

NEEDHAM PLANNING BOARD MINUTES

June 18, 2013

The regular meeting of the Planning Board held in the Charles River Room of the Public Services Administration Building was called to order by Bruce Eisenhut, Chairman, on Tuesday, June 18, 2013 at 7:30 p.m. with Messrs. Warner and Jacobs and Ms. Grimes as well as Planning Director, Ms. Newman and Recording Secretary, Ms. Kalinowski.

Transfer of Permit: Major Project Site Plan Review No. 95-2: Banyan Tree, LLC d/b/a The Rice Barn, Petitioner to Zucchini Gold, LLC d/b/a The Rice Barn, 172 North Main Street #9, Mansfield, MA 02048 (Property located at 1037-1041 Great Plain Avenue, Needham, MA).

Mr. Eisenhut noted there was a draft decision in the packet. Roy Cramer, representative for the applicant, has reviewed it. He stated no changes are proposed. It is the same arrangement with the same cuisine and service.

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

VOTED: to adopt the form of the decision presented tonight to transfer the Special Permit to Zucchini Gold LLC as written.

Appointment:

7:30 p.m. – Presentation on M.G. L. Chapter 40B Project: Greendale Avenue Venture, LLC, c/o Mill Creek Residential Trust LLC, 15 New England Executive Park, Burlington, MA 01803, Petitioner (Property located at 692 & 744 Greendale Avenue in the Single Residence A District).

Mr. Eisenhut explained the authority of the Planning Board. He noted they have the right to make a recommendation to the Zoning Board of Appeals which is generally limited to site plan issues. He stated the scope of what they do is narrow.

Robb Hewitt, representative for Mill Creek Residential Trust, noted they are a national company with 9 mobile offices. They have just completed a project in Concord and are working on one in Watertown. He noted they hit the high end of the market. There are big amenity spaces and fitness centers. They spent a lot of time studying who is a renter today. He noted a lot choose to rent rather than own. He stated in Concord they have a gaming room, club space with a kitchen, and a 1,400 square foot fitness room. This was built over the last 3 years.

Mr. Hewitt stated Concord was a 40B project and they worked with the Town of Concord. They are close to condo level quality and all units are high quality. This is a 6.2 acre site that slopes down 40 feet or more from the street to the highway. They have worked hard to use the slope to hide the density. There are 2 story buildings at the street with 4 stories down to the slope. He noted 25% are affordable. One-bed units are \$1,100 and 2-bed units are \$1,300. All units count on the states affordable housing counts. There will be a preference for those who live and work in Needham. They will work with the town.

Michael Binette, landscape architect, noted they have been around since 1971. They have 100,000 units of housing up and down the coast. He is a residential architect and the primary focus is to diminish the impact and honor the streetscape. They are maximizing the topography. He noted 470 of the 500 parking spaces are out of sight under the buildings. There is an internal village in the sub community. The grade drops 1½ stories to an internal street they are creating. There are 2 larger buildings in back and an internal pool off the pool deck. There is a 2 level garage beneath one building and one level under another.

Mr. Binette noted there is 70 to 100 feet of existing vegetation to be retained along the highway. There will be a lot of familiar components such as porches and balconies. There will be breaks in the buildings to break the

density down into smaller parts. There are tree lined streets, entry stoops and they have created an internal village within itself. There will be clapboard trim windows and single hung windows.

Mr. Jacobs asked how many projects they have worked on with Mill Creek. Mr. Binette stated they have worked on 2 projects. Concord was the second with the first in Watertown. Glenn Dougherty, Civil Engineer for Tetra Tech, stated Buildings A, B and C are along the street with D and E in the back. The internal street is 24 feet wide with parallel parking along the street for visitors mainly. The access drive has 2 entrances to each. There are parking garages in the back buildings. They will loop a driveway around the back of the site that will be 18 feet wide. It will be one-way circulation counterclockwise. There will be no parking off that road. It will be for emergency access mainly.

Mr. Dougherty stated they have made some modifications per the Fire Department. The back driveway is pulled away from the building and they have improved the internal circulation and turning radiuses. He noted they have satisfied the Fire Chief's comments but for fire lanes between all 5 buildings. They are working on that. Mr. Warner asked how wide the street is with parking along it. Mr. Dougherty stated the street was 24 feet wide and 9 feet of parallel parking.

Mr. Dougherty noted the storm water management system was DEP designed with storm sceptors, subsurface infiltration systems and deep sump catch basins. There are 3 recharge systems. He noted there is no new untreated discharge from the site. There is greater than minimum water quality required. They have set up a meeting with Town Engineer Anthony DelGaizo for this Friday.

