

**FITCHBURG PLANNING BOARD MEETING MINUTES
TUESDAY, JUNE 21, 2016**

MEMBERS PRESENT: Paula Caron, Chair
John DiPasquale
Mike DiPietro
Mike Hurley
Kristin Sweeney
Andrew Van Hazinga
Laura O’Kane (Assoc. Member)

MEMBERS ABSENT: Paul Fontaine, Jr.

PLANNING OFFICE: Mike O’Hara

Call to Order

Meeting called to order at 6:08 p.m. in the Basement Community Room, Fitchburg Fire Headquarters, 33 North St.

Meeting Minutes

Minutes of the May 21st & June 14th meetings were approved with corrections.

MINOR SITE PLAN REVIEW

None

PUBLIC HEARINGS

Site Plan Review - Bouchard, 12,600 sq. ft. addition, auto service bldg., 288 Lunenburg St.

Anthony Cleaves, Whitman & Bingham & John Levesque, Bouchard Motors present.

Anthony presented plan for 12,000 sq. ft. addition to Ron Bouchard’s Chrysler/Dodge/Ram facility.

Will be used as service area. They also need storage since the buildings that were part of car dealership on other side of street have been sold off. Structure replaces the approx. size of buildings that were recently demolished on site. He explained traffic pattern thru site. Existing dumpsters are tucked away toward rear of site.

Plans of building facade reviewed. Will be metal on front & sides with wall mounted lights. Site is currently paved, no change to impervious area.

Will be new Water & Sewer connections made to lines in Lunenburg St. One comment from DPW: Need more detail on trench patch. Addition will be approx. 45 feet to mobile home park to east. Bouchard’s is at higher elevation. Landscaping? None planned.

Public Comment: none.

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

Motion made (Mr. Van Hazinga) & seconded (Mr. Hurley) to Approve Site Plan. Vote 6-0 in favor.

Special Permit - Jaffee, driveway > 500 feet long, shared driveway, Sheldon Rd.

Anna Jaffee & Lauren Slater presented plan for a 15-foot wide driveway on west side of property on 71 ac. lot. Driveway follows an existing cart path for the most part. It varies from the cart path in some areas to get further away from the wet area. Reasons for Special Permit request: (1) Shared driveway between dwellings on 2 lots. (2) Driveway will be over 500 feet long. Shared portion of driveway will be about 750 feet. Surface of driveway will be asphalt grindings, slope will be pitched away from abutters.

Ms. Caron reminded applicants that there needs to be a common driveway access easement laying out responsibility for maintenance, plowing, etc. They are looking into that.

Public Comment:

Ed Gastonguay, 509 Sheldon Rd. - Do the lots have the req'd amount (175') of street frontage?
Yes, 211.95 and 200 feet.

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

Motion made (Mr. Hurley) & (Mr. DiPasquale) to Approve Special Permit with conditions:

- Fire Dept. approval for length of driveway.
- Review & approval by Conservation Commission and other necessary City departments.
- Subject to Planning Board review & Approval of Common Driveway easement document.

Vote: 7-0 in favor. (Assoc. member Ms. O'Kane participating on Special Permit)

Special Permit - Mixed Used Planned Unit Development (residential & commercial) 579 South St., Gionet (cont'd from 5/17/16)

Bill Hannigan, Hannigan Engineering & Mark Gionet present.

Revised plan shows buildings relocated further away from Ashley Ridge. Two apartment buildings have been combined into one L-shaped building w/ a center entrance. Parking layout has been revised.

Office building still part of plan.

Parking: 28 units - 56 spaces req'd - 58 provided.

Office: 15 spaces req'd - 20 provided.

A four-foot wide sidewalk from site entrance to the sidewalk in front of Ashley Ridge was added to plan. This will help keep vegetation down to insure adequate sight distance.

Mr. DiPasquale asked about a buffer. They will extend stockade fence abutting Ashley Ridge & plant row of white pines.

Q: How much useable open space? Bill H: Not much, except for the undisturbed area at rear of parcel adjacent to Coggshall Park.

Height of buildings will be 3 stories, 32'-34' to eaves. Building size: 13,000 sq. ft. each on 1st & 2nd floors, 10,000 sq. ft. on 3rd floor.

Mr. DiPasquale: Would plowed snow affect the line of sight at driveway?

Bill H: That's an issue everywhere in city.

Mark G is OK w/ maintaining the sidewalk & ensure adequate sight distance (335 feet) from site driveway year-round. Bill H. suggested a sign be installed north of the site driveway: "Driveway Entrance Ahead"

Public comment:

Linda Rameau, Ashley Ridge had a handout for Board members "Top reasons why ..." listing reasons why anything more than 1- or 2-family is not appropriate for site. She's checked w/ P.D. - South & Electric has the 3rd highest accident rate in area. South & Norval is also a "hot spot". In 2014 Board told applicant that 14 units was too dense. Project will decrease property values in area.

