

NEEDHAM PLANNING BOARD MINUTES

September 8, 2015

The regular meeting of the Planning Board held in the Charles River Room, Public Services Administration Building, was called to order by Jeanne McKnight, Chairman, on Tuesday, September 8, 2015 at 7:00 p.m. with Messrs. Eisenhut, Alpert and Jacobs and Ms. Grimes, as well as Planning Director, Ms. Newman, Assistant Planner, Ms. Clee and Recording Secretary, Ms. Kalinowski.

Correspondence

Ms. McKnight noted a Boston Globe article, dated 8/6/15, regarding clean up of the Charles River sent by James Hugh Powers.

Public Hearing:

7:00 p.m. – Major Project Site Plan Special Permit No. 2015-06: Town of Needham, 500 Dedham Avenue, Needham, MA, Petitioner (Property is the Chapel Street Municipal Parking Lot, Needham, MA, adjacent to the commuter rail train station in Needham Center).

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

VOTED: to waive the reading of the public hearing notice.

Ms. Newman noted there are 2 projects and they are linked. There is a de minimus change for Center Café but the Board will discuss them together with the Major Project Site Plan. She gave a brief overview. She noted Devra Bailin is working with the property owners. The applicants are trying to take some dumpsters and put them in a single location with a fence to dress up the back lot. The Rice Barn, Gari's Japanese Fusion Bistro, Needham Center Fine Wines, Bagels Best and Center Café are all on board. The town will give up two (2) spaces in the municipal lot for dumpsters and five (5) private spaces will now be used for public use.

Town Engineer Anthony DelGaizo noted there was a problem locating a spot for the dumpster. He looked at several locations and finally at the train station at the end of the island. Sixty five feet in length is needed for the dumpster removal truck. There will be a 12 foot by 24 foot fenced area that will be accessed in the morning through front gates. Everything fits together nicely. The Town will relocate one light pole 3 to 4 feet. There was no survey. The Town had to figure out where the property lines were. The railing and trees are on the portion of the MBTA property that is not leased to the Town. There are agreements from many years ago between the Town and the MBTA.

Town Engineer Del Gaizo noted the spaces are all on town property. He looked at several areas and modified the area slightly so it would work. He noted the Town had several meetings with abutters. All agreed on the location. He wants approval to consolidate the dumpster area. Ms. McKnight noted the following correspondence for the record: a photo of the area; an email from Police Lt. John Kraemer, dated 8/25/15, noting no safety concerns; an email from Assistant Town Engineer Thomas Ryder, dated 9/4/15, with no comments or objections; an email from Fire Chief Dennis Condon, dated 9/4/15, with no comments; an email from Town Engineer Anthony DelGaizo, dated 9/3/15, with comments and an email from Tara Gurge of the Health Department, dated 9/8/15, with concerns regarding trash, dumpster pick up schedule and comments. Ms. McKnight asked if these concerns had been addressed yet. Town Engineer DelGaizo stated there is an agreement among the owners regarding cleanliness and responsibilities.

Karen Waller, co-owner of Center Café, noted there are currently 5 businesses that take 26 cubic feet of trash weekly. Trash will be picked up 4 times per week. The second dumpster is cardboard only and will be picked up 2 times per week. Currently most are picked up one time per week. She is recommending a metal frame on the

inside and wood on the outside enclosure. It is much more durable. Ms. Waller stated she represents the Thomas' (property owners of 1027 Great Plain Ave.) and Betsy Heffernan is the other property owner.

Ms. McKnight asked why daily disposal is not needed. Ms. Waller stated if there is a summer time issue the applicants will deal with it if they need to. She is happy to have it picked up 5 or 6 times per week if necessary. Steve Waller noted currently the applicants put cardboard and trash in the same space. It is more efficient if it is separated. Ms. Waller added the dumpster company replaces bad dumpsters.

