

NEEDHAM PLANNING BOARD MINUTES

September 8, 2020

The Planning Board Virtual Meeting using Zoom was remotely called to order by Jeanne McKnight, Chairman, on Tuesday, September 8, 2020, at 7:15 p.m. with Messrs. Jacobs, Alpert, Owens and Block, as well as Planning Director, Ms. Newman and Assistant Planner, Ms. Clee.

Ms. McKnight took a roll call attendance of people expected to be on the agenda. She noted this is an open meeting that is being held remotely because of Governor Baker's executive order on March 12, 2020 due to the COVID Virus. All attendees are present by video conference. She reviewed the rules of conduct for zoom meetings. This meeting will include one continued public hearing and will therefore allow public comment. She noted if any votes are taken at the meeting the vote will be conducted by roll call.

Special Town Meeting Zoning Articles: Assignment of Board presenter and review of process and timelines.

Ms. McKnight noted the spacing on page 3 for subsections (a), (b) and (c) should be corrected by adding spaces between each. Ms. Newman will make that edit when she gets the draft of the warrant. Ms. Newman noted the Board needs to determine who will present the Articles and she wants to update the Board on procedures at Town Meeting. Mr. Block volunteered to present. All members agreed.

Ms. Newman noted the protocol is similar to the last time. The Planning Board's presentation as proponent will be recorded and uploaded to the website. Questions from Town Meeting members will be answered and posted on the website. Last time the Board made a recommendation but was not the proponents. The town is setting up a space for the department to sit together so they can answer questions. A meeting will be posted for prior to Town Meeting. The same protocol as previous will be followed. The Board members discussed substance and the best ways to go about the presentation.

Upon a motion made by Mr. Jacobs, and seconded by Mr. Block, it was by a roll call vote of the five members present unanimously:

VOTED: to automatically continue the meeting to 9/22/20 at 7:15 p.m. with the same zoom ID number if any technical difficulties arise that keep the Planning Board from continuing this meeting tonight.

7:30 p.m. – 390 Grove Street Definitive Subdivision Amendment: Elisabeth Schmidt-Scheuber, 390 Grove Street, Needham, MA, Petitioner (Property located at 390 Grove Street, Needham, MA). Please note this is a renoticed hearing that began on February 4, 2020 and is continued from the July 21, 2020 and August 11, 2020 Planning Board meetings and will be further continued.

Ms. Newman stated she has received a request from the applicant for a further continuance. The Board asked for additional information at the last meeting on the revised subdivision submittal. The applicant would like to do additional soil testing and that has not been done yet. The applicant is discussing with the abutter a solution to withdrawal of the application if successful. The request from the applicant is to continue the hearing to 11/4/20 and extend the action deadline to 12/31/20.

Upon a motion made by Mr. Jacobs, and seconded by Mr. Block, it was by a roll call vote of the five members present unanimously:

VOTED: to accept the request to continue the hearing to 12/4/20 and allow an extension of the

action deadline to 12/31/20.

Board of Appeals – September 17, 2020

Lexington 107 LLC – 107 Lexington Avenue.

Ms. McKnight stated she drove by the site. The plans are included in the packet. The 2 car part of the garage will stick out from the house. The 3rd garage will be back about 2 feet from the other garages. All the garages are out front and there are no other 3 car garages in the neighborhood. She commented she personally she does not like this. She would like to say the Planning Board is not in favor of a 3rd garage in this configuration. A discussion ensued. Mr. Alpert stated the Board could comment they request the Zoning Board of Appeals (ZBA) give special consideration to how the aesthetic presentation of this design would fit in with the neighborhood. All agreed.

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

VOTED: to comment the Board requests the ZBA give special consideration to how the aesthetic presentation of this design would fit in with the neighborhood.

Baker's Best, Inc. – 150 Gould Street.

Ms. McKnight noted she drove by this site and parked in the lot. There are not a lot of parking spaces. The relief requested is for 10 spaces for a take-out counter. The applicant wants to allow people to pick up food. She asked if take-out should be considered a temporary approval or a temporary waiver. Ms. Newman stated there was no specific information on parking. The ZBA would be considering that. Ms. McKnight asked if the Board could suggest relief on a temporary basis. Mr. Alpert stated they are doing this now on a temporary basis via the Select Board and it is about to expire. Presently this is a COVID related request. He is not sure the Board has any authority for temporary special permits. Ms. McKnight commented there are single family homes across the street.

Mr. Block noted the applicant is the sole tenant of the building. The ZBA will look at the parking. The Select Board and Planning Board have been supporting small businesses in town with relief during this time. Mr. Alpert noted they could ask the ZBA that if the relief granted is not temporary, they give special consideration to the effect any additional traffic would have on the neighborhood that abuts this property. He has no problem if the ZBA can give a temporary permit. Ms. McKnight would like to add parking to that.

