

NEEDHAM PLANNING BOARD MINUTES

November 14, 2017

The regular meeting of the Planning Board held in the Charles River Room, Public Services Administration Building, was called to order by Ted Owens, Chairman, on Tuesday, November 14, 2017, at 7:00 p.m. with Messrs. Jacobs and Alpert and Mmes. Grimes and McKnight, as well as Planning Director, Ms. Newman and Recording Secretary, Ms. Kalinowski.

Public Hearing Continued:

7:00 p.m. – Major Project Site Plan Review Special Permit No. 2004-01 Amendment 2017 -- Needham High School Addition and Renovations. (Property located at 609 Webster Street).

Hank Haff, representative for the applicant, stated the drawings had been revised. Bill Brown, Landscape Architect, walked the Board through the plan and described the area. He noted the handicap ramp from the drop off to the cafeteria will be paved. Memorial bricks will be relocated at the entry with decorative gravel and native rocks. The project will be reusing plants that are being transplanted. There will be 5 birch trees, cranberry bushes and low sumacs. The project will use cranberry bushes on the slope, 3 crabapple trees, viburnums, which are a low shrub and malankias, which are shorter trees that spread out and bloom. There will be one sugar maple and another maple, low ground cover vinca, deciduous evergreens, bottle brush grass along the edge, wild ginger under the tree and dwarf red twig dogwoods. All plants are 3 to 3½ feet. There will be a butterfly bush at the entrance and black eyed susans. The plants will be spaced so they grow together in a couple of years.

Ms. McKnight stated she looked at the Webster Street side and took photos. It is steeply sloped. She asked why the line was drawn where it was. Mr. Brown stated that is the limit of the work. He noted some cranberry bushes may be moved over. Ms. McKnight stated she would like to see an extension of that concept so the whole slope is treated the same. Mr. Brown noted something could possibly be done with ground cover or shrubs that are not high. Mr. Haff stated it comes down to budget but it could be looked at. Aaron Sicotte, Needham High School Principal, stated the Rotary Club has shown interest in plantings. Ms. McKnight noted she would like the plantings to continue a little further.

Mr. Haff stated the location of the columns moved to the southern edge of the building. There are upper floor interior modifications. There is a refinement of the plans with a modification of the glazing with the ground floor glazing being brought along the face. This is due to a cost savings and to allow the ground level to be articulated. He noted all changes are bubbled on the plans. Michele Rogers, of Dore & Whittier Architects, reviewed the waivers being requested. Mr. Owens stated most are pre-existing. There are 2 changes -- FAR and an increase in height. The lot coverage was 15% maximum in 2004, is currently 18.4% and is going to 22%. FAR is going from .44 to .49. The existing height is 45 feet and will be 65 or 66 feet in height. Mr. Jacobs asked for the rationale for Special Permit number 3 for pre-existing lighting. Ms. Rogers stated she does not do site plan analysis and cannot certify the lights. The lights were accepted in 2004. She is asking the lights continue to be accepted. Mr. Haff noted there are no changes to any parking lot lighting.

Mr. Owens stated the applicant is going to the Design Review Board (DRB) next Monday night. Ms. Newman asked if there were any unique conditions the Board wants applied. She will put together a draft approving the existing site plan. Ms. Grimes questioned the parking lot access and potential one way of Admiral Gracey Way. Ms. McKnight asked if Admiral Gracey Way is a public way or private. Principal Sicotte noted there was a long term issue and a short term issue. The short term is how to get everyone on site without it becoming totally chaotic. For the project, one of the main entrances will be cut out. The access road was used for egress a decade ago. There are ongoing conversations that that may be the best option. It provides an option and a diversion to Webster Street. It provides one side of the building with entry and one side with egress that the school does not have now.

Ms. Grimes asked if that could be a condition for the construction period and how traffic is managed on site. Mr. Jacobs noted February to August is an unusually rapid construction schedule. What if it does not happen? He would like to see some plan in the event it does not proceed as rapidly as possible. Principal Sicotte stated they would just continue what happened February to June with the access and egress plan.

