

NEEDHAM PLANNING BOARD MINUTES

September 24, 2012

The regular meeting of the Planning Board held in the Selectmen's Chambers at Needham Town Hall was called to order by Bruce Eisenhut, Chairman, on Tuesday, September 24, 2012 at 7:30 p.m. with Messrs. Ruth and Jacobs and Ms. McKnight as well as Planning Director, Ms. Newman and Recording Secretary, Ms. Kalinowski. Mr. Warner arrived at 7:40 p.m.

ANR Plan – 963 Central Avenue.

Ms. Newman noted this is the redivision of a property line. Both lots have required frontage on a way and both meet minimum lot size. A triangular piece is being transferred. They want to put an addition on and need to meet the setback. Ms. McKnight clarified this was recently rezoned and asked if it was a historical house. Mr. Giunta stated part of the house is historic but the other is an addition they put on. They cannot touch the original portion of the house.

Upon a motion made by Ms. McKnight, and seconded by Mr. Ruth, it was by the four members present unanimously:

VOTED: to endorse the plan of land for 76 Nehoiden Street as subdivision ANR.

Correspondence

Mr. Eisenhut noted the following correspondence for the record: a press release from Devra Bailin, Director of Economic Development, for a chair auction to be held on 9/29/12 and a copy of the Zoning Board of Appeals decision on 175 Hillside Avenue for the Board's information.

Mr. Warner arrived.

7:30 p.m. – Major Project Site Plan Special Permit No. 2012-07: Normandy Real Estate Partners, 99 Summer Street, Boston, MA, Petitioner (Property located at 66B Street, 360 First Avenue, 410 First Avenue and 37 A Street, Needham, MA).

Upon a motion made by Mr. Ruth, and seconded by Mr. Jacobs, it was by the five members present unanimously: VOTED: to waive the reading of the public hearing notice.

Mr. Eisenhut reviewed the Board's procedures for public hearings. Roy Cramer, representative for the applicant, noted this is a 13.68 acre parcel of land in the New England Business Center. It was formerly 4 separate parcels that they have consolidated into one parcel. He noted in April they came in for Phase 1. That was approval of a 128 unit hotel of approximately 89,740 square feet with 140 parking spaces. He stated this is the master permit for the whole parcel. They have contemplated the hotel will be Phase 1 and rolled into this permit. They are proposing to build 4 office buildings along with the hotel.

Mr. Cramer stated the maximum floor area will be 740,000 square feet in the aggregate. He explained the location and noted the construction of 3 office buildings to be perpendicular to First Avenue. At 37 A Street there is a 103,000 square foot existing building they will take down and that will be the fourth building. It will be 740,000 square feet maximum. There will be 2 parking garages. Garage A will have 700 parking spaces and Garage B will have 1,900 spaces. There will be 114 parking spaces on the surface. The garages will be in the back.

Mr. Cramer then reviewed the relief being requested. He noted there are several minor dimensional waivers and no parking waivers. They are requesting waivers for maximum height from 72 feet to 84 feet. The Fire Department has made a no comment finding. The buildings are not a problem but they are requesting minor dimensional waivers for the parking garages. One is 315 feet long and the other is 350 feet long. They have reduced the rear setback for Garage A from 20 feet to 18 feet. The other relief is the street trees every 40 feet. They cannot do that in 2 areas due to storm water chambers. They are increasing FAR from 1.0 to 1.40. They went to the Design Review Board August 20 and they approved.

Mr. Cramer noted the traffic mitigation fund is based on the additional number of parking spaces you need. The total due for them is \$930,000. They have offered to accelerate payments. He stated each time they receive a Certificate of Occupancy they will pay a portion. He noted in the application they talked about design guidelines. They would like to lease to single tenants. They do not want to design all 4 buildings now. They have given full plans for building #1 and Garage A. They have created condominiums which will be the form of ownership. The goal is to use the condominium structure for the buildings. They are asking for the usual findings.

Mr. Cramer stated this is a multi-phase project. They are looking at this as a master permit over a period of years. They are asking for a 10 year time period.

Keith Curran, project engineer, explained the new curb cuts and locations of the new parking spaces. The project will have a campus feel with pedestrian ways throughout the campus. There will be pathways between office 2 and 3 and office 1 and 2. A speed bump will be installed to keep speeds down and there will be plenty of street trees.

