

NEEDHAM PLANNING BOARD MINUTES

September 26, 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, September 26, 2017, at 7:00 p.m. with Messrs. Jacobs and Alpert and Mmes. Grimes and McKnight, as well as Planning Director, Ms. Newman, Acting Assistant Town Planner, Ms. Collins and Recording Secretary, Ms. Kalinowski.

Transfer & De Minimus Change: Major Project Site Plan Special Permit No. 1991-07: Henry Hospitality, Inc., d/b/a The James, 18 Cliftondale Street, Roslindale, MA, Petitioner (Property located at 1027 Great Plain Avenue, Needham, MA).

Ms. Newman stated there has been a request for a postponement due to illness.

De Minimus Change: Major Project Site Plan Special Permit: Petrini Corporation, 187 Rosemary Street, Needham, MA, Petitioner (Property located at 266-310 Chestnut Street, Needham, MA).

Bob Hentchell, representative for the applicant, noted the applicant wants to replace the existing concrete plaza with a paver system plaza and new landscaping. Mr. Owens noted a letter from Thomas Ryder, Assistant Town Engineer, with comments, and a draft decision.

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

VOTED: to determine this is a De Minimus change.

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

VOTED: to approve the draft decision as presented in the packet tonight.

Minutes

Ms. McKnight noted she has revisions for the 7/11/17 and 7/25/17 minutes.

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

VOTED: to submit changes to the Planning Director for 8/8/17 and 9/5/17.

Request for Lot Release Aly Raisman Way Subdivision: David Brinkman, Developer/Owner, 1242 South Street.

Mr. Owens noted there is a request from the owner and a letter from the DPW noting a few open items but having no objections to the release of the lot. Ms. McKnight asked how the money is being held. Ms. Newman noted a performance bond was established. There was a recommendation of \$21,000 for a subdivision bond and \$7,000 for an off-street drainage bond. Ms. Newman says upon receipt of the surety, and signing of the agreement by the owner, the lot release will be given. Mr. Owens noted there is a draft of the release of lots.

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

VOTED: to approve the release of lots once surety is received and to approve the amount of the bond.

Extension of Temporary Certificate of Occupancy: Normandy Real Estate Partners Major Project Site Plan Special Permit No. 2015-05 (128 East).

Roy Cramer, representative for the applicant, noted the Board issued the regular Certificate of Occupancy for the Shark Ninja building but the landscaping was not done. It was to be done by 9/15/17 and was done by 9/10 or 9/11. He has received the As-Built plans and Certificate this afternoon. The applicant is asking for an extension to 11/30/17 as he did not get the As-Built in time. He believes everything is done correctly. He is waiting for the site inspection and wanted time so he does not have to come back.

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

VOTED: to approve the requested extension.

Ms. Newman stated once everything is signed off she will release the funds.

Correspondence

Mr. Owens noted a zoning article from the Town of Dedham with the notice of a public hearing regarding banning recreational marijuana establishments. Ms. Newman thought it would be helpful to see what other towns are doing. Mr. Owens also noted a copy of a letter from the Attorney General to the Town Clerk regarding the Annual Town Meeting and approving all zoning articles and a copy of the Board of Selectmen goals for 2018-2019.

Public Hearing:

7:30 p.m. – Special Permit Amendment Under Site Plan Review: Beth Israel Deaconess Hospital-Needham Addition and Walkway. (Property located at 148 Chestnut Street, Needham, MA).

Upon a motion made by Mr. Alpert, 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 Beth Israel Deaconess Hospital-Needham, stated the hospital is requesting site plan review and expansion of the hospital. He reviewed the requested zoning relief. He noted 111 Lincoln Street was a medical office building. The hospital purchased the building in 2014. The building will be demolished. 26 parking spaces will be eliminated from the south parking lot and 15,000 square feet of area will be incorporated into the hospital lot. There will be a 37,000 square foot addition of 4 stories built on the site of 111 Lincoln Street and part of the south parking lot. Part of the south parking lot will be reconfigured closer to Lincoln Street. The other part will remain intact except for another emergency access that will be added at the Fire Department's request. Additional storm water management measures will be added to modernize everything. Cars will enter the south parking lot on Chestnut Street. The Lincoln Street entrance will be closed off to limit hospital traffic in the neighborhood. There will be a substantial landscape plan.