Mr. Eisenhut asked about the lighting plan. Mr. Dougherty noted the perimeter lighting is shielded and shut off. There is a one foot candle average, 24 foot high pole lights and LED lighting. There will be some accent lighting as building design and some lighting in the landscape islands. Mr. Jacobs asked about the back drive. Mr. Dougherty stated it is more spaced out. There are no sidewalks back there. Mr. Eisenhut asked about pedestrian access from the back buildings to the road. Mr. Dougherty stated they are still working on that.

Jeffrey Dirk, Traffic Engineer for Vanesse Associates, noted they did a full traffic study. They are presenting it to the ZBA this Thursday night. There are 3 primary intersections they looked at. They looked at Greendale Avenue from Kendrick Street to Great Plain Avenue, the 2 signaled intersections at Kendrick Street and Great Plain Avenue and the intersection at Bird Street. They studied the intersections on 2 consecutive days. There are 9,350 vehicles per day with 2 way traffic on Greendale. He noted 7:00 a.m. to 9:00 a.m. and 4:00 p.m. to 6:00 p.m. are the peak hours. The site is posted 40 miles per hour. The average speed was 43 miles per hour. He feels they can safely exit the property.

Mr. Dirk noted they have Mass DOT data through 2010. They looked at the crash rates at the Mass DOT. The crash rates at the intersections that they evaluated are all below the state averages for crashes. There are no safety deficiencies. They have received information from the Needham Police through 2012 that they will be looking at. Traffic growth has been less than 1% the last 10 years. He added the creating of the interchange will be removing some traffic. They feel it will be a benefit for them. He reviewed the traffic information. There will be 1,942 vehicle trips over a 2 way basis including all vehicles. The net new traffic due to the project will be 151 vehicles in the a.m. and 183 vehicles in the p.m. They feel 75% of traffic will go to the north of the site and the second largest percent will go to Kendrick Street.

Mr. Dirk noted the Bird Street intersection is F level service. The Bird Street queue is 6 vehicles in the a.m. The increase in the queue will be 2 for 8 vehicles. They feel this is a minor impact. He noted there is a sidewalk on the west side of Greendale Avenue. They want sidewalks within the development to Greendale Avenue. They need a cross walk. There is a sidewalk to the north up to Bird Street. The crossing is on the south side. There will be a change in the recommendation. They want it to be very walkable internally.

Mr. Dirk noted there are bicycle racks all around. Mr. Eisenhut asked if they would be willing to put bike strips on Greendale Avenue. Mr. Dirk stated they will look at that. They need a stop line at Bird Street and they will do that as part of the project. Mr. Jacobs asked how many school children are projected. Mr. Hewitt stated there

were no formal projections. They have looked at Charles River Landing which is 350 units and has 17 school children. Ms. Newman asked if they will be filing a fiscal impact analysis. Mr. Hewitt stated he had not planned to.

Ms. Grimes commented Broadmeadow School is attractive for families. She feels it would be helpful to have an impact analysis for school children. Mr. Warner suggested they consider 2 crosswalks – one for pedestrians and one for bikes. Mr. Binette noted all buildings will empty out onto the internal street. There are fire stairs and they are looking at connecting the trails. They will use more mature trees by the streets and smaller scale plantings between the buildings. There will be landscaping around the entry stoops, a bocci court and a putting green. There is a standard list of species that are planned.

Ms. Grimes asked how many units they have in Concord. Mr. Hewitt stated they have 350 units in Concord and 206 in Watertown. Ms. Newman asked what the density of the site is in Concord. Mr. Hewitt stated they have about 24 usable acres so it ends up with about 12 units per acre. There is all surface parking in Concord with a total of 700 spaces with 66 internal spaces. Mr. Eisenhut asked if each unit will get a parking spot and was informed it would. There are also 40 visitor spots. Mr. Hewitt noted typically one space is free and they can buy another. In Concord this is not set yet. Watertown's internal spots will have a fee and outside spaces are free.

Ms. Grimes asked if there were any thoughts of a bus to the T Station. Mr. Hewitt stated they have found there is not really a big demand for it. They will look at if it is wanted. Ms. Grimes stated they could tap into the 128 shuttle.

Mr. Jacobs stated there is a severe easement impact. Mr. Hewitt stated the existing old easement goes through the center of the site and connects to 128. They have proposed relocating around the perimeter at their cost for a uniform grade or with the adjacent building to work around the old pipes. Chris Regnier stated he feels it is a better design to move the line.

Mr. Jacobs stated there will be 9,350 vehicles per day and asked it be broken down over 24 hours. Mr. Dirk noted there will be 1,000 vehicles in the a.m. peak.

Mr. Eisenhut stated they had recommended a play area previously and asked if they have any thoughts on that. Mr. Hewitt stated they consider it when kids are anticipated. They do not anticipate any due to Charles River Landing. Ms. Grimes commented they should consider kids due to the proximity to Broadmeadow School. Mr. Eisenhut agreed they should consider kids.

