –Black Gum Tree Subdivision**– a request for sketch/pre-application review for a 10-lot subdivision off Burnham Road. The lot is zoned Suburban Residential (SR). The lot is shown on Map 3, Lot 17. The property totals approximately 16.4 acres and currently contains wetlands, a potential vernal pool and mature canopy trees and understory as well as the largest Black Gum tree in the State of Maine. The applicant is Plowman Development Group and is represented by Steve Blake, P.E. of BH2M. The current property owner is John D. Phinney.

The applicant proposes a paved private driveway, individual domestic wells and subsurface septic systems. The applicant has provided a conventional layout as well as a cluster layout for the Board review. Approximately six acres of open space is proposed to be set aside.

Below are topics the Planning Board may want to discuss with the applicant. The discussion topics are written as a guide for the Planning Board. It should be noted that the discussion topics are noncommittal and all decisions on relevant discussion topics are those of the Planning Board.

Comprehensive Plan

- The suburban residential zoning is proposed to remain in this area.
- The uses allowed are proposed to include different housing options including single family.
- The Future Land Use Plan states “The development standards in the Suburban Residential Area should allow for moderate-density residential development with somewhat higher densities for residential developments that utilize public water and/or public sewerage. The base density for residential development should be set at one unit per net acre. This should increase to 1.5 units per net acre with public water and two units per net acre with public sewerage. The development standards should provide a density bonus of 10 to 15% for subdivisions that are developed as conservation or open space subdivisions that preserve a portion of the site as permanent open space.”

Zoning and Subdivision

- The zoning is currently Suburban Residential (SR), which allows for single family residential.
- Clustered residential development is allowed in this zoning district and shall follow the standards in Chapter 2 Section 2-4 General Performance Standards.
- Conventional subdivision is allowed in this zoning district.

Google earth image taken in May, 2018.



Historic Preservation

The applicant should check with the Historic Preservation Commission of Gorham to determine if the property has historic, archaeological, or significant sites.

Below are staff comments:

**Planning Division:** November 30, 2020

- Zoning - SR; no public water or sewer
- Vernal pool should be determined
- Black Gum tree should have protections and access determined
- Trail connections or proposed should be shown on site plan

**Assessing Department** – November 16, 2020

1. Is this a condominium project?
2. Will buildings be single family or duplexes?

**Code Department:** November 18, 2020

All underground electrical must be inspected before backfilled.

**Fire Department:** November 18, 2020

1. On the plan with the cul-de-sac, the inner circle needs to be a minimum of 60' and a minimum 20' of road width.

Brian Plowman – Black Gum Tree Subdivision -

2. On the plan with the hammer head on it, the road width needs to be 20' and 50' long.
3. A "No Parking - Tow Away Zone" or "No Parking - Fire Lane" sign should be added to the hammer head.
4. The buildings will meet all applicable sections of the NFPA 101 Life Safety Code and the NFPA Fire Prevention Code 1. All buildings shall be properly numbered in accordance with E911 standards including height, color and location.
5. All buildings shall be protected under the Fire Suppression Systems Ordinance as applicable. The sprinkler plans shall be submitted to the Fire Department and the State Fire Marshal's Office for review and permitting. The plans submitted to the Fire Department shall be submitted at least two weeks prior to the start of the installation of the system. Sprinkler test papers will be required to be submitted to the Fire Department at the time a CO is issued.
6. I would prefer plan # 1 (with the cul-de-sac) be used over Plan # 2
6. **Past history has repeatedly shown that private ways/drives are very poorly maintained, and wintertime poses a very serious issue of emergency vehicle access, with very little enforcement available to the Town. I would state for the record and make notice that the Fire Department cannot and will not be held responsible for incidents where we cannot gain access to buildings or incidents on these private ways/drives that are not properly maintained.**

**Police Department** – No comments

**Public Works Department:** November 17, 2020

No significant wetlands will be impacted by this project. The parcel is composed of mostly upland forest, gently sloping to the east. A DEP Permit may be needed.

Based on the layout of the parcel and presence of minor wetlands/open space a cluster subdivision design is preferred.

Due to the presence of minor wetlands on the eastern side of the parcel, special care should be taken to prevent sediment migration and erosion on Lot 6. All BMP's should be followed for construction based on the Maine Erosion and Sediment Control Manual.

A cluster subdivision would allow the least impacts to the environment, along with providing the most recreational opportunity. Since a historically significant Black Gum Tree (70' tall) is present in the open space area, it's recommended that a trail be built and sign placed near it.

Let me know if you have any questions or concerns

Matt LaCroix, Stormwater Compliance Officer