Ms. McKnight asked about a grease barrel. Ms. Waller stated it is picked up every week or 2 weeks. She is looking to get everyone to use the same grease recycling company. That is a square modulated structure that needs to be maintained and cannot be open in the parking lot. Ms. Grimes asked if, currently, all owners have their own. Ms. Waller stated yes. The applicants do not want it in the trash enclosure. She is not sure it makes sense to put it in the same place.

Mr. Waller stated it may not make sense to have a centrally located grease container. Ms. McKnight asked how the Board of Health makes sure it is ok. Ms. Waller stated it is inspected regularly. Ms. Gurge is very supportive of the restaurants in town and she appreciates her. Chris Lianis, owner of Needham Center Fine Wines, stated he is looking forward to this. He feels it will be a benefit to all and will beautify the space.

Ms. Grimes stated she is excited for this. She feels it will improve this area greatly and will attract more people. Mr. Jacobs stated he is in favor of this idea. He asked Town Engineer DelGaizo to show how the trucks will come in and unload. Mr. DelGaizo showed the process and noted it will be 2 separate trucks. Mr. Jacobs noted 5 or 6 truck visits a week. He asked the Waller's if they had seen the license and agreement document. Mr. and Mrs. Waller stated they had seen it.

Mr. Jacobs asked who decided on 5 years for the agreement. Ms. Waller stated she was not sure. Ms. Newman feels it was Ms. Bailin for the town. She noted Town Counsel has approved. Mr. Jacobs asked what happens after 5 years. Mr. Waller commented they hope it will be renewed but it will be up to the Town and the businesses to review.

Mr. Alpert stated he feels it is a great idea to consolidate. This will help from a health point of view. It is great the Town is willing to do this. He stated the waiver requested made him think. Bike racks were mentioned and he would like a bike rack installed. Town Engineer DelGaizo noted there were no bike racks within the boundary of the property. Mr. Waller stated there were new racks put in on the bank side. Town Engineer DelGaizo stated that is not within the property. Mr. Alpert stated he would like to encourage racks being put in wherever they can be.

Mr. Eisenhut stated there is no parking for commuters. More are walking. Mass Bike is doing a campaign and more racks will be utilized. He feels if people see the bike racks they will use them. The racks need to be visible. Town Engineer DelGaizo stated there is no place within the Chapel Street property for a bike rack. Mr. Jacobs commented he is not in favor of putting a bike rack inside the parking lot.

Mr. Alpert stated in paragraph 4, it noted Heffernan and Thomas are responsible for trash. This should be clear in the agreement. He would like to see bike racks if possible. If it cannot be done, it cannot be done. In general he would like to see more landscaping in this lot. Mr. Eisenhut stated he experiences this lot every day. It is a mess and not safe for pedestrians. There is no safe passage. The Board could look at the feasibility of taking out 3 spaces that go across to the railroad. The Newman School is precedent for this. It calms traffic and is aesthetically pleasing. It is safer. He would like the Town to look at the cost and feasibility. Ms. Newman stated she could send a letter to the Board of Selectmen requesting they look at that.

Mr. Lianis, of Needham Fine Wines, stated he thinks the Town has been generous with this project already. It is an important project for small businesses. Betsy Heffernan stated she agrees with all his thoughts. The town has been looking at the downtown streetscape and looking to get the poles underground. It is one step at a time. She agrees everyone has to work together to make it look better.

Ms. McKnight commented a tree is being removed. The MBTA trees have mostly died. She asked if there is a place replacement trees could be planted. Town Manager DelGaizo noted there is a little island with one tree. He may be able to get one tree near the entrance. Ms. Waller stated the MBTA transformers are there. Ms. McKnight stated she would like a small tree if feasible. She asked what time the trash is picked up. She noted the permit says not before 7:00 a.m. and she feels this limitation needs to continue. Ms. Grimes agreed the Board needs to reiterate the limitations remain.

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

VOTED: to close the hearing.

