

PLANNING BOARD
REGULAR MEETING MINUTES
APRIL 28, 2020 VIA GO TO MEETING

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

Members absent: *None.*

Also present: Chris Coughlin-*Engineering*, Christine Fucile-*DCDP*, Matt Olson-*Applicant*, Patrick McCarty-McCarty *Engineering*, Justin LeClair-McCarty *Engineering*, and members of the public (see attendee list in 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 8:08 p.m.

1. MINUTES

Vote to approve Regular Planning Board Meeting Minutes of February 11, 2020.

(No meeting was held in March).

Motion to accept and approve Planning Board Regular meeting minutes of February 11, 2020 as presented.

R. Bettez, Sr. /R. Swartz.

Vote - All in

favor.

2. NEW BUSINESS

2.1 Timpany Crossroads, LLC Site Plan Approval for Drive-Through restaurant facility:

Mr. Schafron confirmed this will need to be carried forward into the May Planning Board meeting.

T. Beauregard suggested the Planning Board vote to continue into the May Planning Board meeting.

Motion to continue the Timpany Crossroads, LLC Site Plan Approval amendment for Drive-Through restaurant facility site to the May Planning Board Meeting.

R. Bettez/R. Swartz.

Vote – All in favor.

2.2 Timpany Crossroads, LLC Special Permit for Drive-Through restaurant facility:

Mr. Schafron confirmed this will also be carried forward into the May Planning Board meeting.

Motion to continue the Timpany Crossroads, LLC Special Permit for Drive-Through restaurant facility to the May Planning Board Meeting.

2.3 525 Parker Street as a Development Overlay District 1:

Justin LeClair of McCarty Engineering displayed the cover letter dated February 19, 2020 from McCarty Engineering sent to The City Council.

Patrick McCarty, owner of McCarty Engineering introduced himself as well as Justin LeClair of McCarty Engineering, Brian Marchetti-Project Engineer, and Matt Olson-Applicant.

Mr. McCarty stated the project is located at 525 Parker Street which is a 7.5 acre parcel located in Industrial 1 zoning district. To the left is the B&M railroad, and Parker Pond to the west, with residential properties to the north and east, and Parker Street to the south with residences on the opposite side of Parker Street. In 2006 the Development Overlay district was established for the site, and in May of 2007, the Planning Board voted to approve a development that consisted of 54 units, and 16 three- and four-unit buildings. This project was never constructed and sat vacant since that time. This property was the formerly GEM Industries, a furniture manufacturer, and was a large mill on the site that was demolished in 2006. Therefore, for 14 years has been left undeveloped and partially vegetated.

On behalf of Mr. Olson, plans were prepared for three (3) multifamily buildings, one on the eastern side, one on the western side, and one up on the north side, with the back side facing Parker Pond.

Each building is three-stories and contains 41 units. The proposed development covers the area of the site that was previously approved, however, the main difference between the two, is the approved project showed an emergency access driveway through the wetland and out to Water Street. Further, the current plan proposes a double-barrel entrance out to Parker Street, and did not see a need to disturb the wetland and introduction of traffic onto the small, low volume of Water Street to the north.

Mr. McCarty displayed a copy of the site plan submitted, and stated they are seeking to amend the Development Overlay District that was granted in 2006 for this proposed project. Further, it is understood the first step for this process is a recommendation from the Planning Board to the City Council in favor or in opposition to the amendment request. Following this both parties are to hold a Joint Public Hearing on the matter. T. Beauregard summarized the original development was approved for 54 three and four unit condo development back in 2006/2007 time frame which was never built, therefore, Mr. Olson, developer has now come forward requesting an amendment to the overlay to allow for three multi-unit buildings for 121 rental units on the property as opposed to the 54 residential condo units.

Mr. Schafron questioned the setbacks from the street. Mr. McCarty replied the requirements for this district is 5,000 square feet for minimum lot area and the plan has 706,000 square feet, lot coverage maximum of 85% and the plan is at 20.7%, there are no requirements for frontage and the plan has 390.5 feet, the minimum side yard requirement is 10 feet and the plan is proposing 21 feet (*green area on the plan*). The proposed buildings are no closer to Parker Street than the original furniture factory building was which was a ten (10) foot yard setback. The rear yard requirement is 20 feet, and the plan is proposing about 591 feet. Mr. McCarty commented to J. LeClair he thought the proposed rear yard might be incorrect in the zoning table with regard from the northwest corner of the back building to the rear property line. J. LeClair responded the lot actually has Parker Pond within the lot lines, so it is more back across the pond and is considered more of the side yard setback for proposed building C.

