

**PLANNING BOARD
DECEMBER 1, 2016
MINUTES**

Chairman Burke called the meeting to order at 6:04 pm at the Town Hall.
Members present: Barringer, Burke, Giger, Perkins, Svarczkopf, Wilson, Vega
Members absent: None

JOINT MEETING WITH BOARD OF SELECTMEN TO DISCUSS TRAFFIC ISSUES

Selectmen Anna Eliot, Joshua Degen, Barry Pease, Peter Cunningham and John Petropoulos (Selectmen's Chairman) were in attendance.

Chairman Burke said that he is more than happy to talk about traffic in a general sense but that the Planning Board is not able to discuss anything in any specificity about a project outside of the public hearing. That would be taking testimony outside of the public hearing and would create a defect in the process. Chairman Burke stated that the group could discuss each board's statutory obligations but that he would like for the conversation not to stray into Indian Hill Music discussions as that would be deleterious to the process and the public.

(Michael Vega and John Giger joined the meeting.)

Selectman Chairman John Petropoulos said want to discuss how to coordinate the approval processes and make sure that Selectmen concerns are heard. Chairman Burke explained that the various departments and boards are asked for comment and that comment is incorporated into the record through the public hearing process. Mr. Giger said that we do require applicants to provide traffic studies and where there is a large project we engage independent peer review of the traffic studies. For example, Nitsch Engineers are the Planning Board's peer review for the site civil review. Town employees such as the land use director, fire chief, police chief, DPW director, etc. also have relevant expertise to advise the Planning Board on various aspects.

Mr. Petropoulos said that we do not want a decision made without input and he understands that there will be opportunity to provide that input. Mr. Pease said the BOS can change more frequently than the employees of Town Hall. The BOS's policy work is less than robust. He said that he wondered if the Board of Selectmen has an obligation to review what the employee input would be prior to that advice and direction being given to the Planning Board. Mr. Degen said that this is an unusual project because there is a major traffic impact on major public ways, changes to road alignments and widths, changes to a park and things at are outside of the State Highway's jurisdiction. He said that the question is how to avoid re-engineering when the Selectmen reach these decisions after a Planning Board review. Mr. Barringer said we invite you to stay for the public hearing that begins in 45 minutes.

Mr. Petropoulos said I believe that Mr. Degen has asked for a coordinating committee. Chairman Burke said that he hears that and that there are certain procedural difficulties surrounding meeting and deliberation outside of the public hearing. He said that having two members of the Selectmen meet with two members of the Planning Board would not necessarily include the needed expertise. He then stated that the Planning Board relies very heavily on the traffic peer review and noted that we each have our statutory responsibilities that we need to observe. Discussion moved to the fact that the Board of Selectmen has a liaison to the Planning Board. Chairman Burke said that he does not want to

get into specifics, but if you do stay for the public hearing there are some things that he would like to say with respect to Selectmen responsibilities. Ms. Eliot said that as a Selectman and as the liaison to the Planning Board, she has been attending Planning Board meetings. She said that she would like to make sure that this review results in a safe and good outcome. She said that she wants the Planning Board to be able to work out all of the details that you are charged with working out.

Mr. Degen said that you might advise your applicant to come before the Selectmen on non-site review matters and it would be helpful if you would loan us your traffic engineer. Then, the Planning Board would be advised of the off-site information and decisions before the Planning Board acts. Chairman Burke said that this would be a decision for the applicant to make as it would be their experts and their costs. Mr. Giger commented that if the Selectmen wanted the process to proceed in a manner that has the applicant going to the Selectmen first, then there should have been a bylaw drafted to require this act. Chairman Burke said that the Planning Board's processes are in accordance with Massachusetts General Laws Chapter 40A requirements and that he is not sure how this proposal would mesh with those obligations. Mr. Giger noted that the Planning Board has been meeting since May and they always request feedback from the DPW Director, fire chief and others. Mr. Barringer said that we will be in public hearing beginning at 7 pm to address these matters then.

Mr. Petropoulos said that he wanted to let people know that from the Board of Selectmen point of view, there is no sense that something has gone wrong here. Mr. Pease said that he wants to know the pathway, saying that there can be a problem when there is a hybridization of powers and that it would seem that one process should not go forward without the other. If one process is greenlit, then that might pressure the other process. Mr. Barringer pointed out the pre-submission land use department meetings and also the form of intent distribution that informs all Town boards and departments about Planning Board applications.

Mr. Giger said that we are adhering to state laws. The state's laws creates this board. There has been a lot of coordination and so if there is concern about the coordination then the concern must be about the content of the coordination. There have been other significant projects in Town. He stated that for him to feel like we are doing something constructive, then we would need to look at the content and not just review the communication chains. Chairman Burke said that we must abide by the process that state statute and local bylaws have created.

