

NEEDHAM PLANNING BOARD MINUTES

March 29, 2016

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, March 29, 2016 at 7:00 p.m. with Messrs. Eisenhut 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 the following correspondence for the record: a notice from the Dedham Planning Board with changes to the Zoning By-Law on Mixed Use. She noted she found the information on page 3 regarding dwelling units in a Mixed-Use Development interesting. Each dwelling unit cannot be less than 400 square feet or more than 1,500 square feet. She questions this. She thought generally square footage could not be regulated. She noted a notice from the City of Newton and commented she found this interesting. Newton is changing street facing garages. She suggested the Board might want to find out what Newton is doing.

Ms. McKnight also noted copies of Needham Times articles: an article by Karen Price, dated 3/10/16, regarding the Large House issue; a letter dated 3/10/16 thanking Sam Bass Warner and an article dated 2/25/16 regarding food trucks in down town and a petitioned article to liberalize regulations. Mr. Jacobs asked if the Board has been asked to give their opinion on the food truck issue. Mr. Eisenhut stated there has been enormous success in Boston. The thinking is it brings in business. Mr. Jacobs stated he does not buy that. Not with all the restaurants in town. Ms. McKnight commented she thinks it is working people who want a quick bite to pick up. She noted Danny at Bagel's Best thinks it is competition.

Ms. Newman stated she shares the concerns. The restaurants have significant expenses with rent and such and food trucks have no expenses. The trucks are properly put in areas where it is underserved. The place for food trucks is at places like Memorial Field at events. Mr. Eisenhut stated he does not want to express an opinion to the Selectmen. Mr. Jacobs stated he will express his opinion to the Council of Economic Advisors (CEA).

Transfer of Permit: Major Project Site Plan Review No. 2006-04: Asillem, LLC, d/b/a Stone Heath Pizza Co, P.O. Box 725, Sherborn, MA 01770 to Sol Soul Family Foods, LLC d/b/a Heath Pizzeria, 59 Mount Vernon Avenue, Needham, MA 02494, Petitioner (Property located at 974 Great Plain Avenue, Needham, MA).

Ms. Newman noted this has been put off.

Public Hearing:

7:00 p.m. – Major Project Site Plan Review No. 2010-03: F & A Farms, Inc. d/b/a Volante Farms, 226 Brookside Road, Needham, MA 02492, Petitioner (Property located at 292 Forest Street, Needham, MA).

Luke Showalter, Project Engineer for Sage Engineering and Contracting, Inc., stated the existing farm stand is about 25,000 square feet with the greenhouse. The original plan was approved in 2010. There will be 3 major changes. For the frontage on Forest and Brookside, they will tear down a dilapidated barn. Two barns will be built at 4,075 square feet to store farm equipment. The barns will be pre-engineered steel constructed buildings. There will be underground storm water management features.

Mr. Showalter noted there will be a renovation of an area in the basement. This will be a prep kitchen. He noted the applicant wants to expand to meet the need. The third modification will be to the parking area to meet the requirements of the barns and food prep area. The project will add 11 net total parking spots. This will exceed the required amount. He noted the Conservation Commission approved on 1/14/16. He met with Planning

Director Newman and Assistant Planner Clee to review the plans and address all comments. On 3/7/16 he met with the Design Review Board (DRB) with revised plans to address their comments. Mr. Jacobs asked if there is a gravel road and was informed there was a gravel road to the barn. Mr. Jacobs asked if it would remain gravel. Dave Volante stated it would remain gravel. Ms. McKnight asked about deliveries. Mr. Volante stated the barns will just be for long-term storage for farm equipment and dry storage. He stated they send no trucks up Brookside Road.

Mr. Eisenhut noted there are 2 existing home by the farm and asked if the houses were owned by the Volantes. Mr. Volante stated the houses are owned by his mother and sister. Mr. Showalter stated they have responded to DPW comments with control measures to meet NPDES requirements.