Ms. Newman noted there are 2 decisions being discussed. Ms. McKnight stated she would like to see a tree. Ms. Grimes noted the Streetscape Committee has been looking at this. She would hate to put a tree and have the committee take it down in a year. Ms. Newman stated the trees could be put in in a coordinated fashion. Then the timing could be worked out. Ms. McKnight noted the time for disposal needs to be reiterated and the Board of Health frequency. Mr. Alpert stated there should be a condition that the applicant must meet the Board of Health requirements. Ms. Grimes and Mr. Jacobs agreed.

Mr. Jacobs stated there should be a condition when the permit is issued that if the license terminates the property would go back to the current conditions. Ms. McKnight stated that is a de minimus modification. Mr. Alpert stated the town would also go back to the current conditions. Also, license as may be extended. Mr. Eisenhut stated he would like the Town Engineer to look at the initial feasibility of a walkway from Town Hall to the railroad and the feasibility of bike racks. Ms. McKnight stated that there is not a condition in the permit.

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

VOTED: to deem the changes of Center Café as discussed de minimus.

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

VOTED: to grant de minimus changes per the conditions discussed.

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

VOTED: to grant a Major Project Site Plan Review under Section 7.4 of the Zoning By-Law, a Special Permit under Section 7.5.2 pursuant to Section 1.4.6, to alter or reconstruct a preexisting nonconforming Parking lot; a Special Permit under Section 5.1.1.5 and 5.1.1.6 to waive strict adherence to the requirements of Section 5.1.3, Parking Plan and Design Requirements per the conditions discussed.

Ms. Newman noted the next 2 hearings are to be discussed together.

7:30 p.m. – Major Project Site Plan Special Permit No. 2015-05: Normandy Real Estate Partners, 99 Summer Street, Boston, MA, Petitioner (Property located at 77 A Street, 156 B Street, 189 B Street & 0 A Street, Needham, MA 02494).

7:30 p.m. – Amendment to Major Project Site Plan Special Permit No. 2015-06: Normandy Real Estate Partners, 99 Summer Street, Boston, MA, Petitioner (Property located at 77 A Street, 156 B Street, 189 B Street & 0 A Street, Needham, MA 02494).

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

VOTED: to combine the 2 hearings for discussion purposes.

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

VOTED: to waive the reading of the public hearing notice.

Roy Cramer, representative for the applicant, noted this is the property that General Dynamics owned. Normandy purchased it in December 2014. The applicant proposes to divide off 5 plus acres for a 390 unit 40B project. The applicant has received a site plan approval letter and will file with the ZBA next month. The rest of the project will redevelop 77 A Street, which will be slightly smaller, redevelop 189 B Street, which will be slightly smaller, take down 156 B Street and put a 128-unit hotel the same size as the Marriott and retail space. He noted the project will reconfigure the parking. The applicant will utilize a portion of 189 B Street as temporary space for 77 A Street tenants. It was felt it was better to expand the Trip Advisor parking and give permanent parking.

Mr. Cramer noted there were only 3 open issues with the DPW at this point. The project is 98% done with the engineering components. That will be discussed at the next meeting. He reviewed the Special Permits being requested and noted this is a phased project. Parking and traffic will be discussed at the next meeting. One building has a 16 foot setback from the rear. This was fine when the building was built but now the setback is 20 feet so it is legal nonconforming. The applicant is requesting a waiver.

Mr. Cramer gave an overview of the project and the Master plan permit. The applicant would like 77 A Street to be the architectural basis for 189 B Street. The infrastructure is there for 128 West. The number of parking spaces in the garages is increasing and Engineering had no comments. Kevin Daly, of Normandy, stated they are trying to make it a true mixed use area. The project has consolidated parking, screened and tucked it in the middle of the site. He noted there are 3 different architects – SMMA Architects for the redesign of 77 A Street, Procon for the hotel component and Elkus Manfredi Architects.

