



February 7, 2024

Lenox Zoning Board of Appeals
Town Hall
6 Walker Street
Lenox, MA 01240

**RE: Housatonic Street Public Safety Complex, Lenox MA
 Site Plan Review**

Dear Members of the Lenox Zoning Board of Appeals:

On behalf of the Town of Lenox, we respectfully submit this application for a Site Plan Review to construct a public safety complex at 0 Stone Ledge Road, Parcel #45-54, for your review and approval.

In accordance with ZBL Section 3.5.1, all proposed projects in the C-1A zone must apply for Site Plan Review for approval by the Zoning Board of Appeals. The applicant seeks permission to construct a public safety complex consisting of an office building and a detached garage with associated vehicular & pedestrian circulation, site lighting, stormwater management systems, and plantings. The following narrative demonstrates the ways in which this project complies with the standards set forth in ZBL Section 3.5.9.

Existing Conditions

The site (Parcel #45-54) is located at 0 Stone Ledge Road and is the only property in the Commercial 1-A (or C1-A) Zoning district. The parcel contains approximately 19.6 acres and is bound by town owned parcels #47-60 and #47-61 to the North, a conservation easement and residential properties to the East, Rt. 20 Veterans Memorial Highway to the West, and Housatonic Street to the South. The site used to be mined as a gravel pit but is currently undeveloped and consists largely of early successional vegetation. The parcel contains several jurisdictional areas protected under the Massachusetts Wetlands Protection Act; bank, bordering vegetated wetlands, land under water bodies and waterways, bordering land subject to flooding, riverfront area, buffer zone, vernal pool, and cold-water fisheries. These areas are limited to the conservation easement and will not be affected by the proposed project.

Proposed Conditions

The project proposes the construction of two new buildings; a 22,045 SF building to serve as the main office for police & fire, and a 2,000 SF detached garage to house fire engines and communications equipment. The entrance drive will be accessed through an existing curb cut on Housatonic Street. Vehicular circulation has been intentionally designed to accommodate the large turning radius of fire engines and to reduce the amount of turning. Concrete walkways and planting beds surround the buildings to define and buffer pedestrian circulation from vehicular circulation.

Site lighting is proposed to safely light the entrance drive and parking lots. A telecommunication tower is proposed by the garage to the North of the building. A stormwater detention basin is proposed to capture and treat runoff from the buildings and impervious surfaces. A conservation easement has been placed on the forested land to the

east and will act as a visual buffer from the neighboring residences on Stone Ledge Road.

We believe that this design reflects the goals of the town and complies with the design standards set forth in ZBL Section 3.5.9. The following details how this project meets each of those requirements.

3.5.9.1. Protection of the abutting properties and community to minimize any detrimental use of the site

Parcel #45-54 is a corner lot that is bound by Rt. 20 to the West and Housatonic Street to the South. The only abutting properties on the site are residential properties to the North and East of the site. The heavily wooded portion of land creates a visual and sound buffer to the abutting properties to the North, and the conservation easement placed around the wetland to the East of the site prohibits development from encroaching towards the residential properties to the East. The land within the conservation area is heavily wooded and provides a visual and sound buffer from the residential properties to the East.

3.5.9.2. Convenience and safety of vehicular and pedestrian movement within the site and the relationship to adjoining ways and properties.

Vehicular and pedestrian circulation are clearly distinguished by change in paving material and in elevation. Signage and directional arrows for one-way travel facilitate vehicular circulation. Plantings around the building help to define sidewalks and protect pedestrians from vehicles.

The existing curb cut along Housatonic street is proposed as the new entrance / exit of the property. Entering and existing off of Housatonic street is safer than Rt. 20 given the speed limits of each road. There are no sidewalks - existing or proposed - that cross the Housatonic street curb cut, which allows for safer entry / exit of vehicles to the site.

3.5.9.3. Adequacy of the methods of disposal of sewage and refuse and the drainage of surface and subsurface water.

This project proposes a new 6" sanitary line that connects to the existing municipal sewer system. Stormwater management is handled through a variety of techniques. Subsurface water is managed through foundation drains that outlet to the North of the site. Surface water is managed through a variety of techniques. A water quality swale is proposed to the South East of the parking lot to capture a portion of the runoff. An underdrain from this swale feeds into a larger stormwater detention basin to the North of the site, which the rest of the parking lot drains to. This stormwater detention basin has a stone weir to protect from outwash, and an overflow outlet for heavy rain events. A dumpster pad will be located on the northwest corner of the project.