Ms. McKnight noted the following correspondence for the record: a letter from Assistant Town Engineer Thomas Ryder referring to the plan with NPDES requirements; an email from Fire Chief Dennis Condon, dated 3/25/16, with no objections; an email from Police Lt. John Kraemer, dated 3/3/16, with no concerns; and a memo from Tara Gurge of the Board of Health, dated 3/23/16, with comments.

Ms. McKnight asked if there were new drainage facilities. Mr. Showalter stated the project will utilize underground infiltration chambers. It will catch roof runoff and parking lot run off and will be under the pavement. Ms. Newman stated the DPW has reviewed and signed off. Ms. McKnight asked about landscaping. Mr. Volante stated there will be landscaping in front of the barn. There will be dogwoods and shrubs. In the strip between the road and the parking lot he will extend the existing landscaping and screening with the same varieties and spacing. Ms. McKnight stated she sees maples on sheet C3. Mr. Volante stated he will not match the entire strip. Ms. McKnight noted she would like a landscape plan as a condition.

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

VOTED: to close the hearing.

Ms. Newman noted she will prepare a decision for the next meeting. Mr. Eisenhut stated he would like a condition that there will be no deliveries on Brookside Road to the barn. He would also like a landscape plan with more detail.

Appointment:

7:30 p.m. – Presentation regarding Hillside School at Central Avenue.

Mr. Jacobs stated he would like some sense of what the applicant wants from the Board. Michele Rogers, of Dore & Whittier Architects, stated she would like feedback if the project is going in right direction and any other feedback. She commented they need to know of any changes ahead of time. Henry Haff stated there is a warrant article at Town Meeting for the acquisition of 609 Central Avenue although it is not required the town get that property. Ms. Rogers gave a project overview and noted it is a K-5 Elementary School with the preferred site at Central Avenue.

Mr. Haff stated in 1/2016 the applicant began the schematic design. The town purchased the property on 3/7/16 which includes 6 houses and 6 structures. There is a potential parcel at 609 Central Avenue with a signed offer pending Town Meeting approval. Ms. Rogers noted the applicants have begun site design development. They met with the DRB, Permanent Public Building Committee (PPBC) and Conservation Commission this week. They have also met with the Fire, Police, School Superintendent, Principal, teachers and parents. She reviewed the design project schedule. Construction will start in 2018 and there will be a new school in 2020. There will be 430 students in a 90,732 square foot building with a 3-story academic wing.

Ms. Rogers described the features and the rooms. The classrooms are in one area to be kept private. The quasi public spaces are all in one area which is separated. She noted cars and buses are separated for site circulation.

She stated the parcel backs up to Briarwood Circle, Taylor Street and homes on Central Avenue and Sunset Rd. About half the site is wetlands. One parcel is on Sunset. Behind Sunset is in the Town of Needham but Wellesley owns the wetlands that abut its water supply. Most homes in the area are one to 2 story tall single family. Steven Popper, of the PPBC, stated there were a lot of questions from neighbors. There was the normal expected concern. There has been communication and the angst seems to have diminished. He noted the bus drop off is on Sunset.

Mr. Haff stated Needham has a license agreement with Wellesley for the abutting pond, field and knoll area. Mr. Jacobs stated licenses can be terminated by the licensor at any time. Mr. Haff stated the Needham By-Laws only allow for 10 year licenses. Both Town Counsels drafted the license. They will have to fund the licensed improvements separately. There will be a small play field and walking trails. Mr. Jacobs stated he would like to take a look at the license agreement.

Ms. McKnight stated she does not see a plan that shows how many people are going to be affected by the bus turnaround. Ms. Rogers stated she showed existing conditions and the demo plan. She noted the town will keep the house on Sunset for the contractor if he needs it for a trailer office. She showed the buildings to be demolished. She noted the view of the pond which is proposed to be used as a science pond. Ms. McKnight asked if there was an environmental study done at the site. Mr. Haff noted there was and there is an order of conditions from the Needham Conservation Commission. It requires removal of non-compliant fill the owner put in and some animal oil left by the former owner. There is some asbestos in the houses that will be remediated with the demolition.

