

Planning Board Minutes, 04/12/2016

Lenox Planning Board April 12, 2016 Minutes

Members in Attendance

Tom Delasco (TD); Mark Smith (MS); Kameron Spaulding (KS), Chair; Kate McNulty Vaughan (KMV); John Tansey; Ken Fowler (BoS Liason)

Staff in Attendance

Gwen Miller (GM), Town Planner

- **Approval of Minutes**

Minutes of March 22, 2016 were approved as presented.

KMV recommended not going into as great detail for the correspondence section for future minutes.

Minutes of March 30, 2016 were approved as amended.

KMV commented that definitions and Table of Uses should be included as changes being made to the Zoning Bylaw.

- **Information Session: Zoning Bylaw Amendments for May 2016 Town Meeting (6:00 PM)**

GM provided a presentation of the proposed Zoning Bylaw amendments (attached), concluding with time for questions or comments regarding the proposed Zoning Bylaw amendments. She noted there would be a formal public hearing at 6:00 on April 19, 2016 to provide additional opportunity for public input or comments.

Resident Jim Biancolo provided a two page document of comments for the Board's review and mentioned he would discuss with GM. He suggested removing regulations from definitions, and suggested that the animal day care provision is too vague about what would be allowed in all districts. He had a number of formatting and organizational edits.

Doris of MacKimmie Co commented the changes seemed to be moving toward a positive direction. She questioned what the animal day care use would look like in the village center, and asked the Board if they felt like there would be community support at Town Meeting. KS commented that it is hard to tell, and KMV agreed—few people regularly attend information sessions and public hearings, but might show up with a question or comment at Town Meeting.

The Planning Board approved the warrant article for the proposed zoning bylaw amendments as presented with a unanimous vote.

- **Lenox Manor (130 Pittsfield Road) Project Presentation (7:00 PM)**

The project team (Attorney William Martin, David Carpenter, Vijay Mahida, Previn Mahida, Robert Akroyd, Jim Scalise) for the redevelopment of the existing Magnuson Hotel site provided an overview of their project to the Planning Board.

Attorney Martin explained the proposal for the property at 130 is to create a new hotel and event center. He explained that the project team parsed through the zoning bylaw line by line and strived to provide a thorough application. He noted both the architect (Robert Harrison)

and the traffic engineer (Jon Dietrich of Fuss & O'Neil) were unavailable, but that Jim Scalise will be able to answer traffic questions and Mr. Akroyd questions pertaining to the site layout and design.

Mr. Scalise presented the existing conditions of the site, explaining that the hotel building was constructed in the 1960s as a Holiday Inn. He explained that in 1998 there was a failing of building components and the introduction of temporary restoration and phased repairs since that point. There are currently temporary supports. The building is dated and shows its age—it has a serviceable life of 40 years and is 50 years old. He pointed out that there have been substantial building code changes since the original building was constructed. He also pointed out that people look for a different style of hotel in contemporary times. The new building will include green energy components and green building design. He concluded by stating that the renovated existing hotel would not be as competitive a product as a newly designed and constructed hotel. He highlighted the site plan over the aerial view of the existing hotel to demonstrate that the new footprint is almost the same as the existing footprint.

Mr. Akroyd described how the project relates to the Comprehensive Master Plan. He highlights terms used in the Master Plan: smart growth, compact development. He noted the existing site is an eyesore as you travel up and down the Route 7 corridor. He described it as a grey field. The Master Plan also identified the redevelopment of existing sites which have fallen into disrepair. The reconstruction in the same footprint and use of existing infrastructure is good, as are the transportation improvements being made to the site and corridor. He noted the 2006 "Our Town, Our Future" report which highlighted aesthetic concerns along the Route 7 corridor which is addressed by the project. Mr. Akroyd explained that the Master Plan made a point of expanding beyond political boundaries, and the event center as proposed is a regional economic development opportunity and will reduce the tax burden on residential property owners. He explained that it is compatible with the surrounding area, and describes scalability in the context between the Allegrone site and the proposed hotel at 130 Pittsfield Road, Lenox FIT and the Arcadian Shop. He felt that the new hotel will be better scaled with the existing site than the existing building. He stated the surrounding land use would certainly be complemented by the hotel, as users would access Brushwood Farms, the Lenox Commons, the Audubon Sanctuary, Arcadian Shop, and the village center.