Mr. Curran noted all drainage will be within the roadway directed to catch basins to piping and manholes. It will go through waterfall unit structures before discharging either to A Street or B Street. They will follow town and Massachusetts storm water requirements. They will be infiltrating the roof run off with rain guards or sub surface infiltration areas under the pavement. They will capture rainwater and use it for irrigation. Gas service is in all existing right of ways. They will have sewer to all buildings that will go to the Reservoir B pump station. He noted all buildings will have transformers and the landscape plan shows they will all be screened. Each building has a separate fire protection line and domestic line and there will be a maintenance plan.

Mr. Cramer stated Mr. Curran is working closely with the Engineering Department. They met today and reached an agreement on all the engineering issues. John Martin, project architect, noted it was a tight knit campus. He stated office building one will be 4 stories and tops out at 70 feet within height guidelines; buildings 2 and 3 will have 6 stories and be 84 feet and building 4 tops out at 5 stories and 72 feet. He showed a rendering of what the first floor would look like and the shell of building one.

Mr. Martin stated they tried to use the design of the building to activate the ground floors and to make the architecture of the building and the landscaping come together. The outdoor space and architecture interface here. They paid special attention to the adjacency of the parking garage. There are circulation towers in the front doors of the building. He noted this is a very walkable area. The buildings will be glass and masonry materials. It will be a pre-cast cast stone façade but it could be brick. It will be contemporary and will set lightly on the landscape. There is a high ratio of glass. Building one and 2 are 110 feet wide and building 3 is 120 feet wide. There will be a lot of day light penetration.

Mr. Martin stated building one has a footprint of 40,000 square feet on each of the first 3 floors then 30,000 square feet on the top floor to create an outdoor terrace. The mechanical systems are all high efficiency. All storm water is handled in a best practice way.

Jade Cummings, landscape architect, stated the overall elements tie all together to create the identity. They focused on creating a hierarchy, so if you're a visitor, and you walk through the site, you understand the direct routes between buildings. In the public space they are using a different type of material. Primarily there are native species being used.

Mr. Cramer stated they envisioned with the office park some first floor space dedicated to some retail space and also a restaurant or 2 scattered around the park. They decided to keep it as simple as possible for now and just show the square footage of the office.

Nancy Doherty, traffic engineer from TetraTech, stated they did an update of the study approved in 2008 by the former owner of the site. They looked at 5 intersections and assumed changes would not be in effect until 2017. There will be a total of 1,000 trips in the morning with a build out total increase of 650. She noted they feel there will be 60% from the highway and 40% local. They estimate there will be 10% from Nahantan Street, 15% from Needham Street, 10% from Dedham Avenue, 5% from Greendale Avenue and 60% from Highland Avenue. Sixty % will go to A Street in the p.m. She reviewed the traffic details and volume at each of the 5 intersections. They feel there will be more of an impact at First and Second Streets. It does not change the no build level of services.

Ms. Doherty stated they will pay a traffic improvement fee. There are 2,600 spaces required and 1,987 would be required with an FAR of 1.0. They will pay a fee of \$930,000 on the difference of 613 spaces. There will be a shuttle bus service, bicycle racks and they will post transit maps and forms inside. They will encourage tenants to ride share.

Mr. Cramer stated he received calls this afternoon from 2 property owners in the Industrial Center. They asked some questions about the traffic study and expressed some concern about doing it before the Add-a-Lane Project was completed. He will give them copies of all the reports and meet with them to make sure they are happy. He wants to flush out their concerns and added this new breed of tenants works varying hours. He stated this is a Class A office building and designed to that level. All the buildings have been designed in a green approach and will be LEEDS certified. They believe they will be bringing in a mix of retail.

Mr. Jacobs noted Mr. Cramer's cover letter has a typo on the fourth page, second paragraph. Mr. Cramer agreed it should be "does not exceed 740,000." Mr. Jacobs stated in Exhibit A it should be changed from "Middlesex" to "Norfolk." He asked, under Design Guidelines #6, each building will be increased or decreased from what? Mr. Cramer stated it will be from what he referenced in the letter. They want to make minor adjustments and will accommodate them through the design guideline process. Mr. Jacobs stated he wants to clarify the letter from the Fire Department that if plans change, and the 4 stories become 6 stories and an 84 maximum height, they are ok with that. That is how he reads the letter but he wants to make sure. Mr. Cramer stated his impression was they are ok with it.