Ms. Rogers stated there is a 25 foot setback required from the wetlands and a FEMA flood plain on the site. She filed an LOMA plan with FEMA to adopt and accept elevation 85 as the Flood Plain line. The project will fill in Elevation 85 in some areas and cut back in others. The applicants are asking the Conservation Commission for approval to re-grade in some jurisdictional areas. She reviewed the floor plan. The 3-story part of the building is the academic wing. They are using the existing contours and do not exceed the height limitation. There is a 14 foot difference between the lowest grade and the highest grade. The project may need a waiver for height. K and 1 will be on the lower level, 2 and 3 on the main level and 4 and 5 on the upper level. There will be a 2-story library in the middle of the building.

Ms. McKnight stated the High Rock School had solar panels. Ms. Rogers stated the project is not starting with solar panels but they will be equipped for the future. Mr. Haff noted it will be a LEED silver certified building. The town will get 2 additional MSBA reimbursement points with the LEED silver certification.

Ms. Rogers noted there are 95 parking spaces shown on the site plan. The parent cars and buses are separate. The parents enter at the southern end and circulate in and around the parking lot and exit back out at the same point. There will be a gate on the northern entrance. Vans enter the same but then cut through to the van drop off. There will be a path from the sidewalk to the sensory garden and other gardens to the lower student entry door. Buses will enter and exit via Cefalo and Sunset Road. Emergency vehicles will also have a separate northern entrance with a gate off Central Avenue with access to the front and back. Ms. McKnight asked if there will be a crossing guard and was informed there would be a guard and a cross walk. There will be flashing lights.

Ms. Rogers noted visibility is best at the southern entry location. Deliveries are not scheduled during pick up and drop off. There is a fenced in Kindergarten play area. Ms. Grimes stated she has a problem with the bus route. She lives in the Hillside district and has kids that attend the school. The parent drop-off loop seems wonderful. The bus loop, however, is going through 2 quaint dead end streets. The neighbors will now have all buses on their streets 4 times per day. Mr. Haff stated there will be all day kindergarten by the time this is built eliminating mid-day transitions. Ms. Grimes stated the bus route bothers her. There might be other options. Mr. Haff noted the project acquiring 609 Central Avenue will help reduce the impact of buses. The street widths are all designed appropriately to town standards and can accommodate busses.

Ms. Grimes stated she has a problem with the buses going through a neighborhood. She asked how many parking spaces are needed for staff. Ms. Rogers stated at 1.5 times the full time equivalent staff the project would need 118 spaces. The current design has 95 spaces. Ms. McKnight asked if consideration was given to buses going in the right side and around back and putting the play space elsewhere.

Ms. Rogers stated the storm water management meets the town requirements. There will be gravel wetlands created to receive some of the runoff. She described the site setbacks. The majority of the site is in Single Residence A with some Single Residence B. The project meets all setbacks. She noted they want to place a shed for gas, snow blowers and such. Ms. Newman noted it cannot be put at the location described, but George Giunta Jr. clarified it is not a structure if under 10 feet high. Ms. Rogers asked if the front yard on Sunset is only the width of the street. Ms. Newman noted she would need to look at it. Ms. Rogers stated there is a 10 foot wide planted edge along the street. The project is proposing fencing where they do not meet the transition setback. Mr. Haff noted section 4.2.8 in the Bylaws regarding transitions. Everything within the 25 foot transition area is a driveway. Ms. McKnight asked if the abutter is affected by the turnaround area. Ms. Rogers noted if the town acquired 609 Central Avenue the drive aisle will be extended and 100 spaces would be accommodated on site. The buses will enter from Central Avenue and come out on Sunset. Ms. Grimes noted this alleviates a lot of her concerns. It will help the abutters keep their neighborhood feel.

Ms. McKnight asked what kind of programs are at the school apart from the school day. Ms. Rogers stated that is the reason they wanted public/private zones in the building. The gym will be used by the public as well as the cafeteria and possibly the library. Mr. Haff stated the fields will likely not be used by Park & Recreation after school programs.