Mr. Petropoulos said perhaps there needs to be clear expectations shared with Town employees. He said that he thinks that the Selectmen attended hoping for a bit more considering the size of the project. In the discussion that ensued, it was noted that if the Selectmen want to make the decision about certain aspects such as curb cuts, then that does not need to be under the DPW Director's jurisdiction as the Selectmen could draft a requirement for size of curb cuts, etc. Chairman Burke said that he is not aware of any problems where the system has produced decisions that have created concern. Ms. Perkins said that she agreed with Mr. Degen in that at times we are faced with unique situations. At those times, we hold public hearing and gather input. And at those times, I would expect you to attend the Planning Board's meetings as Mr. Degen and Mr. Petropoulos did last week. Mr. Vega said that we appreciate it when anybody shows up.

Chairman Burke noted that the applicant for the Reedy Meadow Estates definitive subdivision and special permit modification has written to request withdrawal of its application.

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Mr. Giger made a motion to allow the Reedy Meadow Estates applicant to withdraw its application for a definitive subdivision and special permit modification without prejudice. Mr. Barringer seconded and the motion carried 6:0.

At 6:35 pm, Mr. Giger moved to adjourn the Planning Board until 7 pm at which point it will reconvene. Mr. Barringer seconded and the motion carried 6:0.

Mr. Petropoulos stated that the Board of Selectmen will also adjourn until 7 pm and then reconvene.

7 PM

Mr. Petropoulos called the Board of Selectmen meeting to order.

(Timothy Svarczkopf joined the meeting.)

PUBLIC HEARING CONTINUED – SITE PLAN REVIEW 122 OLD AYER ROAD – INDIAN HILL MUSIC

Chairman Burke said that he was reopening the Planning Board's meeting and the public hearing for site plan review of Indian Hill Music at 122 Old Ayer Road.

This week is scheduled for hearing about traffic issues, parking and lighting. At the following hearing date, we have scheduled other topics including noise, appearance, screening, building height, utilities, and the Dover Amendment.

Chairman Burke referenced Prescott Park and whether it has Article 97 protections as some parks and green spaces do not have Article 97 protections. There was a recent amendment to Article 97 and noted that green strips that are left over from traffic intersections do not enjoy Article 97 protections. And, even should it be considered an Article 97-protected park, there are allowed changes to parks associated with roadway work in certain circumstances. Chairman Burke says that this is an area that he would welcome Selectmen weighing in for the consideration of whether this is a public park. He said that the applicant has been conservative and has viewed Prescott Park as Article 97-protected. Chairman Burke asked Gary Hebert if this characterization is accurate. Mr. Gary Hebert of Stantec Consulting Inc., spoke on behalf of the applicant Indian Hill Music Center. Mr. Hebert said that he views it as important green space whether it is Article 97-protected or not.

Gary Shepherd, representing the applicant Indian Hill Music Center, said that he is prepared to address traffic issues, parking and lighting. In addition, a sound engineer is in Town working on acoustics issues and if there is time in the meeting tonight, that person may be available to address the Planning Board. Mr. Shepherd asked for the Town's peer review traffic consultant who is Rebecca Brown, P.E., PTOE for Greenman-Pedersen, Inc. to present first and that then the applicant's traffic engineer Mr. Hebert could go next. Chairman Burke stated that the Planning Board would like to hear from the applicant's expert first before hearing from its own expert.

Mr. Hebert showed the group a slide show starting with a description of the existing circulation problems and constraints. Under constraints, the change in grade near Route 119 is an important consideration. He said that a prior proposal about 20 years ago to build a "T" intersection was rejected then as it would greatly change the appearance of Prescott Common. Single "T" and roundabout options were both deemed infeasible by the applicant for constructability problems. Changes in grade

make the roundabout impracticable as a roundabout would have a maximum of 3% grade and the existing grade is much steeper.

Next, Mr. Hebert reviewed a plan labeled Option 3A that would have made entrance to Old Ayer Road from Route 119 west a one-way street. This option was rejected as traffic might build up for drivers trying to exit Old Ayer Road and turn left on Route 119.

Next, Mr. Hebert reviewed a plan labeled Option 3B that allows for left turn storage. This plan would change a yield sign to a stop control for cars heading from Route 119 east and turning onto Old Ayer Road. There was a sharper turn that was thought to slow traffic. Also it is less convenient for those who have driveways within the intersection. Two lanes means that the turning car blocks the visibility for those who are interested in turning right.