The new structure will be connected to the hospital by a high level walkway. He reviewed the requested permits and waivers. Most relief is for the south parking lot. Currently there are 313 parking spaces on site. Some spaces will be lost in the south parking lot and there will be 295 on site. The hospital has 6 surplus spaces at 73 Chestnut Street and 24 Town of Needham stickers in the municipal parking lot. There is a lease agreement for 110 spaces at the church on Dedham Avenue near 128. The hospital was also initially negotiating for an additional 35 spaces out of town, and it ended up getting an additional 50 spaces. There should be an excess of the parking requirement of 437 spaces. He noted the hospital has a shuttle system so most of the staff will not park in the on-site lots. Mr. Alpert asked how long the lease is in Dedham. Mr. Cramer stated it is a 5 year lease with a 5 year option. The applicant is requesting some findings.

John Fogerty, President and CEO of the hospital, gave broad comments on why this is being done. He noted health care is moving to neighborhoods. Communities want to get care close to home. The hospital has put a lot

of thought and work into this proposal. This is an expansion. He stated he has had a lot of dialogue. These are not new services. The patient clinics are being taken out of the main hospital and moving to the new building. This project is just moving existing services to a better setting. He spoke with the town and has made some tweaks due to the conversations.

John Fowler, of Jake Architects, reviewed the site plans. There will be asphalt parking along Lincoln Street and around the 111 Lincoln Street building. There will be a gate at the exit only on Lincoln Street and they will eliminate a curb cut and access on 111 Lincoln Street. All access is at Chestnut Street. Cars will circle, drop off or valet. There has been one curb cut added on Chestnut Street for emergency access only. The fire lane access will be gated. The building steps back from Lincoln Street. He noted there were 2 goals for aesthetics. The same materials will be used – slate paneling, glass and terracotta. The bridge connected on the 3rd level will be as light and transparent as possible.

Mr. Fowler noted the second goal is to fit in with the residential character of the neighborhood. There will be hardy plank, long windows and a synthetic roof. It has the appearance of an older building and a newer building built behind it. The proposed landscaping will include a wall of arborvitae to screen. The building slopes back, then steps back. The existing landscape will remain. The pedestrian bridge is moved about 150 feet back from Lincoln Street. The parking lot will be landscaped and the bridge will be screened.

Bill Fleming, of William Fleming Associates, stated there will be visually appealing landscaping to blend in. There will be low flowing deciduous shrubs and ornamental grasses no taller than 3 feet high. Lincoln Street will have a row of arborvitae 12 to 14 feet tall, flowering perennials and shade trees and honey locust. Low grass will be used sparingly. There will be native plant materials that are drought tolerant. Chelsea Christenson, of Nitsch Engineering, stated the existing utilities will be demolished. There will be new water and gas and the sewer will be off Lincoln Street. The roof run off will go to a below-grade perforated pipe system. There will be a new curve along the edge of the fire lane to collect and control the water flowing down the fire lane to a new catch basin and water quality structure. They are relocating the existing storm main and will have a new water quality structure.

Giles Ham, of Vanasse & Associates, stated he did a traffic study in 2012 and he is updating the study. The hospital has done a good job with parking. There is plenty of sidewalk for pedestrian traffic flow. There are 11 intersections in the area. He reviewed the traffic counts at peak hours. There are 187 trips in the a.m. peak and 186 in the p.m. peak. This project will have about 35 more trips in the peak hours. The intersections are rated C or better and this would not change. He noted there are about 58 vacant spaces at peak.