Mr. Scalise summarized the site plan, showing the existing entrance. He described the driveway owned by Mr. Curme that leads to the Dormers mansion, and the Allegrone site to the North. He explained there is undeveloped land to the South. He described the acreage of the project area and the frontage, and its C-3A zoning. He explained current occupancy as provided by the Building Inspections office, and the existing accessory structures. He described good access from Route 7, and he felt the size to be a good fit for the hotel project. He explained the Conservation Commission has already determined there are no wetland areas on site, nor is there habitat for rare or endangered species. In terms of traffic, he cited Fuss and O'Neil's traffic study. He noted the roadway has 24,238 cars a day travelling on it. They included the Marriott hotel in their analysis. He described there being no accident problem after review of state accident data. The trip generation found 1.25 percent of traffic already on the road—a small amount of traffic being generated from the site. They plan to widen access and egress to and from the site. He noted low level of service for the left hand turn and a Level of Service B for a right hand turn leaving the hotel. This is why they propose adding a turning lane to the site driveway. The sight distance is poor, but they are shaving the embankment on site to improve distances and add a turning lane. They are also proposing sidewalks. They will be treating stormwater runoff on site, including tree box filters. There is an erosion control plan, and a SWPP plan for EPA. They are required to meet DEP standards as part of their MassDOT approval. They will use less sewer and water given the number of rooms is declining. There will be no light trespass or night glow at this site.

Mr. Akroyd explained the architectural designs for the project. He explained the approach taken by the architect, Robert Harrison of Berkshire Design, Inc. The development team sought a building design that would be compatible with the surrounding buildings in the neighborhood. He described the gabled roof, and the staggering of the roof line. Turned columns will appear through out the project holding porticos and port cocheres. These columns will be in stone bases. The building will be trimmed with clapboard. He said it is intended to be reminiscent of Canyon Ranch or Shadowbrook. The fenestration is reminiscent of other structures such as the single family homes on Cliffwood Street. He and Mr. Harrison worked closely to relate the landscape to the site, and to harken back to the agricultural tradition of New England, particularly the agricultural history of the area along Route 7—Brushwood Farm was once a horse farm; cattle once grazed across the street. There is a variety of outdoor spaces designed into the site. Materials were chosen for longevity but also to meet the standards of the Special Permit and Site Plan Approval.

The Planning Board was encouraged to ask questions or make comments.

Questions and Comments to the project team from the Planning Board were as follows:

JT asked what assessment had come back in terms of the condition of the existing piping, water and water runoff issues. Mr. Scalise said that all piping on site will be a complete replacement. He described a water leak identified early on in the project, a product of the aged infrastructure on site. There will be a small building on site for fire protection. There have been recent improvements to sewer. He explained that the peer review used a model to review the proposed impacts. In terms of stormwater, there are three places where stormwater exits the site, and the site design includes tools to capture the runoff. JT asked if there would be state review and approval of their stormwater plan. Mr. Scalise indicated yes. MassDOT requires adherence to all of MassDEP's standards, regardless if there are wetland resources or not. He noted he had designed the detention basin at Twelve Oaks, and had mimicked the design for the hotel so people entering or passing will not know they are man-made detention basins.

TD asked if there is any LEED certification. Mr. Scalise said didn't expect that. The financing typically carries some requirements for green building and energy components. He also mentioned the building code.

JT asked Mr. Scalise to confirm that the traffic increase at the peak time is only 1.3 percent. Mr. Scalise said they looked at 100% occupancy on the worst (peak) day. He explained the methodology used to arrive at this figure.

KMV asked if Mr. Scalise was talking about a per hour or per day addition. Mr. Scalise indicated he was talking peak hour addition. He said they looked at three study points, including Main Street.

JT asked about the site distance. Mr. Scalise explained how removing the existing water tank building and shaving the embankment will increase the site distance.

TD asked if the pump building will be exclusively used for fire protection. Mr. Scalise stated the pump building will house domestic and fire protection water pumps. The pressure is such as the pumps are necessary.

TD asked if the brand affiliation of the future hotel would impact the building and site design. Mr. Carpenter explained that they were committed to working with the existing plans and had made this clear to the brands with whom they are negotiating.

