

**FITCHBURG PLANNING BOARD MEETING MINUTES
TUESDAY, JULY 9, 2019**

MEMBERS PRESENT: Paula Caron, Chair Peter Capodagli
Paul Fontaine, Jr. Laura O’Kane
Andy Van Hazinga Amanda Koeck (Assoc. Member)

STAFF: Mike O’Hara, Tom Skwierawski

Call to Order

Meeting called to order at 6:03 p.m. in the Community Room, Fitchburg Fire Headquarters, 33 North St.

ANR PLANS

None

MINOR SITE PLAN REVIEW

371 Lunenburg St., Caregiver-Patient Connection, minor revisions

Mike Staiti presented revised plan by Hannigan Engineering dated 7/9/19. Revisions include angled parking spaces in front of building, more detail on the landscaping out front, and a handicap access ramp on the right (westerly) side of the bldg. Per Building Code, the value of the site’s construction work as a % of the total valuation of the property triggers making the entire bldg. accessible, thus the need for the ramp.

Ms. Caron: The replacement fences on side of the parcel should be noted on the site plan as vinyl siding. Motion made & seconded to Approve revised site plan. Vote 5-0 in favor.

Mike stated construction should be complete by early August. They hope to have retail open this fall, but it depends on getting approval from the CCC.

PUBLIC HEARINGS

Special Permit & Site Plan Review - Rivarola, 37 Goodrich St., convert 2-family to 3-family dwelling (cont’d from 6/11/19)

Hearing re-opened. Nicolas (applicant & contractor) present. Dept. comments reviewed. Since it had been several months since the notice of the initial hearing, new notices had been mailed out.

Public comment:

One abutter asked where parking would be. Ans: Six spaces, all off-street in the side yard. No other public comment.

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

Motion made & seconded to Approve Special Permit with conditions:

- Submit a Utility Site Plan for DPW-Engineering & Wastewater review.
- Install curbstops to designate individual parking spaces.
- Surface of new parking area to be asphalt re-grind or similar.

Vote 5-0 in favor

Special Permit & Site Plan Review - Krikorian, 255 Main St., and 112-unit Planned Unit Development (cont’d from 6/11/19)

Hearing re-opened. Present: Bill Krikorian, Charles Roberts, Kuhn-Riddle Architects, Chris Anderson, Hannigan Engineering & Bob Jurasin, P.E. Traffic Engineer w/ Tighe & Bond.

Bill & Charles submitted plan revised 7/9/19 & explained plan revisions since last meeting

At SE corner of bldg. a triangular slice approx. ten feet wide was lopped off of floors 3 thru 7, above the two levels of parking, to provide more light to the windows of the adjacent Rollstone Congregational Church.

08/14/19

Also, there will be LED lighting on the outside of the 255 Main building to illuminate the stained glass windows. The Church will control these lights and pay for the electricity. Unit count remains at 112, but fewer 2-BRs. Unit mix was: 53 1-BR, 59 2-BRs. Now will be: 61 1-BR, 51 2-BRs.

Mr. Fontaine: Regarding the 1st floor space, the applicant should declare yes or no whether it will be a commercial use, due to the effect on the trip generation rate of the project. But he would be satisfied w/ a condition that the applicant will seek a modification of the Special Permit if the commercial space is proposed to happen in the future.

Recycling and rubbish totes will be on the NW side of the site, adjacent to Hotel Raymond.
Q Dumpsters - Will they have screening? Yes, vertical but not horizontal screening on the top, which inhibits trash pickup. Board wondered why a building of this size couldn't have internal trash chutes?
Mr. Fontaine suggested using these instead of outside dumpsters.

There will be laundry and storage rooms (4' x 6') for tenants on each floor and a community space on the 1st floor. Bike enclosures for tenants? No, but they could install bike racks in the garage, or accommodate bike riders with hangers on walls.

Parking: Still 98 spaces on two levels of parking on site and they're leasing 24 spaces in the MART garage, which combined amounts to 1.08 spaces per unit.

Mr. Van Hazinga: re: parking at MART & safely crossing street – What can be done?
Suggestion: As part of the MDOT Water St. Bridge redesign & the Complete Streets program a safer pedestrian crossing could be studied.