Brian Roessler, of Elkus Manfredi Architects, noted there are 3 parcels and one master plan. 128 East is 77 A Street and a hotel building. Landscaping ties it all together. The project will be expanding the 128 West garage by 3 bays. There will be a meandering walkway from Trip Advisors through the garages. It is a pedestrian oriented environment.

Eben Tormey, of XSS Hotels, developed the Residence Suites. It is a 5 story hotel with retail on the first floor. Homewood Suites will be 88,000 square feet. The first floor will be 20,000 square feet with retail on the first floor, a 12,000 square foot lobby and 4 floors of guest rooms. The applicant has gone to the Design Review Board and some adjustments have been made. Mr. Cramer stated the Design Review Board liked the 128 East project. He wants to get the Board's reactions to the changes.

Jason Diorio, of ProCon, noted this is 88,000 square feet. People will be able to tell the difference between the hotel and the retail. The same materials are being used as Residence Inn. The applicant has changed the metal panel, added a dark band, added brick on the end and added windows. There will be oversize windows. They played with the parapet and made a nice roof element. There will be short term parking in front for the retail. He noted there will be breakfast 7 days a week, a bar, meeting space, and a fitness and pool area. All rooms have a small kitchenette. A restaurant is a hotel amenity and will be open to the public but that will not be advertised.

Mark Spaulding, of SMMA, showed the existing conditions of 77 A Street. There will be new points of entry and large internal courtyards. Three points of entry will be created. The cafeteria and fitness center have shared elements of the campus users. The courtyard space identifies the entry area. There will be an overlay of metal panels on the curved side. There will be a primary tenant's entry point. He noted the entrance to the north on A Street has glazing, an entry portal, metal overlay and signage. The project is not changing the geometry of the building. This is reducing about 3,200 square feet. A portion of the façade on A Street is 2-story.

Mr. Roessler noted the new 5 bay garage. The applicant is using the additional perforated screen to break up the façade. The building is similar in color to the garage. It looks less like a garage and more of a building. They will add some surface treatment to the existing garage. Both garages have 8 levels and are 80 feet tall. There are

4 entry points to the garage where there is currently one entry point. There are currently 1,100 spaces and there will be 2,600 spaces.

Mr. Jacobs asked how wide the sidewalk is. Mr. Roessler stated it was about 20 feet and the grass slopes up. Jade Cummings, of Terraink, Inc., stated the project has visual continuity, material continuity, safety and access. There is a strong central access through the project. The proponents will use land forms and earth art. There will be softscape components on the green side and hardscape on the Trip Advisors side. There will be different zones. The applicants are proposing a bocci ball court at the beginning of the meander. There will be a series of berms, land art, bituminous concrete and unit paver elements. There will be a chess/checker area. The project will have 20 feet to provide for a fire access. Mr. Eisenhut asked about the pervious nature of the material. Ms. Cummings stated she is working with Engineering to meet the pervious requirements. The paving will meander and will be a mix of impervious pavers and pavers on concrete. Pervious pavers will be used in other areas.

Mr. Eisenhut stated he would like the applicant to look at more pervious materials for the walkway between the garages. Ms. Cummings stated there will be plantings throughout the area. There is a natural palette where it makes sense. Kevin Daly, of Normandy, stated they will look at pervious materials. Ms. Cummings stated it is a challenge with berming, grading and materials throughout.

Ms. McKnight noted the following correspondence for the record: a memo from Matt Varrell, of the Conservation Commission, stating the Commission has no jurisdiction on this site and with comments; a memo from Tara Gurge, of the Health Department, with comments; a memo from Police Lt. John Kraemer with comments and recommendations; a memo from Fire Chief Dennis Condon with comments and recommendations regarding parapets around courtyards; a memo from Town Engineer Anthony DelGaizo with comments and a memo from the Design Review Board noting the Board reviewed the design for 77 A Street and are generally satisfied.

