

PLANNING BOARD  
Regular Meeting Minutes  
July 13, 2021

Members present: Mark Schafron/*Chairman, Robert J. Swartz/Vice Chairman, Steve Cormier, Robert J. Bettez, Sr., and Paul A. Cormier/Members, and Trevor Beauregard/Director-City Planner*

Members absent: *None.*

Also present: Mayor Michael Nicholson, Chris Coughlin-*City Engineer, Jake Modestow-Representing Bank of America, Christine Martines Fucile-DCDP, and Members of Public (signed attendance sheet on file).*

ANNOUNCEMENT - Any person may make a video or audio recording of an open session of a meeting, or may transmit the meeting through any medium, subject to reasonable requirements of the Chair as to the number, placement and operation of equipment used so as not to interfere with the conduct of the meeting. Any person intending to make such recording shall notify the Chair forthwith. All Documents referenced or used during the meeting must be submitted in duplicate to the Director of Community Development & Planning pursuant to the Open Meeting and Public Records Law. All documents shall become part of the official record of the meeting.

*Mr. Schafron called the meeting to order at 7:00 p.m.*

**1. APPROVAL OF MINUTES:**

**June 08, 2021:**

1. *Public Hearing/Informational Meeting ~ Heywood Hospital Expansion*
2. *Public Meeting ~ 100 & 112 Fredette Street*
3. *Regular Meeting*

***Motion to accept and approve all minutes of June 08, 2021.***

***R. Bettez/R. Swartz.***

***Vote – All in favor.***

**June 22, 2021:**

1. *Public Meeting ~ Heywood Hospital Expansion*
2. *Regular Meeting*

***Motion to accept and approve all minutes of June 22, 2021.***

***S. Cormier/P. Cormier.***

***Vote – All in favor.***

**2. NEW BUSINESS:**

**2.1 Bank of America ATM**

T. Beauregard noted back in 2011, the Planning Board approved a Site Plan for the Price Chopper plaza, which included some conditions, with one of the conditions being any additional variances applied for with regard to signage on the site would need to be approved by the Planning Board prior to going to the Zoning Board of Appeals.

T. Beauregard added Bank of America has a representative here tonight to present their plan, and it will be up to the planning Board to approve what is being proposed, and after will be able to

proceed to the Zoning Board of Appeals for a variance approval. If the Planning Board does not approve, other alternatives can be looked at for the signage on the site.

Jake Modestow of Stonefield Engineering introduced himself and stated he is representing the Applicant, as well as, Bank of America. Mr. Modestow said on paper it is the entire shopping plaza, however, it is a separate parcel because there was a subdivision that happened after the creation of the Price Chopper facility. Mr. Modestow pointed out on the plan the location of the ATM, which is closest to the Sherman and Main Street intersection. Parking on the site is ample for both Price Chopper, and what they are proposing for the ATM. The ATM kiosk will be located along the front side of Sherman Street.

Mr. Modestow displayed a rendering, and said it is a walk up ATM which will lose a total of three (3) parking spaces to replace with a concrete island for the ATM. The ATM will stand approximately 11 feet and 4 inches in height, which is about a four foot box with a slight canopy over it. There is no walk in, just exterior facing, and noted they have these all across the country and work beautifully.

Mr. Modestow added as part of the application, they are proposing some light improvements to provide extra security, as well as a 6 foot high monument sign to be located at the corner of Main Street and Sherman Street. Therefore, they are proposing the logo band on top of the ATM and the free standing monument sign.

R. Swartz commented with the ATM out in the open, and New England weather, especially where Gardner is 1,000 feet above sea level, the winters are a little more unbearable, therefore, asked why the ATM cannot be closed in to make it more bearable for their customers, as well as additional security. Mr. Modestow replied this is one of their larger ATM models, and the actual old school vestibules are no longer desired by Bank of America, and identify the walk up model to be a proper fit for their customers. R. Swartz also commented he is a Bank of America customer, and going to this type of ATM would not entice him to go there, especially in the winter months.

S. Cormier asked if the access for the ATM will be strictly off of Sherman Street. Mr. Modestow answered there is no change for access to the site, since it is sitting inside the parking lot.

P. Cormier asked to confirm the reason why Bank of America is coming back now. T. Beauregard explained back when Price Chopper plaza was permitted, they exceeded the square footage of signage, therefore, the need to go to the Zoning Board of Appeals for a variance. As a condition, any additional signage at the site, requires Planning Board approval prior to going to the Zoning Board of Appeals for an additional variance. Mr. Schafron stated, so what is in front of them is the signage.

T. Beauregard confirmed the height of the sign is about six (6) feet. Mr. Modestow said there is about a 30 Inch gap between the base and the actual sign itself. The total sign is 41 inches in height.

Asked if it is illuminated. Mr. Modestow said yes, it is internally illuminated.

Asked how far back the sign is from the roadway. Mr. Modestow replied ten feet from the property.

Asked the width. Mr. Modestow said 9 feet in width.

Asked if the sign is a standard Bank of America sign. Mr. Modestow said yes. Asked if the come any smaller. Mr. Modestow believes they might be some smaller, but would have to confirm. T. Beauregard commented the sign seems to be overkill for an ATM to have a sign that size. Mr. Modestow added since there are two entrances, the sign can be viewed clearer.

T. Beauregard asked if there was any thought given with regard to about doing exterior illumination. Mr. Modestow said it is frowned upon because of the residents nearby, and prefer not to.