Mr. Fontaine: This plays into a per unit contribution, similar to what the board required for the Bridle Cross condo development years ago - a contribution of \$500 per unit (therefore a cap of \$56,000). This was used to partially fund the roundabout at Rollstone & Electric.
Bill is OK w/ that as long as there's a cap.

Public Comment:

Mayor DiNatale: Supports project, it will be transformative to the downtown.

Chris McDermott, Chamber of Commerce: Project will be a major component of revitalization of the downtown.

Daniel Weiss, FSU, Crocker Center for Civic Engagement, supports project on behalf of FSU administration.

Hal Smith, New Players Theater Guild is in favor. More people living downtown will be good for the NPTG & Stratton Theater.

Mike Montouri, Montouri Oil supports project, commends Bill for his vision for the area. A \$20-25 million project on Main St. is a bold move.

Nick Capasso, Director, Fitchburg Art Museum, was unable to attend but had submitted a letter of support.

Atty. Elijah Erb: He just took on representing the church the day before. The Church and Bill had had a 2-hr. meeting after the last Planning Board meeting and have a verbal agreement. He has a draft of the basis of the agreement between the applicant and the Church and gave copies to the Board and Bill Krikorian to review. Agreement include the LED lights, assurances that there will be no damage to the church's windows or building during construction, replacement Lexan windows protecting the stained glass on both sides.

Mary Jo Bohart, Economic Development Director: Project is on point with the transit-oriented development that is happening in many communities in the state, providing housing near commuter rail for people who want the convenience of in-town living.

Glen Fossa, representing Fitchburg Pride and downtown property owner supports project. It will provide housing which will encourage younger people to stay in Fitchburg.

Jackie Cullen, River Styx Brewery supports market-rate housing downtown, it will be good for businesses. Janet L. & Beth Parrell, Trustee of Rollstone Congregational: Discuss the parking situation. This Fidelity lot next to Hotel Raymond has about 20 cars parked there regularly. What happened to cars that park there now?

Tom: The recent Downtown Parking Study shows that only 30% of downtown parking spaces are being used at any one time. Mr. Van Hazinga suggested that the management plan for the development could designate permitted & prohibited parking areas.

Bob Jurasin, Tighe & Bond briefly went over traffic impacts. Agreed: Traffic operations & safety would be better with Day St. reverting to one-way Northbound (away from Main St.).

Mr. Capodagli: Status of the street connecting Day and Blossom? Could that be used or improved in order to get from this site back to Main St. heading westbound?

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

Motion made (Mr. Fontaine) & seconded (Mr. Van Hazinga) to Approve Special Permit with conditions:

- Subject to submittal of mutual written agreement between applicant & Rollstone Congregational Church.
- Subject to Planning Board review & approval of detailed landscaping plan, building elevations & floor plans.
- Subject to DPW-Engineering approval of Stormwater Management Plan.
- Subj to any other Dept. Comments.
- Per unit contribution of \$500 per unit to the City payable upon occupancy of units, which will go into a separate account for Main St. traffic & pedestrian safety improvements, and used at the discretion of the Planning Board.
- Trash to be properly screened and maintained to avoid a nuisance.
- If the designated common space on first floor is proposed to be converted to another use (for example, commercial), subject to Board's review & approval.

Vote 6-0 in favor

Site Plan Review - NBE Fitchburg Solar, 4.88 MW solar array, northerly side of Ashburnham St. between McIntire & Stickney Roads (cont'd from 6/11/19) [request postpone to 8/13/19]

Peer review of applicant's stormwater management plan not completed yet on by on-call engineering firm. Conservation Commission hearing was continued to July 30, their site walk scheduled for this Sat. 7/13 @ 8:00 a.m. Applicants have requested continuance to next month's meeting.

Motion made & seconded to continue hearing to August 13th. Vote in favor.

Special Permit & Site Plan Review - Fanelli, 600 Pearl Hill Road, driveway >500 feet long

Hearing opened. Plan presented. A single-family dwelling on a long (~900 feet) driveway is proposed on 2.6 ac. lot, which had been split off from a much larger tract acquired earlier this year from Lanni Orchards.