Mr. Ham stated he had recommended closing the Lincoln Street lot entrance. The 111 Lincoln Street driveway will be closed. The hospital has a sticker program and security. He does not feel the gates at the driveway entrances are needed. He will look at 2 traffic signals. There is no change in traffic operations. Ms. McKnight noted the landscaping in front of the colonial building on Lincoln Street. She appreciates the residential look and commends the applicant. She asked why the trees are set back close to the building. Mr. Fowler noted the landscaping had to be stepped back from the street for fire trucks to be able to get close to the building to reach the top. Mr. Fleming noted there will be flowering shade tolerant plantings under 15 feet tall with a hedge on the back side.

Ms. McKnight stated the off-site parking is very far away. She asked if these spaces can be counted since they are not within a certain distance. Mr. Cramer stated far off-site spaces are the basis for asking for a waiver. Ms. McKnight asked where the shuttle pulls in. Mr. Fogerty stated the emergency entrance by School Street. Mr. Alpert asked if there was a need for zoning relief. Mr. Cramer stated there was. He reviewed Section 7.4, Section 1.4.6 for the canopy, some parking criteria and number of spaces.

Mr. Alpert noted the Oak Street and Chestnut Street intersection. He commented more patients will use the south lot with the new building. He asked if the trips into that intersection were included. He feels there will be more in and out of that lot. Mr. Cramer stated the staff parking in that parking lot will be minimized. Mr. Ham noted

traffic signals will be optimized. He is confident it will work well and the impact will be small. Mr. Fowler commented the clinics currently exist. Ms. Grimes stated the hospital did a nice job in the back of the building. It is a nice step back and she likes that the back exit will be closed. She asked if the impact with the new police and fire stations being built was looked at. Mr. Ham stated it was and the number of trips is very minimal.

Mr. Cramer noted the hospital will be one address as 111 Lincoln Street will be gone. Mr. Jacobs asked what the width of the building on Lincoln Street was going to be. Mr. Fowler stated it would be 95 feet 2 inches on Lincoln Street with a depth of 107 feet. Mr. Jacobs asked him to speak on lighting and acoustics and asked if the front face could be broken up at all. Mr. Fowler stated a varied setback front face was looked at but it gave the building a multi-unit look. The hospital wanted a more traditional look. It is a steel structure and not as easy as wood frame to move in and out. Mr. Cramer noted there would be one fake door in the middle. Mr. Fowler stated the lighting is by existing illumination. There is no general illumination being added. Very low level bollards are being added at the sidewalks. There will be an illuminated low level in the drop off area and under the bridge. There will also be some lighting along the fire lane. The building will be open business hours only.

Dr. Jeff Becker stated he lived at the intersection for 40 years. It is a very difficult area for patients. It is a very congested area. He wants to support the hospital. There is a huge problem on Chestnut Street at points in the day. He is not sure this would make it worse. There is no place for long term employee parking. He stated his lot is often filled with people not for his building. Every time something is added it is a disaster. It is a very tight area and Chestnut Street is very busy. The studies do not represent reality.

Cheryl McSherry, of 39 Grant Street, stated this is the third phase. She noted phase 1 worked well with the neighbors. She liked that the applicant did a construction triangle to divert construction equipment. She is tired of the noise and construction with all the projects. She would like the hospital to reintroduce the triangle for less impact. Chris Bahmer, of 76 Kimball Street, commented her impression from previous meetings was the project would be no taller than the original hospital and in line with 115 Lincoln Street next door. It looks like it is in front and taller. Mr. Fowler stated it is in line with the setback of 115 Lincoln Street. It is 59.2 feet which is the same height as the existing building. It goes to the same height as the glass tower on Chestnut Street. Ms. Bahmer feels it is really tall.

Aaron Farbo, of Cavanaugh Tocci, stated he did a sound study. He noted most of the mechanical equipment is screened on the penthouse on the roof. He checks the noise regulations prior to any project. He took sound data for one week and looked for the lowest sound levels, which was 41 decibels. There will be a new transformer on Lincoln Street. He established the sound levels at 42 to 44 decibels. This is an increase of 2 to 3 decibels which would not be noticeable to neighbors. The building will not be in use at night. Mr. Fowler stated equipment was chosen that could be shut off at night and weekends.