The maximum height requirement is 60 feet, and the plan is proposing 52 feet. The number of stories in the district requirement is five (5) and the plan is proposed three (3) stories.

T. Beauregard commented he understands the Development Overlay District 1 does not have a front yard setback, however, this zoning was really developed for downtown development, but this just happens to be outside of downtown and is in a little different setting from downtown. T. Beauregard suggested it would add a lot the project, aesthetically fitting into this area a little better, to move the buildings back off the roadway somewhat to be more consistent with the underlying zoning, not the development overlay zoning. T. Beauregard stated he believes it is 30 feet in that area.

Mr. Schafron asked if there are any comments from the Development Review committee. T. Beauregard said a Development Review meeting was not held, but a meeting was held with himself, the Developers, and the Building Commissioner. He also shared the plan with some department heads to get some initial feedback.

M. Schafron inquired about Open Space. Mr. Olson answered the usable space is 44% lot cover without the pond, therefore there is 56% open space. T. Beauregard said the pond is not considered open space, and noted the definition of open space in the zoning code. In addition, T. Beauregard said he does not see 56% open space on the site plan. It was noted there is quite a bit of area behind Building A, Building C outside of the wetlands, north of Building A, behind Building B internal to the parking lot where the landscaping features are shown in between the sidewalk and the building. The lot coverage is the building and paving in the development area.

T. Beauregard asked if there will be a common area, as well as outdoor recreational areas, or indoor common space on the site.

It was noted there is a large green space area behind Building C in between the building and the edge of the pond, and is within the buffer zone. Not sure how large of the area it is.

Mr. Schafron asked if there will be a secondary access for emergency vehicles. It was answered there is a 24 foot driveway on either of the center island shown on the site plan. Could restrict to one way in and one way out but keep the width in the event of an emergency, since Water Street access is narrow, and did not want to plow through the isolated vegetated wetlands.

Mr. Schafron confirmed the units, which are 123, and asked if a traffic impact study was completed. The reply was not at this time.

T. Beauregard stated the Fire Chief is very adamant about a secondary access for the fire/emergency vehicles. The access does not have to be a 24 foot roadway, as long as it is a hard gravel surface with a gate. Further, it is preferred to have one entrance in and one entrance out of the site for safety purposes. In this case with two entrances and exits, they should be 200 feet away from each other.

Mr. Schafron asked if there are any questions.

Mr. Swartz said he remembers when the factory was there with a paved banking for parking with the edge of the banking located right on Parker Street. Therefore, there should be more travel lane to have access into the facility, and also strongly supports the second exit access for emergency vehicles.

Mr. McCarty stated he has no opposition to adding emergency vehicle only second access, but was looking at having to go through the wetlands to get to Water Street.

Mr. Swartz also noted the middle barrier for driveway entrance, and if there will be a one way in/one way out, thought the middle barrier should be eliminated.

Mr. McCarty thought the middle barrier may even be a little bigger due to 24 foot drive aisles, and if they went to one-way, it could possibly be 20 foot wide, and would gain four feet from each drive aisle which would be eight (8) feet total to the central green space, and create almost like a boulevard effect with the road going in with landscaping separating the road going out. Further, could add some green space and open space. Mr. Swartz added the factory was one-story.

Mr. Schafron inquired about a lighting plan. Mr. McCarty replied he has a full set of site plans available which includes grading, drainage, utilities, and landscaping, but for this part of this process, just submitted the layout plan with number of units until there is a decision on moving forward on the development overlay.

T. Beauregard stated even though the plans are conceptual stage of the process, should reflect as consistent as possible as to what the final project will be. M. Schafron agreed and personally would like to see plans with the revised entry way with the secondary entrance included.

S. Cormier commented he agreed with Mr. Swartz and T. Beauregard with regard to the buildings being located too close to Parker Street roadway. Also noted the railroad bridge being where it is, would also be a difficult situation with the buildings that close. Therefore, the buildings should be moved back. Also agreed with the secondary access, and thought it should be paved due to plowing.