3.5.9.4. Adequate means of protecting wetlands, watersheds, aquifers, and well areas.

A conservation easement exists on the portion of land to the East of the parcel to protect the existing wetland vernal pool. The Town of Lenox Conservation Commission agreed that the proposed work is far enough away from the wetland and vernal pool that it should not cause significant disturbance.

3.5.9.5. Provisions for off-street loading and unloading of vehicles incidental to the normal operation of the establishment, parking, lighting and internal traffic control.

The use of the proposed project as a public safety complex necessitates provisions for emergency vehicles. Berkshire

Design Group has studied the turning & loading / unloading dimensional requirements for these vehicles and designed the site accordingly. Parking for visitors and staff occurs in the two lots to the North of South West of the site, separate from the emergency vehicles which circulate in the triangular section of paving to the south east of the building. Signage, lighting, and street marking all work to enforce this circulation.

3.5.9.6. Provision of open space consistent with Town Open Space Plan Concepts.

This project is consistent with the Town's Open Space Plan Concepts. One of the tenets of the Open Space Plan is to increase the Conservation Commission's ability to review, comment, and permit development near sensitive wetland resources. The conservation commission was able to place a conservation easement to the East of the site which protects the vernal pool and wetland and maintains open space on the site.

3.5.9.7. The natural landscape shall be preserved in its existing state insofar as practicable, by minimizing tree cutting, and soil removal or filling of the site. Any grade changes shall be in keeping with the general appearance of neighboring developed areas.

Due to this areas history as a gravel pit, this existing site is an early successional forest landscape. This project proposes the clearing of this early successional forest, but minimizes disturbance to the more mature forests to the north and east of the site. The grading of the detention basin will be completely out of view from both Housatonic street and Rt. 20. Approx. only 16% of the parcel will be developed, the rest of the parcel will not be developed and remains land locked with no other frontage but route 7 & 20.

3.5.9.8. Location and design shall not cause avoidable damage to wildlife habitats or corridors, or to any plant species listed as endangered, threatened or of special concern by the Massachusetts Natural Heritage Program, or to any tree exceeding 24 inches trunk diameter four and a half (4 ½) feet above grade. Applicants must submit documentation to the SPGA of having consulted with the Conservation Commission and the MA NHP regarding these considerations, and that the proposed site either contains no such habitats or materials or that all feasible efforts to avoid, minimize or compensate for damage have been reflected in the proposal.

This project proposes clearing approximately 3 acres of early successional vegetation that established on an old gravel pit. This project does not propose development to the North and East of the site, which is heavily forested with mature trees and contain several natural resource areas. Berkshire Design Group will submit, along with this application, documentation of having consulted with the Conservation Commission on the wetland to the east of the site and the resulting decision to place a conservation easement on that portion of land.

3.5.9.9. The layout of design features, such as vegetative buffers, within developments which will integrate into the existing landscape.

The project proposes shade trees around the entirety of the new development. Tree species have not been selected at this stage, but are anticipated to draw on native species found on site to create an appearance of blending naturally into the surrounding landscape.

3.5.9.10. Consistency of the proposed development with the Town Master Plan Concepts.

This project has been requested by the Town and therefore is in line with the Town's interests.

3.5.9.11. Compliance with the provision of Massachusetts General Laws, Chapter 40A and 41A, the rules and regulations of state and federal agencies and the Bylaw of the Town of Lenox Zoning Bylaw - SECTION 3 - Page 13 Lenox.

This project complies with the provisions of Massachusetts General Laws and the ByLaw of the Town of Lenox.

3.5.10. Sewer and Water Capacity

This project proposes one new 6" sanitary line and one new 6" water line. The proposed work will not have a significant impact on sewer and water capacity.

Thank you for taking the time to review this Site Plan Review for the new Public Safety Complex on parcel #45-54. We look forward to discussing this project at your next available hearing.

Sincerely,

Carlos Nieto-Mattei
Berkshire Design Group