Ms. McKnight asked if the hospital was negotiating for other off-site parking. Mr. Cramer noted negotiations were on for an additional 50 spaces. Mr. Jacobs asked when he would know. Mr. Cramer hopes to know in the next week or so. Mr. Alpert stated he would like Mr. Ham's reaction to Dr. Becker's comments. Mr. Ham stated 5 to 10 years back people were parking in the hospital lots and going elsewhere. The hospital does not have a problem but the area does.

Mr. Owens asked if the hearing should be kept open for additional parking information. Mr. Jacobs stated he would be more comfortable with additional information. Ms. Grimes noted she thinks the project is acceptable even without the additional spots. Ms. McKnight commented she is not sure the hearing needs to be kept open but there should be a condition in the decision.

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

VOTED: to close the hearing.

Mr. Owens stated this will be discussed at the next meeting and a decision will be drafted.

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

VOTED: to reopen the hearing for the purpose of noting the correspondence.

Mr. Owens noted the following correspondence for the record: a memo from Engineering with no comments or objections; a memo from Tim McDonald of the Board of Health with no comments; a memo from Building Inspector David Roach with no comments; a memo from Fire Chief Dennis Condon noting all concerns have been addressed and he has no objection; a letter from the Police with no safety concerns and noting they are satisfied and a letter from the Design Review Board with comments and approval.

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

VOTED: to close the hearing.

Informal Informational Presentation – Needham High School Addition and Renovations.

Michelle Rogers, of Dore & Whittier, noted on Webster Street there will be a main entrance in the courtyard space, storage and a vestibule near Gym B of 690 square feet. There will be renovations to the chiller by putting in 2 smaller chillers. There are pre-existing rear setbacks. The transition spaces need to be 25 feet. The project has 22 to 24 feet. Hank Haff, representative for the applicant, noted there is a 10 to 15 foot grade change which is important to note. He added the parking is quite well screened because of the grade change.

Ms. Rogers stated there is no setback at Admiral Gracey Drive. The FAR is pre-existing, non-conforming and went from .43 to .44 with the 2004 renovation. It will be go from .44 to .49 with this project. The lot coverage will increase to 22%. She reviewed the changes: Gym A will be renovated in the building; Gym B storage, a storage shed for gas powered equipment, a classroom addition and boiler and chiller work. Mr. Jacobs asked the size of the shed. Ms. Rogers noted the proposed shed is 10 by 10 feet. On Webster Street there will be a 3 story addition, classrooms and administrative offices. The current plaza will be lowered to make more outdoor seating. There will be picnic tables. Ms. Rogers described the changes and additions.

Ms. Rogers noted the second floor will have special education integrated areas, new classrooms and collaborative learning. The third floor will be the same as the second floor. The classrooms will be able to be subdivided. She reviewed the proposed elevations. The current has 2 colors of metal and 2 colors or brick. The new will be brick and panel glass. Ms. McKnight asked if there will be a sign for the Needham High School on this side. Ms. Rogers feels a sign belongs closer to the street but is not part of this. She noted the maximum height of the existing building is 68.3 feet and the new section will have a maximum height of 45 feet. This conforms with Article 4.

Ms. McKnight stated it looks as though the mulch hill does not have ground cover. She suggested this be looked at. She noted the High School now is a very confusing building. This seems to be a big improvement. Will there be a connection between the front and back? Ms. Rogers stated the 2 lobbies connect as one. The principal's office is being turned into classroom space for our Pathways Program and the principal is being moved to a smaller area. Ms. Grimes commented it looks like a big space to her. Ms. Rogers reviewed the other areas being renovated throughout the building.

Mr. Haff noted the construction period will be February to August. It will be the same company that did the Newman School. It is an aggressive schedule. The project will take over a portion of the Webster Street parking area. Parking permits for students will be cut back. The area will be needed for staging. The drop off will be moved to the other side of the building for the construction period. Ms. McKnight asked if the Rosemary Pool project will be completed. Mr. Haff noted the pool will be done in June. This is starting in February.