Mr. Jacobs asked the Normandy representatives to give some thought to the meander, stretching things between the 2 garages and possibly decreasing the height. Kevin Daly, of Normandy, stated they will look at it. Robert Deutsch, of 14 Hardy Street, wanted to know construction timelines and hours. Ms. McKnight clarified the project will be phased. Mr. Daly stated on this side of the project, once the permits are in hand in early 2016, there will be a 12 month timeline for 77 A Street. The hotel, which they will start the first quarter of 2016, has the same timeframe. He noted 189 B Street lags behind as there are no tenants yet. The hours will probably start at 8:00 a.m. due to the hotel on site. He thinks it will be 8:00 a.m. to 3:00 p.m. or so with maybe some longer days.

Mr. Deutsch asked about blasting. Mr. Daly stated there would not be any blasting but possibly a little chipping. Ms. Newman stated the Board may need more data for a traffic study at the Third Avenue and B Street entrance.

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

VOTED: to continue both applications to 9/29/15.

Discuss zoning amendments for the Fall Special Town Meeting.

Ms. Newman noted the Selectmen are voting tonight on Moe Handel's article regarding historical structures to refer it back to the Planning Board. Mr. Alpert recalled the definition of historic structure and the concept of not just being on the historic register but being a certain number of years old and having a recommendation of the Historic Commission that there is historic value. He noted in sub paragraph e, the concept would be at least 75 years old and the Historical Commission has found the structure to be of significant historic value. Mr. Eisenhut noted the Board should say 100 years as that is the standard definition. Mr. Alpert suggested 100 years from when it is approved.

Ms. Grimes stated she is not for it. Ms. McKnight noted she would rather stick with listed properties. She feels it would be easier to get through Town Meeting. Mr. Eisenhut agreed. Mr. Jacobs stated he is good with it the way it is. Mr. Alpert withdrew his suggestions.

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

VOTED: to refer the article to the Board of Selectmen.

Minutes

Ms. McKnight noted on page 2, 2nd to last paragraph, take out “and FAR and limitations.” On page 4, third paragraph, after subdivision should be “, since some waivers...” On the bottom of page 2, 2nd line, should say “owners” not “owner.”

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

VOTED: to adopt the minutes of 5/26/15 with changes.

Board of Appeals – September 17, 2015

John and Neila Whitbeck, 34 Meadowbrook Road, Needham, MA – 348 Manning Street and 34 Parkinson Street.

Ms. McKnight noted she liked certain of the design features. There is a one-car garage, that it was setback from the front and used various materials on the front and side. It does seem to have a very high roof profile. There is a usable third floor and with the third floor it would have an FAR of .37. The proposals that the Large House Committee were focusing on were .34 for a proposal like this. Mr. Eisenhut clarified Ms. McKnight noted the proponent is proposing an FAR of .38 and the Board would prefer a .32 limit. Ms. McKnight stated that was correct. Mr. Jacobs noted there are standards in the By-Law.

Mr. Eisenhut stated he feels there is an inappropriate massing scale for the neighborhood. Ms. McKnight stated she has an issue with the height. There is a very high roof. Ms. Newman stated it is within the limits.

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

VOTED: to comment the ZBA needs to determine if there is appropriate scale and mass as the Planning Board has a question regarding this.

Aaron Heesch and Allison Latt Heesch, 300 Second Avenue, Needham, MA – 20 Sherman Street.

Ms. McKnight stated this is the same issue as the previous. It is a tall and massive house.

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

VOTED: to comment the ZBA needs to determine if there is appropriate scale and mass as the Planning Board has a question regarding this.

Report from the Planning Director and Board members.

Ms. Newman gave the Board an update on the Rockwood subdivision. There is still a no build requirement. Everything is at a halt. There are still some safety issues. Mr. Jacobs asked if the Board should ask the applicant to come in and explain the safety issues. Ms. Newman will speak with Engineering.

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

VOTED: to adjourn the meeting at 10:30 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,
Donna J. Kalinowski, Notetaker

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to be 'Elizabeth Grimes', written over a horizontal line.

Elizabeth Grimes, Vice-Chairman and Clerk