Next, Mr. Hebert looked at Option 3C, the Robertson plan, which would straighten Old Ayer Road North, retaining two way flows. However, it would remove a section of existing sidewalk on Route 119 that Mr. Hebert believes would be in the Town's best interest to retain. The grade changes are too steep for design standards.

Next, Mr. Hebert looked at three possibilities for Option 3D. First, remove as much of the 'nose' as feasible within grading constraints to improve approach angle and aim for 20 mile per hour speeds. Then, consider either a two to three vehicle right bypass to retain MassDOT sidewalk plan, or short left lane within a paved area. This plan would both avoid driveway impacts and also avoid park layout encroachment. Mr. Hebert described more details of this traffic plan including an optional crosswalk and a two-foot rubble strip.

Rebecca Brown said that she recommends the crosswalk be moved to Old Ayer South and away from Main Street. This would lessen traffic impact of the crosswalk and the flow of traffic at Old Ayer South is slower which should be safer for pedestrians. Ms. Brown noted that the existing sidewalk already funnels foot traffic to the Old Ayer South location for a crosswalk. The sidewalk could cross Prescott Common but that is not necessary from her perspective.

Ms. Brown said that the 50' long left turn lane doesn't make much sense because it wouldn't be long enough for it to be beneficial during the evening peak hours and it would be unnecessary anyway because traffic in the opposite direction is light. Cars can easily turn left when they get to the intersection. The weekday morning peak time is a challenge for the intersection. She recommends a widened out (18-foot width) lane to allow a through vehicle to bypass those waiting to turning left. This is consistent with the MassDOT plan and wouldn't require modifications to the plan. Planning Board members said that they are comfortable with the focus being on the recommended plans rather than the discarded plans. Chairman Burke said that with the Selectmen here, he wanted to comment that the Planning Board is probably going to be looking at an Option 3D sort of plan. The final plan may be more granular.

Ms. Perkins said that the recommendation makes sense for preserving the park. She recommended angling the intersection so that cars can see oncoming traffic more easily than is presently the case for entry from Old Ayer Road North to a left turn on Route 119. Chairman Burke said that the proposed change of removing the 'nose' would make it easier for entering traffic to see if the Route 119 cars are continuing straight or planning to turn right on Old Ayer Road. STOPPED AT 1:19 15

Mr. Barringer asked if the Old Ayer Road South entrance onto Route 119 can be done within the right-of-way. Mr. Giger asked both traffic engineers if any requirement to implement be required to work with MassDOT. Mr. Hebert answered that the re-striping of 119 might need MassDOT sign-off. Mr. Giger recommends allowing appropriate time for MassDOT approval. Mr. Hebert said that he does not view the striping change as essential, rather it is beneficial. The MassDOT review could perhaps be done at the district level.

Mr. Petropoulos said that he is agnostic in terms of the impact on the park. As for the traffic changes, he would defer to traffic engineers but he does not want the Town to have to pay for any of it. Mr. Degen said that he still likes a plan that does not require a truck to swing across other lanes to square up on the turn. He prefers the one-way option. Mr. Hebert said that he is presenting a concept plan and this is not engineered yet. When engineered, turns will be designed for the largest trucks.

Police Chief Donald Palma addressed the meeting to discuss left hand turn traffic during large scale events. He suggested adding an officer at the intersection of Old Ayer South and Route 119 to route traffic in bunches of 30 to 40 cars allowed to pass at one time. Planning Board members noted that it should be considered a condition of its decision that a large event should be required to secure a large enough police detail to handle the traffic for a large event. Chief Palma said that he has discussed all of his traffic concerns with the applicant including one day liquor license events. Mr. Degen recommended requiring installation of "no parking" signs along Old Ayer Road and Peabody Street as a Condition of Approval.

Mr. Degen asked about cars leaving a large event that will opt to turn down Peabody and plan their route to Farmers Row in order to avoid other cars. Chief Palma said that details would push traffic to Old Ayer Road. As far as no parking anywhere but the site, Mr. Shepherd said that he has planned to discourage parking anywhere but on site. Mr. Giger asked if the chief had memorialized his agreements with the applicant and Chief Palma said that this is a work in progress and ongoing and it is not complete. He added that he is also trying to avoid concrete detail numbers of 3 or 4 officers when the attendance may be as low as 400 people.

Mr. Antonellis of 13 Temple Drive said that there may be 2,300 people events in the summer and asked the Planning Board to examine how handling that number of people would work out. He suggests scaling the project rather than scaling the infrastructure.

