

**PLANNING BOARD
FEBRUARY 23, 2017
MINUTES**

Russ Burke called the meeting to order at 7:07 PM at the Town Hall.

Members present: Barringer, Burke, Giger, Svarczkopf, Vega (arrived at 7:30 pm), and Wilson

Absent: Perkins

788 BOSTON ROAD PRE-APPLICATION DISCUSSION

Bruce Ringwall, Civil Engineer from GPR Engineering Solutions, represented the Applicant on this matter. Ringwall provided an overview of existing conditions at the site, including a discussion of prominent features, and presented the development concept consisting of a 2,500 s.f. coffee shop, 3,150 s.f. bank with drive-through, 7,660 s.f. medical facility, and 9,000 s.f. retail building consisting of 3 storefronts. The concept features two entrances- one on Route 119 and one on Sandy Pond Road and 136 parking spaces. Ringwall stated that the focus of the design is on providing easy vehicular access while accommodating both pedestrian and bicycle circulation. Parking will be shared between uses. The entrance to the medical facility's parking lot closest to Route 119 will be one-way. They hope to minimize conflicts by limiting on-street parking to one side of the thoroughfare only. The Applicant hired GPI to conduct the traffic study. The two dumpster locations will be towards the back of the property. Water will be a looped system- they will extend water along Route 119 to the site drive. They are proposing an LID stormwater mitigation system. Ringwall proceeded to show elevation drawings of the various proposed buildings. He explained that they hope to submit an application within the next month or so and begin construction in summer 2017. The medical facility must be completed by December 31, 2017 per contract. It is likely that the retail building will be constructed last.

Svarczkopf said that he likes the overall layout but expressed reservations about the safety of the slope to the rear of the property. He is concerned about the development density when taking into account both the paving and the buildings. He is concerned that there may be insufficient space to accommodate the dumpsters and snow storage.

Burke explained that the Applicant met with Burke and Bonavita twice previously to discuss site layout. He likes the proposed on-street parking along the thoroughfare believing that it will be an effective traffic calming measure.

Wilson said that he appreciates the Applicant's effort to address prior comments. He is also concerned with the slope to the rear of the parking area, especially the fact that cars will be parked at a 90 degree angle to the slope. Ringwall responded that there will be a guardrail, an 8-10' wide landscaped area, and then the retaining wall. The change in elevation from the front of the lot to the back of the site is approximately 30'.

Giger called attention to the eastbound traffic at intersection. He told the Applicant to look hard at the traffic on Route 119 and consult with the police department about how to deal with the raceway. He expressed the importance of making it clear that patrons must turn right only onto Route 119. Ringwall explained that they are contemplating installing an island that will force vehicles to go right onto Route 119 and supplementing that with signage. Giger expressed a concern about the utility box for the intersection traffic lights blocking the line of site. Giger suggested that they look at the new Dunkin Donuts in Harvard as an example of good design. He expressed his preference that the patio not be visible from Route 119. He wants landscaping to screen the patio from the highway and break up views of the parking lot from the roadways. He is also concerned about deliveries to the retail spaces- ensuring that there is adequate space for a loading area.

Barringer said that the Applicant needs more ADA parking spaces at the medical office building. In response to a question from Barringer, Ringwall explained that they are interested in installing decorative lighting with LEDs. Barringer recommended warm white LEDs of 2400-3000 calvin that comply with dark sky standards. He asked Bonavita to provide cut sheets for Indian Hill Music's parking lot lighting. He said that the parking lot lights should be turned off at 11 pm- when the businesses close.

Ringwall asked the Planning Board if they were amenable to the following waiver requests:

- Plan at a scale of 1"= 30'? Planning Board- no issues.
- Plan depicting 1' contour intervals instead of 2' contour intervals? Planning Board- no issues.
- Existing conditions plan showing all land within 200 feet of the subject property instead of 500 feet? Planning Board- no issues.
- A minimum parking lot aisle width of 28' or 26' instead of 24'? Burke responded that he prefers a narrower parking lot aisle width.
- Recharging more stormwater than the rooftop runoff if they treat it first? Ringwall explained that there will be some flow off-site onto the adjacent National Grid land. The Board responded that they may be amenable to this as long as there is as much pre-treatment as possible and Nitsch Engineering is amenable to it. Burke suggested that he discuss this with Nitsch Engineering.

SPRING TOWN MEETING – DISCUSSION OF DRAFT MEDICAL MARIJUANA & CONCEPT PLAN WARRANT ARTICLES

Bonavita provided a brief overview of the draft Medical Marijuana Bylaw. She explained that she would like to delete the bullet pertaining to growing/cultivating on residential lots because it seems to conflict with the new law legalizing recreational use of marijuana. She proposed allowing Registered Marijuana Dispensaries by-right in the Industrial District because of the scale and character of the typical facility (located within a building of approximately 20,000 square feet in size and enclosed within a fence with security cameras). She proposed allowing Off-site Medical Marijuana Dispensaries by-right in the Industrial and General Business Districts. She suggested allowing the uses by-right because similar uses with similar impacts are allowed by-right within these districts and because the Bylaw itself specifies the parameters for receiving a permit.

Barringer said that he prefers allowing these uses via special permit. Burke asked Bonavita to seek Town Counsel's opinion about whether the Planning Board will have to readvertise and hold another public hearing to make this change since it will make the regulation more restrictive.

Giger and Svarczkopf suggested allowing Off-site Medical Marijuana Dispensaries within the Village Center Business District as well.

Russ Harris of the Groton Herald suggested contacting the Police Chief for his opinion.

Burke requested additional information about the state permitting process for dispensaries.

Burke summarized the Concept Plan warrant article and provided his rationale for elimination of Concept Plan approval for commercial/industrial development. He explained that those submitting a rezoning petition will still be required to submit a Concept Plan for Town Meeting consideration. Bonavita called everyone's attention to the clean version of Section 218-18, which reflects how Section 218-18 will read if Town Meeting approves the Article.

Giger asked if an Applicant will be constrained by the concept plan approved by Town Meeting as far as uses are concerned. Burke responded that that is up for debate.

Burke explained that the Planning Board is exploring the possibility of adopting Town-wide design guidelines as an additional safety net. Giger said that he reviewed the sample design guidelines previously distributed from Acton, Harvard, Northborough, and Groton. He wants to focus the design guidelines on those aimed at commercial development. He wondered if there is enough time to compile design guidelines by Town Meeting. Burke responded that the design guidelines could be adopted as a Planning Board regulation instead of a Zoning Bylaw.

INDIAN HILL MUSIC – PLAN ENDORSEMENT

Giger made a motion to endorse the plan entitled “Plans to Accompany Permit Applications For The Music Center at Indian Hill-Phase II”, dated September 14, 2016, last revised January 12, 2017, prepared by Beals Associates, Inc. Svarczkopf seconded the motion. Barringer, Burke, Giger, Svarczkopf, and Vega voted in favor. Wilson abstained from the vote.

Wilson made a motion to adjourn. Vega seconded the motion. The vote was unanimous.

The meeting adjourned at 8:55 pm.

Respectfully submitted,



Laurie Bonavita
Land Use Director/Town Planner