

NEEDHAM PLANNING BOARD MINUTES

January 8, 2019

The regular meeting of the Planning Board held in the Charles River Room, Public Services Administration Building, was called to order by Paul Alpert, Chairman, on Tuesday, January 8, 2019, at 7:00 p.m. with Messrs. Jacobs and Owens and Mmes. Grimes and McKnight, as well as Planning Director, Ms. Newman and Recording Secretary, Ms. Kalinowski.

Zoning Articles for May 2019 Annual Town Meeting: Review and Vote to Transmit for Hearing: Transit Oriented Development District ("TODD") at 433 Chestnut Street, map change.

Mr. Alpert noted the proposed warrant articles with legal descriptions.

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

VOTED: to refer both articles to the Board of Selectmen.

Public Hearing:

7:05 p.m. – Amendment to Major Project Site Plan Special Permit No. 2015-05: Normandy Real Estate Partners, 99 Summer Street, Boston, MA, Petitioner (Property is located at 89 A Street (formerly 77 A Street), 156 B Street, 189 B Street & 0 A Street, Needham, MA).

Upon a motion made by Mr. Owens, 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 part of the Center Business 128 East project. The hotel has been approved twice. This is the same location with 180 units. It was 128 units. This is basically the same size but 23 square feet less in floor area and 5 stories. The current approval is 4 stories and the one before that was for 5 stories. The parking request is due to the increase from 128 units to 180 units. The maximum employees will be 15 to 24. There is a new additional waiver request of 55 parking spaces. He is also re-asking for parking design waivers that were already approved. The traffic consultant's report noted the increase in trips is de minimus.

Harry Wheeler, of Group One, noted the architectural changes. He noted the ground floor remains the same and there has been one more floor added. He showed the new elevations. He noted 3 stories of rooms is going to 4 stories of rooms. The lobby base and materials are the same. The applicants have gone to the Design Review Board (DRB). There will be wrapped metal material and it will also be wrapped around the top. The sign is not showing on the building. He noted the first approval was for 63 feet 7.5 inches in height. The next approval was 51 feet. This request is for 62 feet.

Mr. Cramer noted the DRB has approved all the plans. He has received "no comment" letters from the Police, Fire and Department of Public Works (DPW). Ms. McKnight stated she would like to see the view from B Street and asked if the first floor is retail. Mr. Wheeler noted the first floor is retail and there is a signage band along the retail. Mr. Alpert asked how many rooms were originally approved at 5 stories. Mr. Cramer noted it was always 128 but was mostly suites then.

Courtney Jones, of Tetra Tech, showed the trip generation. There will be 52 additional rooms. Those rooms will create 26 to 39 trips per hour during peak hours. This is a minimal increase. Mr. Jacobs asked about the assumption of the occupancy rate. Ms. Jones noted it was the assumed typical occupancy rate. She noted 68 to 69% is the national average. Mr. Jacobs noted the numbers could be low if there is a higher occupancy rate. Ms. Jones stated this is a stand-alone facility. She took into account shared trip activity using Transportation Demand Management (TDM). The feeling is people will take the shuttle or will walk to close area businesses.

Mr. Jacobs asked Ms. Jones if she felt the numbers were fine and she agreed. Ms. McKnight noted the peak hours are usually 7:00 a.m. to 9:00 a.m. and 4:00 p.m. to 6:00 p.m. Ms. Jones stated there are 4 access points for cars to enter/exit. There is a negligible increase in traffic. The full analysis was submitted with the original permit and included the entire area. She reviewed the projected peak parking demand. She noted there are 3 different uses so this accounts for shared parking. The peak at 10:00 a.m. is 1,362 spaces with 1,507 spaces allocated. She feels the supply is more than adequate.

Mr. Alpert noted the following correspondence for the record: a letter from the Commonwealth of Massachusetts Energy and Environmental Affairs that noted the changes were insignificant; an email from Tara Gurge of the Board of Health with comments regarding the dumpsters; an email from Fire Chief Dennis Condon with no concerns; an email from Police Lt. John Kraemer noting no safety concerns; and a letter from Assistant Town Engineer Thomas Ryder with no comments or objections.