Mr. Schafron stated he believes this project is not quite ready for recommendation, and is welcome to come back again. Mr. Schafron suggested meeting with the Planning Director and various other city bodies to address these concerns.

T. Beauregard explained for a zoning amendment there is a time frame, and assumes Mr. Olson has a P&S on the property, so he is allowed to ask for a zoning amendment, or to rezone the property. Once the City Council receives that request, there is a 14-day period to then submit to the Planning Board. The Planning Board did not meet in March, however, the request was received on March 5, 2020, the regularly scheduled Planning Board meeting was for the following Tuesday, therefore, this would not give enough time to review to put on the Agenda. Further, the Planning Board will need to make the recommendation to the City Council to have a joint public hearing within 65 days after the Planning Board receives the plan from the City Council which brings us to May 9, 2020, which still could not be met. T. Beauregard recommends the most appropriate way to handle this is to withdraw the original amendment request and resubmit a revised plan at a later date. Mr. McCarty thought right now it is impossible for either side to meet the deadline, therefore the best solution is to withdraw without prejudice with a letter, do some revisions for the plan, and resubmit. Mr. McCarty summarized what revisions need to be done, such as look at the access in the proposed driveways, see what can be done to move the buildings further back from Parker Street, and add secondary access through Water Street. Mr. McCarty noted he did not hear any comments regarding the size and look of the buildings, and number of units, and sounded like it is more of a public safety.

Mr. Schafron added he is interested in the traffic impact.

R. Bettez voiced his concern regarding the residents that are on and around the pond have been fighting for years to get the pond cleaned up, and wondered if any pollution will be added to the pond from this development, especially with run off from the parking lots, etc. Mr. McCarty replied the stormwater system has been designed to meet all the Massachusetts stormwater

management standards. The drainage calculations and reports will be submitted with the detailed set of plans to both Planning and Conservation for DPW and Engineering to review.

T. Beauregard restated he needs to see the 56% open space on this plan, as well as the outdoor common area. Further, having that many people in one area there should be some amenities on site with regard to quality of life, whether indoor/outdoor or both. Mr. McCarty will review this. Mr. Swartz asked if the rental units will be market price. Mr. McCarty answered all units will be market rates. Mr. Swartz asked if there will be any Section 8 units. The reply was not planning to.

Mr. Swartz asked if the units will be oriented for certain age groups. The answer was no, units are available for anyone who can afford it.

Mr. McCarty pointed out there will be 90 two-bedroom units, and 33 one-bedroom units.

Mr. Swartz commented some of the Ward 3 residents are in opposition of this project regarding a possible impact to the city relative for the school district, but does not see a problem due to the number of bedrooms in these units.

P. Cormier asked to see a design of the buildings. Mr. McCarty pointed out some preliminary renderings, and noted McKenzie engineering in Leominster is doing the architectural and structural design of the buildings.

Mr. Schafroon recommends Mr. McCarty complete the withdrawal letter to reset the clock, and work with the appropriate city personnel to address the concerns. Mr. McCarty agreed.

2.4 Planning Board Member for Development Review Committee

T. Beauregard stated Laura Casker, previous member of the Planning Board was a representative for the Development Review Committee, and a new Planning Board volunteer is needed.

Both R. Swartz and S. Cormier presented themselves, and after discussing, it was agreed R. Swartz would now be the Planning Board Member volunteer.

Motion to accept R. Swartz as Planning Board Member volunteer for the Development Review Committee.

S. Cormier/P. Cormier.

Vote – All in favor.

2.5 Fee Schedule Amendment

T. Beauregard presented the new Fee Amendment schedule, and noted some edits and additions had to be made for Drive-through fees, as well as Planning Board Amendment fees.

Motion to accept the updated fee schedule edits/amendments as presented.

S. Cormier/R. Swartz.

favor.

Vote – All in

3. OLD BUSINESS

None at this time.

4. ANNOUNCEMENTS~~NEWS~~ARTICLES~~EVENTS

Next Planning Board Meeting scheduled for May 12, 2020 at 7 p.m. It was mentioned the preliminary election is scheduled for the same evening, therefore, it was agreed to change to Thursday, May 14, 2020 at 7 p.m.

Adjournment

Motion to adjourn.

R. Bettez, Sr. /S. Cormier.
favor.

Vote --All in

The meeting adjourned at 9:06 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