Ms. McKnight asked if the Board members would agree to extending the landscaping approximately 20 feet farther. Mr. Owens stated that is beyond the scope of the project. He added citizens groups have offered to assist. Mr. Haff commented he could have the designer make a recommendation but he cannot guarantee it would happen in this project. Ms. McKnight stated she is ok with that. Mr. Alpert asked what the Board is requiring in the Special Permit. Ms. Rogers stated the applicant would make a good faith effort but do not want it in the documentation. Ms. Newman stated she will do it as a plan modification. She will note the area of future plantings. Mr. Owens noted the hearing would be held open and the Planning Director will draft a decision.

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

VOTED: to continue the hearing to 11/28/17 at 7:00 p.m. at Needham Town Hall.

Informational Item – 305 Dedham Street Zoning, Padma Sri Jammalamadaka, owner, seeks a zoning change from SRB to GR so as to allow a 2 family use at the subject property.

Padma Sri Jammalamadaka stated she has been at 305 Dedham Avenue for 10 years. Lot 50 is between the railroad and the house. She is trying to get a small house built on it. She noted there is a 50 foot N Star easement. Mr. Jacobs asked if the applicant knew about the N Star easement when she bought the property. Ms. Jammalamadaka stated she did not know. She would like to see if the Board can change the zoning for multi-family. Mr. Owens stated the Board cannot do spot zoning. He thought there were 2 buildable lots but there are not. He noted the Board cannot offer her any relief. Mr. Jacobs commented he did not know the second lot is unbuildable. He suggested Ms. Jammalamadaka see someone who specializes in Real Estate. Mr. Alpert agreed.

Recreational Marijuana – Update.

Ms. Grimes stated she has reached out to other towns but did not have a chance to put anything together. Ms. McKnight stated she photocopied some pages from the Cannabis Commission website that she thought would be useful to the Board. The Commission has been having a listening period. It is almost over, then the Commission will prepare draft regulations. She explained the timeline. Ms. Newman stated the Board may want to look at how the medical marijuana was done.

Informational Item – Proposed Zoning Bylaw Amendment to Neighborhood Business District.

Mr. Owens noted the applicant made a presentation to the Council of Economic Advisors (CEA). Terrence Morris, attorney for the applicant, noted the Panella's have owned the property at 40-50 Central Avenue for 80 years. The family is invested in this area of town. He described the area. The applicants would like to redraw the line to follow their lot line. Michael Panella, owner, stated there was a neighborhood meeting. Flyers were handed out up and down Reservoir Street and down Central Avenue to Gould Street. Fifty to sixty homes got the flyers. There were several representatives from neighborhoods there at the meeting.

Mr. Morris stated the Panella's would like to revitalize this area of town. Residential use is not allowed. He has drafted a proposed warrant article. A1 apartment use is the most permissive. Ms. McKnight noted 4 stories are allowed in the Center Business District and this district only allows 3 stories. Mr. Morris stated he would like the Planning Board to support this article at Town Meeting. Michael Panella stated he needs to renovate upstairs but would like to renovate the whole property.

Ms. Grimes, noting the barber shop across the street, asked if there were apartments upstairs. Mr. Morris confirmed there were apartment upstairs. He stated the apartments are pre-existing, nonconforming. Mr. Jacobs

stated he has no problem with the principle. The town may want to do more to stimulate growth. He stated he likes what Mr. Morris drafted but he is not sure about the second part. He likes the concept. Ms. Grimes noted she also likes the concept but would limit to this area. She is in favor of doing something but in this area. She likes the overlay concept.

Mr. Alpert stated he is in favor of what the applicants want to do. He would like to reexamine this whole area. He would like to change the map to put all the area of the applicant's lots in one district. Mr. Owens commented he is hearing a very positive response from the Planning Board. He supports the concept. He would like the applicant to work with the Planning staff.