Dave Zeiler of 310 Old Ayer Road commented that he did not know how the applicant's assertion that there would not be a traffic jam on Old Ayer Road for a 2,300-person event could be accurate. If there are 14 summer events on 3 out of 4 weeks in the summer that is 75% of the summer there will be traffic congestion, lights, etc. Mr. Zeiler noted that this would change the character of the Town and is a significant impact. Besides the festivals, he urged the group to look at the increase to the projected peak time (4 pm to 7 pm) traffic on Old Ayer Road and its impacts. He said that this is a great project but that he views it as over scaled for what the lot can hold. He noted that the Old Ayer Road and Route 119 intersection predates Article 97 and, in some cases, Groton roads were designed for cow traffic and not people traffic.

Another commenter, Steve Robertson of 135 Peabody Street, said that there are also fifty 1,000 person events besides the very large events and that lighting and other traffic needs to be considered. He recommends scaling down the project and not using generators to light up the intersections. Mr.

Shepherd replied with two lighting points. He said that Indian Hill Music lights will be plugged into the electric grid and that only the police will be able to turn the lights on and off.

Regarding Peabody Street traffic, Mr. Hebert proposes geometry changes at the intersection to make the entrance less inviting, there will be no parking signs, there will be a locked gate that will be opaque and kept locked for use by emergency vehicles only. Mr. Pease said that he would like traffic to be discouraged from using Peabody Street for access to the site and mitigate projected increase in traffic in residential neighborhoods surrounding the site. Mr. Hebert explained that the traffic study estimated car trips and where the traffic will be coming from. Mr. Hebert stated that there is a low projected volume of car traffic on Peabody Street relative to Old Ayer Road for both the arrival and the departure from events. Mr. Svarczkopf asked for Rebecca Brown's opinion of traffic. Ms. Brown said that about ten percent (10%) of site generated traffic would use Peabody Street per the applicant's study and she views that study as reasonable. She said that there is no way to completely restrict access or that would affect local traffic as well.

Mr. Svarczkopf viewed his personal experience of living on Champney Street that is closed down once a year for Halloween and again for the road race. He said that he welcomes the events and has adjusted to the impact. He commented that there is no proposal to close down Old Ayer Road. Mr. Robert Hargraves of 21 Temple Drive asked for the project to be scaled back.

Chris Ripman, a registered architect for Ripman Lighting Consultants who represents the applicant Indian Hill Music Center presented to the meeting on exterior lighting. His firm has designed the lighting for Bunker Hill Park, the Dorchester Heights Monument and other high profile projects. He said the character is a rural site and a rural context. We look to provide lighting for safety and enjoyment. The lighting fixtures will be tallest in the middle of the site and shorter around the edges. The lighting is dark sky compliant and is zero to 10 volt dimmable to allow for future accommodations once the lighting is in use. With LEDS which are numerous small lights, there is increased flexibility for use. Mr. Ripman showed a slide that compared the less bright and helps control the element of the light fixture in the field of view.

He is using 12-foot high fixtures behind 12-foot screening to mark edge of the parking area. The 20 foot poles light the ring road and are aimed inward. You do not see the LED lights at all from abutting properties as one cannot see into the lights when a person is 75 to 100 feet away. Mr. Barringer asked if he took elevation into account. Mr. Ripman said that with elevation the cone of light might reach 125 feet whereas the distance to Peabody Street is an estimated 200 feet.

There are also tall (perhaps 10 feet) and short bollards (perhaps 3 feet) providing lights for the pedestrian area.

Mr. Ripman said that the lighting will also be zoned. Mr. Vega asked if the ring road lighting has been toned down. Mr. Ripman replied that the lighting is both toned down and dimmed to the minimum allowable level.

The three reliefs requested are for:

1. use of taller poles than allowed which would be 25 feet high versus 20 feet high. Fewer fixtures means less presence of the lighting system when viewed from off site. Higher allowed heights allows for fewer fixtures which will lessen the impact.

2. Use of the IES criteria rather than the Groton minimum. Planning Board members commented that they are in agreement with less light.
3. Allowance of lower minima than required by the Code on certain roadways and parking areas. Some roads won't be lit because they are for emergency purposes only.

Mr. Barringer asked about colors of the LEDs. Mr. Ripman said that color temperature will be a warm LED at 27k which is an incandescent level and parking lots will be at 3000. Mr. Barringer said that he was fine with those numbers.

Mr. Giger asked about the lighting at 2 am in the morning after all events are over and nothing is going on at the site. Gary Shepherd answered that the intent is that lighting will just be sufficient to light the ring road for use by a Groton Police cruiser. Chairman Burke said that the Groton School's lighting down to its hockey rink seems like an appropriate amount of light. Gary Shepherd said that were it not for security or vandalism concerns, then the entire site would be dark. Chairman Burke asked how the glassed performance center will be lit at night.