Dwelling will be on public water & sewer. The water connection will be 1½ inch waterline and there will be an individual booster pump due to concerns about water pressure at that elevation on Pearl Hill Rd. They will also have residential sprinklers. Dept. Comments reviewed.

Public comment:

Glen Fossa supports application.

Motion made & seconded to close hearing. Vote in favor

Motion made (Mr. Fontaine) & seconded (Mr. Van Hazinga) to Approve Special Permit with conditions:

- Residential sprinklers to be provided, per Fire Dept. recommendation.
- Apron where driveway meets Pearl Hill Road must be paved.

Vote 6-0 in favor.

Special Permit & Site Plan Review - Mehmud, 62 Fox St., convert a mixed-use (fmr. dental ofc. & apartment into a 2-family dwelling

No one present for this item. Motion made & seconded to postpone opening the hearing to next month. Vote in favor.

OTHER BUSINESS

Falcon Nests, 62 Lincoln St. - potential Infill Lot & variance

Paul Bourbeau, PHB Architects, representing Chris Derosa, present to discuss proposed redevelopment of a vacant two-family on a 12,500 sq. ft. at 62 Lincoln St. that also has frontage on Brier St.

Q: Is it possible to split off from this lot an Infill Lot with min. 5,000 sq. ft. fronting on Brier St. and construct another single-family on that lot. Ms. Caron explained that that the Board's Special Permit Rules & Regs. specifically prevents subdividing an existing lot in order to create an Infill Lot. The purpose of the Infill Lot section was to encourage the re-use of existing, non-conforming (but at least 5,000 sq. ft.) vacant lots, not to create new parcels. A waiver of this regulation was not likely. Relief from the dimensional requirements would be needed from the ZBA in the form of a Variance and/or Special Permit.

Proposed Zoning Amendment - concerning Medical Offices and to further define medical and uses

Board reviewed Law Dept. memo dated 7/2/19 which suggested treating "medical office" as a separate item in the Use Table, and allowing by Special Permit only in the CBD & FSC districts.

Tom had discussed the matter w/ City Solicitor in anticipation that the Board would not be in favor of this approach. It was suggested that the Use Table could be amended to allow other types of medical offices (ex. Dentist, physician, ophthalmologist, etc.) by right, but all other medical uses would be by special permit. The goal is the have more control over medical uses such as clinics that are likely to have queueing out on the sidewalk.

It was pointed out that the hearing on the zoning amendment had been closed at the May meeting. Motion made (Mr. Fontaine) & seconded (Mr. Van Hazinga) to recommend against any amendment that requires all medical uses to obtain a Special Permit. Vote in favor.

0 Richardson Rd. (near Kyle Rd.) - conversion of open space parcel in "Candlewood Park" subdivision

Judy & Jim Belliveau present to discuss buying a vacant 1.5 ac. lot at 0 Richardson Rd. (near Kyle Rd.) in order to build a house next to their son's. The parcel is one of three parcels that were designated as open space per condition of the Definitive Plan approval for the Candlewood Park subdivision and the SD covenant in the mid-1990s. This parcel (Parcel "B") was designated on the SD plan as a future playground, to be conveyed to a homeowners association, but that has not happened. There would need to be new notice & public hearing to consider modifying the Definitive Subdivision decision

Several members stated that it would not be a good precedent and that it might open the gates for trying to build on other "open space" parcels.

Mr. Van Hazinga left the meeting before the next item due to a potential conflict of interest and did not return.

16 Prospect & 132 Pleasant St - rehab

Josh Shaine & Sherene Raisbeck in to discuss future Special Permit applications for 16 Prospect St. & 132 Pleasant St. Both properties are owned by the Fitchburg Housing Authority, who is disposing of the properties. 16 Prospect is classified by the Assessors' Office as a Group Residence; it is proposed to be converted into a 4-unit bldg. 132 Pleasant is also classified by the Assessors' Office as a Group Residence; it is proposed to be converted into a 3-family. Applications will be filed for a future meeting.

Meeting Minutes

June minutes not completed, action deferred.

Motion made & seconded to adjourn. Vote in favor.
Meeting adjourned: 9:10 p.m.

Next meeting: August 13, 2019
Minutes approved: August 13, 2019