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. McKnight noted on page 3 of the letter, #8, requests the right to revise the floor plan without coming back. She would like to add "provided the square footage of the building and guest units remains the same."

Board of Appeals – January 17, 2019.

Christopher Bianchi – 29-31 Linden Street.

Bianchi Family Trust – 33-35 Linden Street.

Mr. Alpert noted both locations are tearing down 2 family homes and replacing them with new 2 family homes.

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

VOTED: "No comment."

T-Mobile (NB&C) – 1555 Central Avenue.

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

VOTED: "No comment."

Correspondence

Mr. Alpert noted the following correspondence for the record: a copy of a letter Planning Director Newman sent to Jon Schneider, Chair of the ZBA, with some comments on prior matters.

Minutes

Ms. McKnight handed in revisions for the 10/22/18 minutes.

Discussion of Proposed Permit Streamlining Initiatives.

Ms. Newman noted there will be a Chair/Vice Chair meeting on 1/24/19. Mr. Jacobs and Mr. Alpert will meet with the Council of Economic Advisors (CEA) and the Board of Selectmen and this will be on the agenda. Ms. Newman noted the email from Devra Bailin titled "Memoranda regarding streamlining" and noted some things she would recommend as to what kinds of insignificant modifications could be made post-construction. The second suggestion would be any change which triggers site plan approval. She would feel comfortable if that is articulated and with a specific purpose. She would not go along with the third suggestion to allow de minimis and

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administrative changes without notice and hearing and to separate site plan review from special permit issues. All members agreed.

Ms. McKnight noted, in the Insignificant Modification – Post Construction draft, what does “relocation of terminal” in the second line mean. She does not understand the phrase. Ms. Newman will verify. She thinks it is a typo. Ms. McKnight asked about the addition of fences. Ms. Newman stated she would do repair and replacement as insignificant but would take out additional fencing. Mr. Jacobs stated this is permissive and not required. Ms. Newman noted she does not anticipate she will see many. She will put this into a formal document and the Board can vote to approve it at the next meeting. Mr. Jacobs noted in the second paragraph, third line, it says “removal of excess parking spaces.” He asked excess over what? He feels it should say “excess spaces over what is allowed or otherwise required.”

Report from Planning Director and Board members.

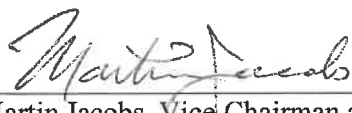
Ms. Newman noted the zoning will be discussed on 1/29. The Board should think about what kind of presentation they want for the public, how to present, who is going to present and information needed. Ms. Grimes agreed. She feels it would be helpful to show slides with the heights. Mr. Alpert stated a zoning article regarding three car garages is not ready. They will have Accessory Dwelling Units (ADUs), Chestnut Street and the Muzi site. Mr. Owens stated he would present the Hartney Greymont (Chestnut Street) site. Ms. Grimes asked if Ms. Bailin could assist with the Muzi site. Ms. Newman agreed that would be helpful. Ms. Jacobs stated he would work with Ms. Bailin.

Ms. Newman stated she would work with Karen Sunnarborg on the ADUs. She will send notices to neighbors of the Muzi and Hartney Greymont properties. Mr. Owens suggested notices should go to neighbors and Town Meeting members. This was agreed. Ms. McKnight stated there should be a fiscal impact analysis presented for the Hartney Greymont site. Mr. Alpert stated he will present the ADUs. Ms. Grimes noted there have been some nasty comments on Facebook. She feels it is a good idea to invite Town Meeting members. She asked if they could respond as a Board to Facebook.

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

VOTED: to adjourn the meeting at 8:02 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,
Donna J. Kalinowski, Notetaker


Martin Jacobs, Vice-Chairman and Clerk