Board of Appeals --- November 16, 2017.

Saptarshi Gehosh – 57 Brookline Street.

Ms. McKnight stated she looked at the two garages and it is not bad. Mr. Jacobs noted the minimum yard setback is 12 feet. The left side does not comply. This is a brand new house that was built under the old zoning. He feels the Board should ask how the calculation was done for the wall.

Ruston Mehta – 9 Alden Road.

Ms. McKnight noted the existing garage is set back. Mr. Jacobs stated this is at a dead end area. He does not feel the plans are sufficient. Ms. Newman stated Powderhouse Road is a way. The setback does not work. She thinks the Board should ask if there is sufficient setback on the Powderhouse Road side.

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

VOTED: to say "No comment" with regard to the request but question the setback on Powderhouse Road.

Catalyst Development, LLC – 65 Parish Road.

Mr. Jacobs commented the notice should say "to a new 2-family dwelling." Is it a defective notice? He noted there is something wrong with the plan. The proposed drive does not look twice as big. The plan shows the drive going from 896 feet to 1,804 feet. Mr. Alpert stated the proposed drive goes all the way to the lot line. Mr. Owens stated the drive is the U shaped area. The proposed drive is an error on the plan. There is no comment other than there is an error on the plan and the question of notice.

Minutes

Ms. McKnight gave her revisions for the 9/26/17 minutes to the Planning Director. Mr. Jacobs noted on the 10/10/17 minutes, 2nd paragraph, it should be Brookline not Brooklyn. The 3rd paragraph at the bottom should be "patients per hour."

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

VOTED: to approve the minutes of 10/10/17 as amended.

Correspondence

Mr. Owens noted a memo from Karen Sunnarborg, Community Housing Specialist, dated 11/9/17, to Town Manager Kate Fitzpatrick and Planning Director Lee Newman, regarding Senate Bill 81 and a Massachusetts Municipal Association (MMA) piece. He feels the Board should send a letter to the 3 State Legislators expressing the opinion this Board is in favor of local decision making and do not approve this in this form.

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

VOTED: to vote as the Chair expressed.

Mr. Owens noted the proposed meeting schedule for 2018. Ms. McKnight requested the July meeting be July 17. All agreed. Mr. Owens stated he does not feel the Board meets enough in the summer. Ms. Grimes stated she will not be here for the 3/13/18 meeting. Ms. McKnight suggested the August meeting be 8/7/18. All agreed.

Mr. Owens noted there was a draft of the annual report and budget. He noted if any members have comments the comments should be given to the Planning Director in the next week. There is also an email from Devra Bailin, dated 11/3/17, noting the Council of Economic Advisors (CEA) will be reorganizing and discussing Needham Crossing on the Newton side of 128; a legal notice from the City of Newton regarding food trucks as an FYI; a copy of a letter Planning Director Newman sent to Town Manager Kate Fitzpatrick regarding the Memorial Park parking agreement for the Rosemary Lake project; and a letter sent to Elite Builders regarding Rockwood Lane. Ms. Newman noted there is a tentative meeting set up for tomorrow.

Ms. Grimes noted for the record she was reported to the Ethics Commission for the second time for being a member of the Planning Board with respect to the Rockwood Development. The complaints say there is a conflict of interest. She stated neither she, nor any members of her firm, has ever represented any of the developers.

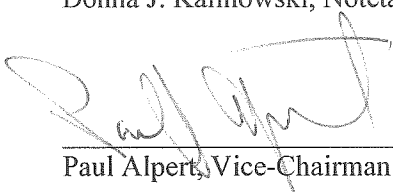
Report from Planning Director and Board members.

Ms. Newman noted 12/7/17 is a special meeting. Ms. McKnight commented she thought she read the Coca Cola property has been sold. Ms. Newman had not heard that.

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

VOTED: to adjourn the meeting at 9:12 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,
Donna J. Kalinowski, Notetaker



Paul Alpert, Vice-Chairman and Clerk