

**FITCHBURG PLANNING BOARD MEETING MINUTES
TUESDAY, JUNE 14, 2016**

MEMBERS PRESENT: Paula Caron, Chair
John DiPasquale
Paul Fontaine, Jr.
Kristin Sweeney
Andrew Van Hazinga
Laura O’Kane (Assoc. Member)

PLANNING OFFICE: Mike O’Hara

Call to Order

Meeting called to order at 6:03 p.m. in the Garden Room, Fitchburg Public Lye-berry, 610 Main St.

PUBLIC HEARINGS

Zoning Ordinance Amendment - proposed Commercial Recreation development, off Westminster Hill Rd.
Ms. Caron opened the hearing & explained the two City Council petitions before them. Proposed use is currently not permitted in the RR district.

(1) Petition #107-2016 (noted as “A” on handout for audience) would change “Commercial Recreation” in the Use Table from “No” to “Special Permit - PIng. Bd.” in the Rural Residential zoning district.

(2) #106-2016 (noted as “B” on handout) proposes a new Commercial Recreation Planned Development District specifically for the seven parcels listed.

She explained process of concept plan and informal workshop per the PDD section & clarified that Planning Board only makes a recommendation on the petitions. The City Council is the approval authority for all zoning changes.

Greg Roy, Ducharme & Dillis, Atty. Tom Bovenzi, and Steve Marsden present.

Greg: Background - developer has expressed interest in site for large indoor/outdoor soccer facility.

He showed large-scale aerial photo w/ playing fields, parking & bldg. overlaid.

Will have 10 playing surfaces, 6 grass & 4 artificial. Six fields will be in northerly side of Westminster Hill Rd. Fields on southerly side will be lighted. Will be run by “Game On Soccer”.

One 10,000 sq. ft. bldg. w/ indoor playing fields, restaurant, pro shop, med. Offices, nursing staff, training rooms, etc. Parking areas for 447 cars. The extent of the development shown is the ultimate build-out of the facility.

Access will be from west via Industrial Rd & Westminster Hill Rd. No access from the east on

Westminster Hill Rd. They propose to make that end of Westminster Hill Rd. a dead-end.

Will need MEPA review, several thresholds are met. Will prob. need to file Notice of Intent w/ ConCom.

Discussion of economic benefit to local economy.

S.Marsden: Nearest similar facility is ForeKicks in Acton. Facility would be open to leagues of any age group.

Ms. Caron: Planning Board will be considering issues such as lighting, sound, stormwater runoff, access, roadway width, traffic impacts, water supply, etc.

Public Comment:

Karen Savone, 177 Victoria Lane: All of Victoria Lane is on private wells. How will this affect them?

Greg: They propose to connect to city water for potable water & for fire protection. There will be water system improvements. They will have well for irrigation of fields.

Ms. Caron: There can’t be any cross connection.

Q: Does Marsden own all the parcels proposed to be rezoned? Marsden owns six; the last 60 ac. parcel is owned by Morin, he has P&S on it. Total area of parcels proposed for rezoning: approx. 150 ac. Total area of proposed development: approx. 40 ac.

Ms. Savone: If this is development happens Victoria Lane will get the brunt of traffic. Susan Wentworth, 1215 Westminster Hill Rd. concerned w/ fertilizer & chemicals that are used on fields. She moved there Oct. 2015 & for the peace & quiet & will fight this to the end.

Q: How much say does the public have?

Ms. Caron: Planning Board will take into account residents' comments and make a recommendation.

Q: How can zoning be proposed to be changed on property he doesn't own?

Ms. Caron: Property owners to be affected by a zoning change may initiate a zoning change, just like Petition "A" which would affect all property in the Rural Residence district.

Mr. DiPasquale: How often fields used? Artificial turf fields: 8 mos. of the year, grass fields: 6 mos. Facility could be open 12-16 hours/day.

Mr. Fournier, 1264 Westminster Hill Rd: Removal of sand & gravel from area since the '60s has caused flooding on his property.

Greg: They will need to do detailed pre- & post-development stormwater analysis.

S.Marsden: Water pressure in area is the issue, there is enough volume. They may go w/ underground storage tank beneath fields to supply pressure. He has been talking w/ Water Dept. Ashok Hingorany, Minuteman Industries, Arbor Way - The water pumps at the Montachusett Industrial Park pump station have failed in the past.

Mr. Diedrich, 1279 Westminster Hill Rd: Interested in amt. of traffic generated. There are 3 streams running thru his property. Developing behind his property would disturb drainage patterns.

S.Marsden: "Game On" has data on traffic generated at their facilities.

Mr. Fontaine: The Board may be looking at off-site improvements & repairs to Industrial Rd.

John Handler. 1296 Westminster Hill Rd. - What would be the enforcement mechanism? Building Commissioner/Zoning Enforcement Officer

Paul Gagne, 245 Central Ave. Ext: Will this affect pond on his property? Plng Bd. acknowledges that

Ms. Savone, Victoria Lane: RR underpass at Rt. 31 is a bottleneck.

Greg Roy: They will have a Traffic Impact Study done & submitted when applying for approvals.