Mr. Ruth asked what the project would be like if the Add-a-Lane Project is complete. Mr. Martin stated he spoke with the project manager for the Add-a-Lane project. There will be new ramps off 128 with only a right turn northbound, full access southbound, some restriping at Third Street and signal improvements. Second Avenue will have exclusive left turn lanes approaching Highland Avenue. They will start construction next year and possibly be done in 2018.

Mr. Ruth asked them to talk about what efforts are being made to alleviate the visual impact of a 300 foot façade of garage with landscaping. Mr. Martin stated the long facades face each other so the stakes are lower. The façades are anticipated to be particulated pre-cast concrete panels with perforated panels. There will also be some crowning and glass at the front and vertical glass towers.

Mr. Ruth noted the traffic payment is to be paid at the time of the Certificate of Occupancy but Mr. Cramer's letter says at the time of the building permit. He asked they clarify when it would be. Mr. Cramer noted they said at the time of the building permit but he will verify that. Mr. Ruth stated he would like them to be a little more imaginative about what public education they will do.

Ms. McKnight noted for the pedestrian walkways there is one spot where she did not see a walkway. It is near the curb cut off First Avenue that she does not see a walkway at the end that crosses that road from First Avenue.

Justin Krebs, applicant, stated the front door entrance has raised crosswalks there. Ms. McKnight noted the application calls for office and research and development. She wants to be clear if a restaurant is later proposed that is not a de minimus change. Mr. Cramer stated that would be a public hearing. Ms. McKnight asked if that is the same for retail. Mr. Cramer noted under the By-Law a certain percent of retail is allowed by right. If they decide to stay within that it would not trigger a public hearing. Ms. McKnight stated they should say something like that in the decision. Mr. Cramer agreed.

Ms. McKnight noted the 5 intersections and asked if both on Highland Avenue were presently signalized. Ms. Doherty stated no, only the one on Second Avenue is signalized. There is no signal on Fourth Street. She reviewed the signals at the intersections. Ms. McKnight noted on page 3 the footnote states the entrance to the building is directly from the street. She asked if they are planning to subdivide the plan to create streets. Mr. Cramer stated no, it is one lot and the condo has ownership. Ms. McKnight asked how they are going to comply with the zoning by-law requirement for entrances from public streets. Mr. Cramer stated it is a campus project. Maneuvering aisles act like streets. They are not public streets but they act like streets. It will function as a public way. Ms. McKnight stated she does not see any ambiguity in the by-law. It is a requirement and she does not know how they can get around it. They may need to create a subdivision with waivers. Mr. Ruth noted he looks at this as it fronts on 128.

Ms. McKnight asked if the transportation management plan was part of the conditions of the permit or part of the Zoning By-Law. Ms. Newman stated it was a condition of the permit.

Mr. Warner stated he is in favor of the project. He stated each building will have their own tenants and their own lifestyle depending on the tenants. He does not know how that would work out.

Mr. Eisenhut asked if they would be willing to set a LEED standard in the decision. Mr. Krebs stated yes, they will have the silver standard. Mr. Eisenhut noted there are no specific design guidelines. He asked if the Design Review Board is satisfied that the guidelines for the unbuilt buildings are specific enough. Has there been any discussion? Mr. Cramer stated he has spoken with Mark Gluesing for months that this was what was coming. He did not feel he should officially go to him. He noted they have specific guidelines in Exhibit A.

Mr. Eisenhut stated the uninterrupted façade length of the garage is a concern. He is not sure what is unique about this uninterrupted façade. How can they justify this one from the next one that comes in? Mr. Cramer stated it is different. With buildings there are architectural elements and they could jog something out. With garages all spaces need to be a certain width and the same with maneuvering aisles. The garages have been put in back so they are barely visible from the street. The Board could exercise discretion. They feel it is a reasonable request. Mr. Martin stated they could construct a little jog or an element but they would need to adjust the setbacks. He understands the Board not wanting to set a precedent.

Ms. McKnight noted they did not say facades that are a concern are along a street. This façade is along a side line. It is neither affecting an abutter nor the street frontage. This only affects a strip of land.

Mr. Eisenhut stated there is a footnote on entryways. He is satisfied to put in the decision that for all intents and purposes it functions as a public way. Ms. McKnight commented she does not think they have the power to do that. Mr. Eisenhut noted there are other benefits to have that way designated in the decision and say that it would function as a public way. He asked if they would be satisfied with that. Mr. Cramer stated as long as it says it functions as a way.