Mr. Popper asked if he could mention to the Finance Committee the Planning Board's thoughts on the improvements made to the plan with 609 Central as it is being recommended by the Selectmen at May Town Meeting. Ms. McKnight stated the zoning concern would be resolved by the purchase of this parcel. Ms. Grimes stated she would like more buffer for the house next to the bus lane. Ms. McKnight asked about cars at night. Ms. Rogers noted it depends on the function. The people would park in the lot and go in the front or main door.

Ms. Rogers noted there is a sensory garden and raised garden beds. There will be a retaining seat wall with a pop up wall to write on, an outdoor art closet, another sensory area with a swing, another outdoor teaching space with bench seats and a small amphitheater with 2 levels of seating along the path to the lower entry. There will be a bituminous path or pervious surface, color coding, hop scotch, four square, 2 playgrounds and a field in back for physical education. There is an existing pond, with a proposed walking trail around the field and bridges, color pavements, bike racks and lots of trees. They are working with the science teacher and arborist to plant new trees that coordinate with the science curriculum.

Mr. Eisenhut stated he would encourage pervious surfaces. Mr. Jacobs expressed safety concerns with kids around the pond water.

Decision: Major Project Site Plan Special Permit No. 2016-01: 57 Dedham Avenue LLC, 471 Hunnewell Street, Needham, MA, Petitioner (Property located at 15 & 17 oak Street, Needham, MA).

George Giunta Jr. noted he has the decision. Mr. Jacobs noted point 1.16 says average illumination level of less than one foot candle. Mr. Giunta Jr. stated it should just say it has to be adequate if that is the concern. Mr. Jacobs noted that was his concern. Ms. Newman will add to 3.19 that it must be adequate. Ms. McKnight noted basic "and adequate." Mr. Giunta Jr. stated he has not had an issue with too little lighting. Mr. Jacobs commented he just wants some kind of measure to fall back on. Maybe adequate is enough. Ms. McKnight noted in 3.9 the proposed sidewalk and asked if it is shown on the plans. Ms. Newman stated it is shown on the plan but it could be clearer. Ms. Newman will clarify the sidewalk is along the entire frontage. Ms. McKnight stated "of the premises."

Ms. McKnight stated in the last sentence of Section 4.7, the following phrase should be taken out: "unless it finds that the use of the property in question or the construction of the site has not begun". The Board should not grant an extension provided unless there is good cause. All members agreed. Mr. Giunta Jr. noted the requested plan modification to include a formal landscape plan. He requested this be removed. The Design Review Board did not see a need for it. Ms. McKnight clarified she wants to know if the landscaping would be trees, shrubs or other plantings. Ms. Newman noted the Board always required a landscape plan. She noted the contractor could do the landscape plan just stating what caliper and species. This is the cheaper way.

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

VOTED: to grant a Major Project Site Plan Special Permit under Section 7.4 of the By-Law; a Special Permit under Section 1.4.6 of the By-Law and a Special Permit under Section 3.2.2 of the By-law and additional waivers as set forth, and all as set forth in the draft decision that was circulated and discussed today.

ANR Plan – Needham Nine Owner, LLC, Petitioner (Property located at 77 A Street, 156 B Street and 0 A Street, Needham, MA).

Ms. Newman noted this is Normandy. There is a letter acknowledging the cross easement not on the ANR Plan. This has not been drafted yet. The applicant wants an easement or parcel before it gets conveyed off. She noted the letter in the packet describes it.

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

VOTED: to endorse the plan ANR.

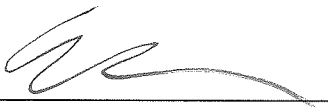
Report from the Planning Director and Board members.

Ms. Newman noted she had a meeting with the Selectmen regarding medical marijuana. There is a school at 255 Highland Avenue the Board did not know about. It is a school under what the Planning Board defined. It is public and non-profit. The Board used public or private and did not use non-profit. It is a Special Education school with an academic component.

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

VOTED: to adjourn the meeting at 9:46 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,
Donna J. Kalinowski, Notetaker



Elizabeth Grimes, Vice-Chairman and Clerk