Mr. Eisenhut noted they have a lot of pervious surface. There is no need for traditional pavement. They could use various materials to break up the monotony. Mr. Hewitt stated traditional pavement lasts longer. Mr. Warner noted it would help the trees on the back side of the 3 building if parking spaces were pervious surfaces. He asked what they are doing about noise. Mr. Hewitt stated there are internal courtyards. They will use the buildings to block noise and they will beef up the interior walls with drywall. The fence will be a sound wall. He noted there will be water features for ambient noise. Most of the activity will be up front. He noted the Add-A-Lane project has sound barriers going in some areas.

Ms. Newman noted there is an 18 unit per acre maximum. They are looking at 300 units on 6 acres. Mr. Eisenhut asked how many units they would lose if they make the front and back buildings level. Mr. Hewitt stated he was not sure. Ms. Grimes asked how many units are in Building D. She was informed there were 126 units. Ms. Grimes suggested they get rid of Building D and scoot back Building C. She feels it will not look as bad for the neighbors.

Ms. Newman stated Charles River Landing has 44 units per acre. This is 50 per acre. Ms. Grimes commented she appreciates the parking is underground. Ms. Newman stated they need to consider correspondence from other departments they have received and take it under advisement. She suggested they continue the meeting to July 9 to gather further information. There was unanimous agreement.

Board of Appeals – June 20, 2013

Joseph M. Ribaud, 22 Green Street, Needham, MA – 22 Green Street.

Ms. Newman noted they were going further into the prior setback and there is an issue with the overhang. She stated they cannot protrude into the setback. They would need to redesign it so the overhang cannot protrude more than the existing. She thinks he is going to redesign it. Mr. Eisenhut asked if they have standard language that says they should confirm the prior non-conforming is lawful. Ms. Newman stated they did. She noted they should comment the plan as presented requires a variance because of the intrusion of the overhang into the setback.

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

VOTED: to request the Planning Director write a letter requesting the ZBA confirm the prior non-conforming was lawful and comment the plan as presented requires a variance because of the intrusion of the overhang into the setback.

Kamaya LLC, PO Box 290403, Weathersfield CT, 06129 – 1187 Highland Avenue, Needham, MA.

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

VOTED: “No comment.”

Fuller Brook Enterprises, Ltd., 264 Edgewater Drive, Needham MA 02492 – 817 Highland Avenue and 471 Hunnewell Street, Needham, MA.

Ms. Newman stated they want to take down the front building. It appears there will be a new curb cut along Hunnewell Street. They are not changing some existing curb cuts. She stated if he is creating new curb cuts it is Planning Board jurisdiction and not ZBA jurisdiction. Mr. Warner noted the existing conditions plan does not show the curb cuts. Ms. Newman stated it shows it is open between those 2 curb islands. She stated the applicant is now defining the curb cuts by carrying the curbing around the edges and into the parking lot. Mr. Warner noted in the proposed plan it shows there will be a 39 foot curb opening and then a 49 foot curb opening.

Mr. Eisenhut stated they should raise the issue with the ZBA that since the curb cuts are not currently functioning as they are on the proposed plan, it is their view they are creating curb cuts and that is the Planning Boards' jurisdiction. Otherwise, they should not be allowed to go against the intent of the zoning district and take more away from the front sidewalk. Mr. Warner stated they are creating more parking in front of the building that faces the street than exists at present. He commented what they want is for the buildings to be more up front with the parking in the back.

Mr. Jacobs noted they need to point out to the ZBA Section 4.4.4, 4th paragraph, second sentence, which says they can have not more than 15 feet front setback on Highland Avenue in the Avery Square Business District if having frontage on Highland Avenue. Ms. Newman agreed they should point that sentence out. Mr. Eisenhut stated they should give the Planning Director the authority to call out the curb cut issue and the language just referred to. Ms. Newman stated they may want to note the building crosses the property line and they should be satisfied with that. She feels they should call out the jurisdictional issue and recommend against the demolition of the front portion of the building because of the provisions of the maximum setback. Ms. Grimes stated she disagrees with that.

Mr. Eisenhut stated they could rephrase it and say they feel knocking down the front portion of the building would be inconsistent with this provision of the zoning ordinance language. Mr. Jacobs stated it was already non-conforming and this would make it more so. Ms. Newman stated she will call out the jurisdictional issues related to curb cuts and to call out what the zoning requires currently on the setback on the front and its purpose under the Avery Square plan and the easement.

Minutes

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

VOTED: to approve the minutes of 2/19/13, 3/5/13, 3/19/13 and 4/16/13.

Report from Planning Director

Ms. Newman noted Urgent Care is ready to occupy their space. She has a floor plan, final elevations and the architect's affidavit. She would like the Board to authorize an occupancy permit.

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

VOTED: to authorize an occupancy permit.

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

VOTED: to adjourn the meeting at 9:35 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,
Donna J. Kalinowski, Notetaker



Sam Bass Warner
Sam Bass Warner, Vice-Chairman and Clerk