KMV asked about the stone, whether it would be veneer. Mr. Akroyd indicated yes.

KMV asked what effort had been made to include internal driveways for the site and connectivity to other sites in the locus area and if there would be possibility of an internal driveway. TD said this would be great to see. Mr. Akroyd said it was a great idea, but difficult to make happen given the surrounding land use. He said the most logical space for this was the Brushwood Farms site.

KMV asked if they would continue to have the left turn. The team said yes. Mr. Scalise suggested people will select the right hand turn by default out of impatience.

KMV noted she was very pleased to see the level of design in the proposed project. JT confirmed the building will be clapboard. Mr. Akroyd said it would be clapboard and trim siding.

JT asked what type of signage would be in place. Mr. Martin said it would be the same signage but with the appropriate brand name. Whatever signage is at the building itself will be compliant with the zoning bylaw.

MS confirmed the petitioners were requesting relief from the 35' height requirement to go to 49'10. He asked how tall the Allegrone building is, or how much taller they are going than the existing hotel building. Mr. Scalise said the tallest part of the Allegrone building is in the rear and is only two stories and at the front the height is in the high 30s to low 40s. MS confirmed that the front of the building will be where it currently is. Mr. Akroyd said that it will be very close. Can you say where the Allegrone is in its setback from the road? The group looked at an aerial photo provided by the petitioner. They concluded that the setback at each building was similar, though Allegrone may be a little bit closer.

KMV asked to see the site plan again. She asked to clarify the layout of the building. Mr. Akroyd walked her through the building's components in relation to the site orientation. KMV asked why the event center was put on the front of the application cover even though it is tucked in the back. Mr. Carpenter and Mr. Akroyd explained that a great deal of care has been put into the design, and that it will be a

unique facility in the Berkshires and an anchor component of the business. Mr. Carpenter explained the event center will host events throughout the year.

JT asked how large the event center would be. Mr. Carpenter said it would be 6500 sq. feet and clear span. He said this will be a premiere event space.

MS asked if there were dining rooms. Mr. Carpenter said there will be limited service: breakfast in the morning and a bar and appetizers served in the evening, but no restaurant. The lodge space will house breakfast. Mr. Scalise said they have followed the bylaw and provided every specific use for their calculations. Mr. Carpenter said the event center has a larger catering kitchen. There will be no restaurant open to the public.

KS stated that Mahida Hospitality is part of the Lenox Chamber, and that he, KS, is the Director of the Chamber of Commerce. He would abstain from the vote. His simple opinion is that placing a new hotel where an old hotel is a great use. He expressed concern that perhaps the town is reaching a tipping point in terms of the number of hotel rooms. He felt there could be less parking provided.

TD asked about snow removal and storage. Mr. Scalise indicated where they would put it. JT asked how this would impact drainage. Mr. Scalise described the on-site mitigation tools, including tree box filters.

KMV said she agreed with KS and TD about the parking area. JT said the design was going to be an asset to the town.

The board agreed to vote on a recommendation that evening.

JT moved to recommend the plan. MS seconded. All approved.

MS agreed with the parking comment. He found the project to be handsome and well done. He felt the event center was well sited.

TD agreed with previous comments and concurred on the parking comment. He suggested there could be a flexible parking area with grass and gravel.

JT thought the design was great, and thought the conformity was 110% on the mark, and felt the proposal to be a benefit for all—the Lenox Shops, the downtown area.

KMV concluded by saying the design was well done, and she appreciated references to the Master Plan, and the reuse of an existing site needing improvement.

The Board concluded by recommending the project to the Zoning Board of Appeals in a four to zero vote, with KS abstaining.

- **Committee/BRPC Updates**

TD explained that the CPC would hold a public hearing on Monday, May 16 at 6:00 to receive input from the community and other town boards and committees about what type of projects CPC should consider funding in the future. He recommended that the Planning Board provide priorities at this hearing. KS suggested the PB review priorities and the updated CPC plan and application material at the April 26, 2016 meeting to prepare for the May 16 hearing.

MS explained that HDC is continuing to work on their bylaw and guideline revisions. He stated the bylaw updates reflect language being added from Chapter 40C, the state law enabling local historic districts, and that the commission hopes to bring this forward for town meeting in the fall. He noted the work on the guidelines does not need approval from town meeting.