Q: Could there be a curfew at night? Neighbors can hear games at Monty Tech fields at night now.

Mr. Van Hazinga: That could be considered as a condition of a Special Permit. There will be a host of other issues to consider and conditions.

Q on how Plng. Bd. will make recommendation?

Board will consider all the neighbors comments & applicant's information and discuss among themselves before making a recommendation.

Mary Jo Bohart, Economic Development Director pointed out benefits of this type of project. It would be attractive to Great Wolf Lodge - teams traveling for tournaments would use the hotel. Revenue to city b/c hotel taxes.

Ms. Scavone: Yes, but how to attract these visitors to downtown? She's found that visitors to area are reluctant to go to downtown Fitchburg

Timetable: Greg: Game on Soccer is looking at several other sites. They want to build on one sooner rather than later.

Chris Murray, 1218 Westminster Hill Rd: The outdoor recreation idea is good, but fields are way too close to houses - only 100 feet? The four on northerly side of Westminster Hill Rd. is a major concern. Could minimize that if there were fewer or relocated fields.

Mr. Fontaine: One of the things the Board will be looking for is a deep tree buffer.

Ms. Cushing, 150 Victoria Lane: 447 pkg. spaces not enough, there's never enough parking for tournaments. Traffic past Victoria Lane will be bad, there should be a traffic signal at 2A & Princeton Rd. Board: Probably doesn't meet warrant for signal. They could put condition 'no soccer parking in street'.

Some wells are close to the road. If Westminster Hill Rd. is widened, will wells be affected? What will be recourse?

7:45 p.m. Motion made & seconded to close hearing. Vote in favor.

Paul reminded the audience that after the public hearing closed, the meeting would continue and the Board may be discussing their recommendation.

Board discussed issues and concerns raised tonight. Members thought Petition "B" is a better option than "A", gives Board more control.

Motion made (Mr. DiPasquale) & seconded (Mr. Fontaine) to recommend that petition "A" be given leave to withdraw. Vote 5-0 in favor.

Motion made (Mr. DiPasquale) & seconded (Mr. Fontaine) to recommend that in favor of petition "B", (Planned Development District), provided the following issues/concerns are addressed in the zoning amendment:

- # of playing fields NTE 10.
- Only one building allowed.
- Applicant must demonstrate adequate buffering and screening to adjacent residential areas to mitigate spillover lighting and sound from soccer facility.
- Access to site to be solely from west via Industrial Rd. & Westminster Hill Rd.
- Improvements made to public water supply system to provide adequate water pressure for fire and domestic flows.
- Proponent to submit Traffic Impact Study and cover City's cost of a 3rd party peer review of TIS.
- Proponent to make improvements as recommended in traffic study & by 3rd party peer reviewer.
- Improvements to be made to Industrial Road and Westminster Hill Rd.
- Other offsite improvements to mitigate the impact of development, such as: evaluation and recommended improvements to Montachusett pump station at foot of Industrial Road, providing adequate turnaround at easterly terminus of Westminster Hill Rd.
- Satisfactory review by Police, Traffic Division and Fire Protection.
- No on-street parking to be allowed on Westminster Hill Road or Victoria Lane.
- The Planning Board shall have the sole authority to determine whether the detailed site plan submitted conforms to the approved Concept Plan, and, what constitutes a "major" or "minor" change in the concept plan. A major revision will require new notice and hearing.

- Minor revisions to the approved development plan are allowed. A reduction in the number of playing fields, the size of building, or parking spaces will not constitute a major change.

Vote 5-0 in favor.

S. Marsden: It was not discussed tonight, but solar arrays were included in language of Petition "B". He wants the ability to include solar arrays as a permitted use in the amendment in order to decrease reliance on Unutil.

Proposed Zoning Amendment to amend Ordinance's definition of "Manufacturing" to include alternative energy mfg.

Hearing opened. MRPC had come up with the following suggested language, to which the Board agreed to make a slight amendment:

LIGHT MANUFACTURING - The production, fabrication, processing or assembly of goods, **including renewable or alternative energy manufacturing- PRODUCTS**, in a manner that is in compliance with all state and federal rules and regulations; confines disturbing smoke, fumes, dust, chemical discharge and noise to the premises; and is not hazardous to abutters because of potential fire, explosion or radiation.

MANUFACTURING - The production, fabrication, processing or assembly of goods, **including renewable or alternative energy manufacturing- PRODUCTS**, in a manner that is in compliance with all state and federal rules and regulations.

RESEARCH AND TESTING - Investigation and/or testing of goods and/or equipment **including renewable or alternative energy research and development facilities**, provided that all operations shall confine disturbing smoke fumes, dust, chemical discharge and noise to the premises and that no operation shall violate any federal or state rule or regulation.

Motion made & seconded to close hearing. Vote in favor.

Motion made & seconded to recommend in favor of the amendment as modified tonight. Vote in favor.

Due to vacations on the third week of July, the Board agreed to move July meeting from third Tuesday, July 19th to Monday, July 11th, location TBD.

Meeting adjourned: 8:54 p.m.

Next meeting: 6/21/16

Minutes approved: 6/21/16