Bill H. rebutted one of her points - Gionet's previous proposal was a different type of project - condo townhouse units.

Board was informed that there will be a re-hearing before the Conservation Commission at a later date because of a notification problem w/ previous hearing.

Paul Fontaine, Sr. - Snow from pavement widening will be plowed onto sidewalk & block sight distance. Will snow be removed from sidewalk in every storm? Building is still 3-story and building height has increased 4 feet. He'd like to see the height of extended stockade fence on Ashley Ridge side increased from 6 to 8 feet, even if a variance is needed.

Bill H: Building has been moved further away from Ashley Ridge by about 60 feet.

He is OK w/ a condition to attempt to get approval to increase height of fence, but he doesn't want to be required to get variance.

Q: Could there be other types of buffer? Bill H. suggested a 2-foot berm and the six-foot fence placed on that.

Paul Fontaine, Sr. wants the same fencing on the south side of the site, as well. Mark G. is willing to do that.

Bob Pelletier, Ashley Ridge: What about rubbish? Ans. There will be 2 dumpsters in front of the residential buildings.

Beth Holland, Norval Ave. - Concerned with safety. There are other areas where the project could go.

Robert Irvine, Ashley Ridge: Has applicant built on ledge before? Would there be blasting?

Bill H: Maybe only drilling. Blasting is regulated by State and is monitored by the Fire Dept.

Atty. Holly Suprenant, Ashley Ridge asked that the Board to take into consideration the feelings of the residents, and look at balancing the economic benefit of the project to the developer with the detriment effects of the proposed project.

Ms. Caron thanked residents for their comments.

Board discussion:

Mr. Van Hazinga: Doesn't think 34 units & 3-story bldg. is a good fit for the neighborhood. Two stories and reduced density would be better.

Mr. DiPasquale: In 2014 the Board determined that 14 units was a better fit. He'd like to see something more in line with that #.

Mr. Hurley: He's counted 36 apts. and 72 condos in the area & 17 commercial uses in the South St. corridor from Wanoosnoc to Electric Ave.

Ms. O'Kane: Concerned w/ density, traffic.

Mr. DiPietro: Too dense.

Ms. Sweeney won't second-guess the traffic engineers, would like to see density decreased. Would like discussion with applicant to continue in a spirit of compromise.

Q: Does applicant need 28 units? Mark G: Yes. It is similar to density in the area.

Bill H. will go back w/ applicant and assess their options.

Ms. Caron: Note that the commercial piece isn't a requirement for the PUD.

Discussion about when July meeting would be, since several members would be on vacation 3rd week in July. Agreed to hold July's meeting on MONDAY, July 11th.

Motion made & seconded to continue the public hearing to Monday, July 11th. Vote in favor.

Site Plan Review, Special Permit - 409 Main St. LLC, conversion of building into retail/restaurant & residential (Parking Relief), 409 Main St.

Matt Fournier explained project of converting former Cahill's at corner of Main & Prichard into first floor retail or restaurant and two 2-BR apts. for professionals on 2nd & 3rd floors. He will be installing all new doors & windows for better curb appeal.

There will be some parking accommodations for guests/.

Suggestion to review parking situation after a period of time; maybe parking for residential will not be needed in the future.

Parking: He has been in discussion with Treasurer's Office about leasing spaces in municipal garage. & Will be included in rental agreement w/ tenants. There will be some parking accommodations for guests. He is looking to reduce the required parking to one space per unit.

Suggestion to review parking situation after a period of time; maybe parking for residential will not be needed in the future.

He plans on renovating the apts. on 2nd & 3rd floors first while using 1st floor as a staging area.

Q: Could there be a single use on both 1st & 2nd floors? No, an elevator is in the way.

Matt: First floor will have 5,900 sq. ft. space. Trash storage will be internal to the building, will have bike storage on 2nd & 3rd floors, laundry, maybe more internal storage space. Ceiling heights 14 feet on 1st & 2nd floor, 10 feet on 3rd floor.

Timing ? Hope to have building permits by end of July & start construction in the fall
Will look into updating the lighting and façade, plan to install planters out front.
Security, once in front door, will need key fob to gain access to upstairs. Better lighting will be provided in side alley/passway. All HVAC equipment will be on roof.

Discussion

Mr. DiPasquale – Good project. Someone needs to go first on Main St.

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

Motion made (Mr. DiPasquale) & seconded (Mr. Van Hazinga) to Approve the Site Plan and to Approve a Special Permit for relief from parking requirements to allow one space per dwelling unit.

Conditions: 1-year review, submit parking agreement for off-site parking for Board's review & approval, submit architectural plans for Board's review & approval.