Mr. Schafron asked if the Board wants to approve the proposal for the sign, so they can then go to the Zoning Board of Appeals and ask for a variance for the sign.

***Motion to approve signage plan for the Bank of America walk up ATM kiosk project as required by Site Plan Approval Decision for Development Plan for Proposed Mix-use Development off Main and Sherman Streets dated June 20, 2011.***

***P. Cormier/R. Bettez.***

***Vote – All in***

***favor.***

### **3. OLD BUSINESS:**

#### **3.1 Site Plan Approval ~ Heywood Hospital Expansion Project**

To be continued until next Planning Board meeting on August 10, 2021 at 7 p.m.

#### **3.2 Continuation of Public Hearing ~ Special Permit/Heywood Hospital Expansion Project**

Mr. Schafron stated he will reconvene since Peer Review is still being reviewed, therefore, the proponent has asked for a little more time to digest the Peer Review recommendations and comments. Further, will carry this forward to the August Planning Board meeting to give Hannigan Engineering enough time to review the Peer Review and respond. Mr. Schafron asked if there are any comments, or questions on this.

***Motion to continue the Special Permit Public Hearing for Heywood Hospital Expansion Project until the August Planning Board meeting.***

***R. Bettez/R. Swartz.***

***Vote – All in favor.***

#### **3.3 Continuation of Public Hearing ~ Special Permit/Heywood Hospital Micro Grid Project**

Mr. Schafron stated he will also reconvene this project as well, as this is the same situation as the Expansion Project. The proponent, Tighe & Bond, would also like some time to digest the Peer Review that just arrived. Mr. Schafron asked the Board if they have any questions, comments, or concerns.

***Motion to continue the Special Permit Public Hearing for Heywood Hospital Micro Grid Project until the August Planning Board meeting.***

***S. Cormier/P. Cormier.***

***Vote – All in favor.***

#### **3.4 MJTC [Montachusett Joint Transportation Committee] ~ Appoint Planning Board Member**

T. Beauregard noted he provided information as far as when the meetings are held, etc., regarding this committee, and acknowledged Mr. R. Swartz has volunteered his services as Planning Board Member.

#### **3.5 Ordinance ~ Development Overlay District 1**

Mr. Schafron noted they recently attended the Joint Public Hearing for this, and asked T. Beauregard if he had some thoughts on this. T. Beauregard commented he expressed his thoughts at the Joint Public Hearing. T. Beauregard explained the development overlay districts, as well as any other overlay district (*ex. solar overlays*), are tracked on the overlay zoning map, so if anyone from the public would like to know how many, and where the overlays are, they just go to the map, which is the best way to look at them since it shows the location as opposed to in writing. Further, placing them in the zoning code book, is basically duplicating efforts, as well as rewriting the code book every time a zoning overlay is created and approved, which again is duplicative and unnecessary.

Mr. Schafron summarized, from what he understands Councilor Graves is asking be put in the books is when the City Council puts a condition on an overlay district, and just the City Council, which he also understands is a pretty rare event. Mr. Schafron directed to the Board and asked if this is what they understood. R. Swartz replied yes. Mr. Schafron asked T. Beauregard, if some was to go to his office, how he would direct someone. T. Beauregard replied hopefully a member of the public would contact his office, or the building commissioner's office, where they could be shown how to view the zoning map on the City's website.

C. Coughlin, City Engineer, added the map is available to the public online from the City's website under the GIS department, and it is just a layer in there where one would check a box and all overlays pop right up.

Mr. Schafron asked if the Board had any questions, or discussion.

S. Cormier spoke of the Public Hearing where Councilor Graves came forward and explained it was a housekeeping method, or cleaning up the housekeeping more than anything else, and as he explained it, it made sense what he was saying, however, to have to duplicate/triplicate the same effort as what the map shows, and what the Planning Director has in his file, does not make any sense at all, and feels the way it is now, by leaving it on the map that someone could look and see where it is, as well as if someone stopped by the office, they could discuss with the Director, is probably the best way to go, without creating another loop, or a lot more work for a lot of people.

Mr. Schafron added, ease of information access is the crux of it.

R. Swartz stated he does not think the map is the issue, but is identifying the conditions, or the restrictions on each overlay type, and where to put the information. In addition, Councilor Graves suggested it go in the zoning code document. R. Swartz said he prefers to go to one place, and maybe the document, but not sure if that is the real, correct, or most efficient way to do this, and suggested more discussion amongst themselves as to which way to go with this particular issue.

C. Coughlin suggested possibly adding a link, so if one clicked on the link, it would go to the code section in order to save a little bit of time, and might be a good middle ground.

T. Beauregard stated the current process has been in place for a decade plus, and have not had any issues.

Mr. Schafron stated C. Coughlin's idea seems to be the easiest way to go, and would not create a burden on any department.

***Motion to send final notice to City Council the Planning Board recommends not to approve the amendment to Development Overlay District 1, as presented.***

***R. Bettez/P. Cormier.***  
***favor.***

***Vote – All in***

**4. ANNOUNCEMENTS~~NEWS~~ARTICLES~~EVENTS:**

... Next Meeting: Tuesday, August 10, 2021 at 7 p.m.

**Adjournment**

*Motion to adjourn.*

***R. Bettez/S. Cormier.***

***favor.***

***Vote – All in***

**The meeting adjourned at 7:30 p.m.**

All documents referenced or used during the meeting are part of the official record and are available in the Department of Community Development and Planning pursuant to the Open Meeting and Public Records Law.