Thomas J. Phillips, representative for 250 Realty Trust who owns the abutting parcel, stated he is speaking neither in favor nor against. He wanted to clarify Mr. Cramer was correct saying they look forward to additional conversation.

John Fantasia, of 300 First Avenue and also an abutter, stated he has a concern that granting the application would be done prior to any work being done on the Add-a-Lane Project and/or the Highland Avenue reconstruction. Mr.

Cramer stated they could go over the agreements they have reached or they could get an updated letter. He noted he would like all 5 members at all hearings.

Mr. Eisenhut noted the following correspondence for the record: a memo from Janice Berns of the Board of Health with no objections or concerns; a memo from Fire Chief Paul Buckley regarding the height; a memo from Lt. John Kraemer of the Police Department, noting no safety concerns; a 9/14/12 email from the Town Engineer which they will get an update for; a letter from TetraTech in response to comments from the Town Engineer; an 8/12/12 traffic impact study, a cover letter and 2 letters from Roy Cramer.

Mr. Ruth commented the Chairman senses positive support from the Board but he is interested in hearing from others in the park.

Upon a motion made by Ms. McKnight, and seconded by Mr. Jacobs, it was by the five members present unanimously:

VOTED: to continue the hearing to 10/16/12 at 7:00 p.m.

Request for Permanent Occupancy Permit: Major Project Site Plan Review Special Permit No. 2010-02 (Newman School): Town of Needham by its agent the Needham Permanent Public Building Committee, 470 Dedham Avenue, Needham, MA, and the Needham Historical Society, 1147 Central Avenue, Needham, MA, Petitioner (Property located at 1155 Central Avenue, Needham, MA).

Ms. Newman noted this was off the agenda.

Release of Off-Street Drainage Bond: 708 South Street (Riverbend Lane) Subdivision (Lots 1-4A).

Ms. Newman noted they received a letter from the Board of Health recommending release of Lot 1 and 2 for a total of \$7,000.

Upon a motion made by Mr. Ruth, and seconded by Mr. Jacobs, it was by the five members present unanimously:

VOTED: to release the Off-Street Drainage Bond consistent with the recommendation from the Board of Health.

Minutes

Upon a motion made by Ms. McKnight, and seconded by Mr. Ruth, it was by the five members present unanimously:

VOTED: to approve the minutes of 6/26/12.

Report from the Planning Director

Ms. Newman stated she has met with a woman interested in opening a restaurant where the Village Fish was. There is a question of how she is going to process this application. It is not a transfer. The new entity is willing to go in under the terms of the original permit. She asked if the Board would allow this. Mr. Eisenhut commented they talked in the past that they should be able to do this. Ms. McKnight noted the landlord is going to rent to the new tenant. Ms. Newman noted all is the same. Mr. Jacobs commented it does not bother him at all. Ms. Newman will do it as a transfer.

Mr. Eisenhut suggested they talk about the Rail Trail feasibility study. There will be a discussion on 10/10. The trail will go from Needham Junction to the Dover line. A separate Dover committee is working to raise private money to fund a feasibility study. There is also a 1.5 mile section in Medfield. He commented he hopes when it comes to Town Meeting they will support it. Ms. McKnight stated the committee has done a lot of work so far and they have the MBTA on board.

Mr. Eisenhut noted the Selectmen are asking to delay consideration of a bike rail trail from Needham in the Heights to Newton. They want a better sense of all the alternative plans being put forth. He noted the Junction to Medfield will be 6 ½ miles total. They will have a private organization that will take the steel tracks in exchange for the steel. They will do some sort of sand dust bed. Mr. Warner stated the issue will be who maintains it.

Ms. McKnight stated there has been a League of Women Voter's committee that has met the past couple of years and they had a consensus at a meeting last year. They have revised their position on local zoning to take away what sounded like a very restrictive position, and will focus on large houses at their forum in March.

Upon a motion made by Ms. McKnight, and seconded by Mr. Warner, it was by the five members present unanimously:

VOTED: to adjourn the meeting at 10:00 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,
Donna J. Kalinowski, Notetaker

A handwritten signature in cursive script, reading "Sam Bass Warner", is written over a horizontal line.

Sam Bass Warner, Vice-Chairman and Clerk