Extension of Subdivision Completion Date: Belle Lane Definitive Subdivision: Richard J. Gaffey, Trustee, 634 Charles River Street Realty Trust, 420 Lakeside Ave., Marlborough, MA, Petitioner (Property located at Map 305, Lot 23, off of Charles River Street, Needham, MA).

Mr. Owens stated for the record that he lives on Whitman Road. Ms. McKnight asked why an extension is needed for 4 more years. Ms. Newman noted Engineering has recommended 2 years.

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

VOTED: to grant an extension for 2 years until 9/30/2019.

Planning Board Recommendations on Zoning Articles for the October Special Town Meeting.

Ms. Newman noted Article 8 is the downtown map change. Ms. McKnight noted that Article 7 proposes Town acquisition of the abutting 3-family house and does not change zoning needs for the police/fire station project. Ms. Grimes asked what Article 8 looked like and if there were any visuals. It is the early stages of thoughts and designs. The Selectmen will not put a project-funding override article on in the spring but in November. She asked what the rush is without showing Town Meeting members what it will look like. Mr. Alpert stated the real purpose is to change the setback and FAR requirements to expand them. This needs to pass now or people will need to use the current setbacks and FAR for project planning. Ms. Grimes stated the Planning Board will be presenting but will have no visuals. She commented she is not voting for this. Mr. Alpert stated he will defer to the Selectmen. We will not know what it looks like until it goes out to bid for designs.

Upon a motion made by Mr. Alpert, and seconded by Ms. McKnight, it was by four of the five members present (Ms. Grimes voted in the negative):

VOTED: to approve and support Article 8.

Mr. Owens noted Article 9. Mr. Jacobs asked how would this change affect the development impact of other municipal lots like the existing Hillside School. The Board has not discussed that. It has not been studied or thought about. Ms. McKnight stated this applies only to municipal uses. Mr. Alpert noted the Hillside School is 26.4 acres which is mostly wetlands and conservation land. It would all be a special permit. Ms. Grimes stated the Board has not even looked at this and she feels it should be looked at. Mr. Alpert stated it would affect any parcel in the General Residence District that the Town chooses to buy.

Mr. Jacobs stated the Board could say "the change would only apply to municipal lots in the General Residence District of less than X number of acres." The neighbors could get upset about this. Mr. Alpert stated he would not go with an amendment. Ms. McKnight recommended going ahead with the article as drafted. The Board would respond to particular applications since they are Special Permits. Mr. Owens stated it never occurred to him. He thought it was only one parcel. Mr. Jacobs suggested adding a lot size limitation of one acre or more. This gets rid of everything but Hillside. Mr. Alpert stated he is not worried about the Hillside School area.

Mr. Owens stated he is embarrassed the Planning Board missed this and the Finance Committee had to tell them. If this is only by Special Permit the Board has never said no to a Special Permit. There is a lot of risk if the Board goes ahead with this. He would support Mr. Jacobs' amendment of one acre or more. Ms. Grimes suggested the Article be pulled. Mr. Owens and Ms. McKnight would both support an amendment of one acre or more. Ms. Newman stated lots come out of the Assessor's Database. The DPW is showing the Daley Building at over one acre. The Assessor's Database shows it as .93 acre. Mr. Alpert stated he is reluctant to do spot zoning even for the Town. Ms. Grimes needs to look at this.

Upon a motion made by Ms. McKnight, and seconded by Mr. Jacobs, it was by four of the five members present (Ms. Grimes voted in the negative):

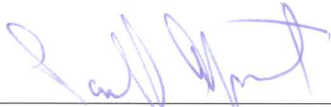
VOTED: to recommend adoption of the article with an amendment that applies to parcels having at least one acre.

Mr. Owens stated Mr. Alpert will present both articles and speak to the Finance Committee.

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

VOTED: to adjourn the meeting at 10:45 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,
Donna J. Kalinowski, Notetaker



Paul Alpert, Vice-Chairman and Clerk