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

VOTED: to ask the ZBA that if the relief granted is not temporary, they give special consideration to the effect any additional traffic and parking would have on the neighborhood that abuts this property.

Second Street DE, LLC – 100-124 Second Avenue.

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

VOTED: "No comment."

Minutes

There were no minutes in final form to approve.

Correspondence

Ms. Newman stated she copied the Board members on correspondence to the Town Clerk regarding a request for withdrawal without prejudice for 770 Chestnut Street LLC. This withdrawal was contingent upon getting a letter from the applicant. She did not receive a letter and reached out to the applicant. She notified the Town Clerk the application for withdrawal without prejudice has thus been denied.

Report from Planning Director and Board members

Mr. Alpert stated he is the Planning Board representative to the Community Preservation Committee and he reviewed the CPC warrant articles. There are 2 articles from 2 churches with requests for Historic Preservation Funds. The First Baptist Church is requesting \$92,000, which is one third of the project cost. He has recused himself from this. The second is a request for \$25,000 from the First Parish Church to do repair work to the steeple. He noted this is actually a bell tower with a Paul Revere Bell. He is not sure this is preservation but perhaps regular maintenance. He needs to be convinced it is a preservation. The Community Farm is requesting \$10,000 due to COVID. There is also a request for \$150,000 to help fund emergency rental assistance to be provided by the Town.

Mr. Alpert noted there are 2 articles for Park and Recreation project funding. One request is for Claxton Field lighting and skin renovations for the infields. Park and Recreation also want to resurface the DeFazio Field track. There has been pushback for residents for more rental assistance and not for Park and Recreation. He feels Park and Recreation is seeking CPA funds rather than going to the Town for funds. The Committee is running low on funds. He noted the Town will be requesting substantial funds for Emory Grover rehabilitation/preservation. Mr. Block asked if the Planning Director was aware of Park and Recreation using conservation funds for their piggy bank and not general funds. Ms. Newman was not aware. Mr. Block stated the Board should speak with Park and Recreation or the Finance Committee to see what is going on. It would be worthwhile to check this.

Ms. McKnight stated she looked at how the town spends their funds since the law changed in Community Preservation Act funding. This was changed to allow funding for outdoor athletic facilities. Hardly any money is used for open space land now but a lot to various athletic fields. She would support Mr. Alpert voting against Park and Recreation funding as there are other town needs coming up. She feels Mr. Alpert's vote would speak for the Planning Board. Mr. Alpert described the way the funding works. All the money for Park and Recreation has come out of the general bucket but it is taking away funds that could be used for affordable housing and historic funding.

Mr. Alpert noted the Planning Board was going to put together a Tree By-Law when he was first on the Board. They set up a Tree By-Law Committee and it seems to have been stopped. He noted there is a lot on the corner of Country Way and Central Avenue that has been clear cut with not a single tree left. He wants to see if the Tree By-Law Committee can be revived and put back on track. He explained the concept of the Tree By-Law. This would discourage developers from taking down a lot of mature trees. They would have to leave some mature trees. This would be for homeowners also. People would have to pay into a fund if they take down trees beyond a certain level.

Ms. Newman noted she met with Greenman-Pederson Inc. and Town Engineer Anthony DelGaizo this morning. They are in the process of the traffic study the Planning Board requested for the Industrial-1 land at the corner of Highland Avenue and Gould Street. The build out at 1.35 FAR is evenly split between corporate office and research and development with 15% for ancillary retail. They are using

data the Town collected and state information. That piece should be done within 30 days. They will be looking at trip generation for commercial uses described versus a combination of commercial and destination retail. Ms. McKnight noted there was going to be a study of residential uses in Highway Commercial 1. Ms. Newman stated there will be 3 scenarios and trip generation will be assessed for all three.

Mr. Block stated the Town is looking to implement a shop local, dine local campaign. He will bring this up at the Council of Economic Advisors (CEA) meeting tomorrow morning. Mr. Block noted he is the President of the Needham Heights Neighborhood Association. He was approached by LCB's Attorney Roy Cramer to see if NHNA would be interested in hosting a meeting focused on the proposed rezoning of the Carter Mill property. LCB would like to participate. They have begun marketing outreach. The meeting will be held Monday, 9/14/20, at 7:00 p.m. via Zoom. There will be a presentation with questions and answers. He welcomes Planning Board participation. Mr. Alpert stated the Board should authorize Mr. Block to speak on behalf of the Planning Board if there are any questions for the Planning Board. Mr. Block noted he has no issue with that but may take the question and follow up with the Planning Board if technical or legal issues are brought up.

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

VOTED: to adjourn the meeting at 9:05 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,
Donna J. Kalinowski, Notetaker

Paul Alpert, Vice-Chairman and Clerk