Vote: 7-0 in favor. (*Assoc. member Ms. O'Kane participating on Special Permit*)

OTHER BUSINESS

Mass. Patient Foundation, concept plan - 99 Development Rd. (former ChemDesign)

Attys. Brandon Kurtzman & David Ullian of Vicente Sederberg, LLC in to discuss proposal by Medical Marijuana applicant Mass. Patient Foundation to use one or more of the building in the former ChemDesign site for the cultivation & processing of MMJ.

Site has been empty for the past 10 years. A locus plan of the campus was submitted. Mass. Patient Foundation's goals to use as much of the ChemDesign campus as possible. They will be leasing entire campus. They plan on using Bldg. 23 (14,000 sq. ft.) first. They may be building new greenhouses in addition. There is plenty of parking. There will be a Community Benefits Agreement w/ city – they are negotiating that now w/ City Solicitor & Mayor.

They noted that the facility will be an "MMM" (manufacturing) as referenced in the Ordinance, NOT retail. Their dispensary will be in Arlington.

Part of the ChemDesign parcel is in Westminster in an industrial zoning district. Their goal is to keep the cultivation facility entirely in Fitchburg, but they will be asking for a letter of non-opposition from Westminster as well. Cash operation? No, Century Bank has agreed to handle payroll, direct deposits, etc.

Ms. Caron: Ever consider a lab use for testing other MMJ providers. State still needs such a facility They'll consider it.

Q: Why Fitchburg? It's a permitted use, City was supportive when they inquired.
They plan to build out 50,000 sq. feet of cultivation space. By end of Year 3 they estimate 40 FT jobs.
Timing? They'll apply for special permit in about a month.

Mary Jo Bohart, Economic Development Director - Will they have exclusive use of ChemDesign's campus? Mass. Patient Foundation will be leasing entire parcel, they could lease portions to other users.

Ms. Caron: Any Q's for Board? Will they need Development Impact Statement or a Traffic Impact Study submitted? Board agreed: No.

Informal concept plan, redevelopment of portion of Mill #1, 44 Old Princeton Rd.

Jeff Anderson, Can-Am Machinery in to discuss proposal for an educational use to locate in 25,000 sq. ft. at Mill #1. Would be located in the southeast side of mill complex, access via existing driveway from Fifth Mass. Tpk. The driveway would need to be improved. Jeff showed photographs of the space. Will

house about 30 students in an automotive technology program. The Educational Use is permitted by right (educational exemption in MGL Ch. 40A) but will need a site plan review for conversion of use. Jeff said they may be filing a plan for the August meeting.

One-Lane Main Street

Due to late hour & lacking a full Board, deferred 'til next month.

Meeting Minutes

Minutes of the May 21st & June 14th meetings were approved with corrections.

ANR plans

Matson, Lots 26 & 27 Flicker Dr.

Plan modifies common property line between lots. Lot 27 gains an additional 2,249 sq. ft. from Lot 26 in order to create larger setback to existing dwelling at #49 Flicker. The Board endorsed the plan.

Planning Board recommendation on zoning amendments re: proposed Commercial Recreation facility in W. Fitchburg

Board reviewed list of issues/concerns that were raised at the 6/14/16 public hearing that were in the 6/14/16 minutes. Steve Marsden asked that suggested language in 6/21/16 letter to Board from Atty. Tom Bovenzi be included in the proposed amendment.

Board agreed: The petition to allow "Commercial Recreation" by special permit in RR district is not recommended. A better route would be to adopt a Commercial Recreation overlay district. That way, if the current soccer complex proposal does not happen the underlying zoning will still be Rural Residential. After discussion, Board agreed to recommend: Max. of 10 outdoor fields, only one Primary bldg., must provide sufficient buffers to adequately address, light, noise from proposed development, no access to site from east, nor via Victoria Lane, assess if necessary make improvements to public water supply in area, perform traffic impact study & other impact studies as needed, applicant may be req'd to make off-site improvements as needed, parking plan to be submitted that adequately addresses soccer parking needs.

Motion made & seconded to recommend against Petition #107-2016, to change "Commercial Recreation" from "N" to Special Permit - Planning Board" in the RR district. Vote 5-0 in favor.

Motion made & seconded to recommend in favor of Petition 106-2016, to adopt a new Section 181.8431 "Westminster Hill Road Commercial Recreation District" as an overlay district, with recommendations as discussed. Vote 5-0 in favor.

Mr. Hurley thought that all abutters in the Industrial Park should also be notified of the City Council hearing on July 7. Motion made & seconded to recommend that City Council send notification of the zoning amendment hearing be sent to abutters on Industrial Dr., Arbor Way & Stevens Rd. Vote unanimous in favor.

Motion made & seconded to adjourn.

Meeting adjourned: 10:30 p.m.

Next meeting: 7/11/16

Minutes approved 8/9/16/16