Mr. Svarczkopf asked about how much control there will be of these controlled lights. Mr. Ripman said that currently the perimeter road lights will be on one zone. The applicant has not yet discussed the police chief's preferences for overnight lighting. Chairman Burke said that generally less is more and there may be iteration in terms of what is proposed for the light management. Mr. Vega said that he would personally not want to see the ring road entirely lit up. The building is the asset you are protecting but perhaps the cruisers own headlights and spaced bollards may provide necessary lighting.

Mr. Hargraves pointed out the overflow parking area and the lighting for that is too close to Peabody and he would like to eliminate the overflow parking along the Peabody Street frontage.

Don Koski of 26 Indian Hill Road asked if he considered fixtures that have motion sensors triggered by a car approaching and turning off when a car moves away. Mr. Ripman said that the system could accept an occupancy sensor and so the capability is there. However, his experience with such lighting is that the change in lighting from low to normal is more disturbing to abutters than useful. Chairman Burke commented that the area wildlife could also trigger on lights using such sensors.

Alan Joslin from Epstein Joslin Architects spoke on behalf of the applicant stating that the overflow parking area lights only go on when cars are exiting and are not lit during performances. Mr. Vega asked for back spill cone of light for a 12-foot fixture and Mr. Ripman answered that the back spill cone is perhaps 7 feet. That light is not projected to show through the screening.

Mr. Alan Hoch commented that the ring road bollard suggestion was a good one. Mr. Hoch said that you may not want to assume that Groton will be providing the security. Mr. Hoch said that the applicant is trying to cram more into this site than is reasonable for abutters near and far.

Mr. Hoch questioned whether the light fixture height waiver to allow taller fixtures is necessary. Also, he said that he has not heard about natural screening along the rail trail to block the lights on that side of the site.

Mr. Hoch said it is important to know before the Planning Board votes what kind of lights are going to be on and when so that everyone here knows what is planned and how it fits into the overall screen.

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Mr. Barringer asked about light fixture pole material. Mr. Ripman answered that the pole material – wood with corten base filled with concrete up to thirty inches for impact resistance. Away from car traffic there will be a less protected base. This wood will be unvarnished Alaskan yellow cedar wood with perhaps a weathering stain. Mr. Giger said that the applicant should anticipate that the Planning Board will want to see a final plan for controls and what comes on when, etc. Mr. Shepherd agreed to provide this information. Mr. Svarczkopf asked about the structural performance of a tall wooden light fixture. Mr. Ripman said that these are manufactured by Cava wood and fully engineered poles.

Ms. Perkins asked to see the new design of the building but the Board agreed that this will be discussed on December 8th.

Mr. Antonellis commented on the lighting. He said that headlights are also lighting and he wants there not to be a problem with headlights ‘washing’ the area. From 11 am to 3 pm on the plan the ring road will allow two-way traffic. Mr. Shepherd said that screening addresses headlight washing.

Mr. Antonellis asked about lighting dispersion. Mr. Ripman said that this cannot be modelled using the typical programs with which he is familiar. Chairman Burke said that lighting dispersion is not within the Planning Board’s purview.

Acoustics engineer Carl Colegold of Threshold Acoustics spoke on behalf of the applicant regarding sound. Mr. Colegold said that the acoustics systems are designed to serve the lawn audience. These lawn speakers are the only exterior speakers for the site. The lawn speakers are distributed throughout the audience. The speakers will be seasonal- taken down in the off season. The modelling on the system as planned allows for sound levels to drop off significantly close to the property line. For Peabody Street residents, they may not even hear a concert projected onto the lawn.

Mr. Steve Robertson asked for noise level for audience applause, moving cars, car doors, etc. Mr. Colegold answered that vehicles traveling on the ring drive will be moving at a low rate of speed and will therefore generate less noise than a car on Peabody Street itself. Sound intensity drops with increasing distance.

Mr. Giger recommended that the applicant review the Commonwealth of Massachusetts code on noise pollution law and the Groton noise pollution bylaw.

Mr. Barringer moved to continue the public hearing for site plan review for 122 Old Ayer Road for Indian Hill Music to Thursday, December 8, 2016 at 7:15 pm for purposes of discussing parking, sound, noise, building exterior, stormwater mitigation, Dover Amendment, and construction limitation. Mr. Wilson seconded and the motion carried 7:0.

Mr. Barringer moved to adjourn the meeting. Mr. Wilson seconded and the motion carried 7:0:

Meeting adjourned at 9:30 PM

Respectfully submitted,
Fran Stanley