

BELLINGHAM PLANNING BOARD
TOWN HALL ANNEX
BELLINGHAM, MASSACHUSETTS

Regular Meeting of August 24, 1978

Members Present: John P. Murray, Chairman
Sergio Rotatori, Vice-Chairman
Gerald R. Brisson
Normand Langlais
James E. Hart

Chairman Murray opened the meeting at 8:00 P.M. Correspondence was read. Letter was received from the Board of Selectmen to Town Counsel Ambler telling him to take any necessary action on Center Park Estates.

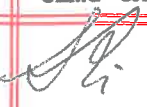
Richard Abrams, President of North American Real Estate Marketing, Planning and Development Co, 1 Wells Avenue, Newton introduced himself and told the Board they were the developers for the Hartford Realty Trust, Roger Belanger and Alexander Harcovitz being partners. He told the Board the proposed site was on 48 acres at the intersection of 126 and No. Main St. and would be known as Shoppers Circus at Bellingham. They would be proposing the nation's first recreational discount shopping plaza. Mall would be 300,000 sq. ft. regional discount mall, leased primarily to discount retailers and merchants. They proposed a central internal conveyor belt system for easy shopping and also a central drive-in pickup station. Proposed on the same side as the mall would be a 10 acre recreational area with pony rides, safari trail with wildlife, miniature golf, a summer and winter fountain pool, picnic area and supervised child area for the shoppers to leave their children at. Across the street would be motel facilities with restaurants and amenities.

A plan of the proposed site was shown and various points of interest pointed out. All prime tenants would have direct access from the exterior and interior of the mall. Four piggy-back secondary tenants would be available adjacent to the four anchor tenants. Remaining rentable space will be divided into 1,800 sq. ft. modules which can be rented individually or in clusters. Dual entrances off pedestrian crosswalk will insure retail exposure. A central arcade ideal for special activities will be realized.

Abrams stated the benefits to Bellingham as a town. There would be retail and commercial revitalization. Local property values would be increased. It would attract industry to Rte. 495 and increase business activities for existing or new local merchants and provide a tax revenue project at \$6000,000 per year. There would be approximately 2,000 full and part-time jobs for local people.

Abrams told the Board what he was seeking at this time was a 100% support of the town and the town officials. They are looking at a \$15 million investment. They would be actively seeking major retailers to locate in the mall once this is done, they would begin construction. They were mainly interested in getting preliminary approval to proceed. Abrams asked for any questions or comments.

Murray asked for more information on the crosswalk going across No. Main St. Abrams stated it would be enclosed to the extent of safety. At this time they have not determined if it will be enclosed or not.



Langlais asked how the project has been in the works and was told by Abrams they had been studying it for six months. They were not looking at any area other than Bellingham.

Murray asked if they were actually submitting this plan to the Board and was told by Abrams that yes; they wanted it to be the site plan. Their plan was to get the Board's blessings, then they have to get tenants and then the actual building.

Murray asked if some of the land was wet and was told the land where the recreation area is was wet. They were aware of the area.

Murray told them he was 100% behind the idea.

Rotatori asked how high the bridge crossing No. Main Street was and was told they were not ready to talk about the specific height of the bridge. They were not going to go ahead with the definitive architectural plan of the site until they had the Board's blessing.

Herr asked if all of the land was currently zoned right. Abrams pointed out two small strips of grass that might have to be rezoned. That was not a problem. Herr asked if the rezoning was a minor thing, what else do they want the town to do for them. They would need permission for a bridge but other than that it did not seem to him that they needed the town to do anything for them.

Langlais told them he wanted to take a closer look at the site and plans. He agreed that it would be a nice thing to have in the Town of Bellingham. Selectman James McElroy asked how Hartford Avenue and North Main Street was going to handle the traffic flow. Abrams told the Board they did not do a traffic study yet. They had to do the site plan and then they could develop the traffic flow.


Langlais asked what their time frame for the mall is. Abrams stated it is subject to two things 1) the Town's co-operation and 2) their success in bringing in major tenants. They would hope to begin building in the spring time.

Dave Arnold asked what they intended to try to bring into the mall, what kind of tenants. Would it be stores like Mammouth Mart or Zayres or more like Jordan Marsh or Filenes. Abrams stated they would like Jordans or Filenes as their major tenants. The hotel site is something separate and might not be in the first phase. By and large they would bring in the entire project at once. Right now they just did not know what type of tenants they could attract. They think they have a good quality development. Herr suggested they submit a site plan to scale as early as possible so that the Board has time to review it and take care of any problems that might come up. The Board would be more than willing to work with them on the development. Abrams told the Board they would be more inclined to follow that route once they get the tenants. They have to be sure first that the Town is in back of them.

Roger Belanger told the Board they will be seeking the proper approval of the various town boards when the time was right along with any state regulations. They have every intention of following every rule and regulation. O

On a Langlais-Brisson motion the Board voted unanimously to take the plan under advisement and review it next month and get a letter off to Abrams.

Walter Sampson, engineer for the proposed subdivision off Horseshoe Drive told the Board they had not changed the plan at all as requested in the last meeting. Hart told the Board he would like to change the road from the Ruth Ellen side as requested by the Board to the Horseshoe Drive side.



They would comply with everything else the Board wanted, but would like permission to change the location of the cul-de-sac. Brisson asked Sampson if he had studied the effect of the road on that side. Sampson felt there would be sufficient site view. Langlais asked if the Board could go through all of the other items one at a time. Sampson told him they had not done anything on any of the items because they had wanted the road changed. Brisson told him they would have to satisfy the site distance requirement and the proper grading. He would have no objection to this as long as it meets all the requirements. Sampson said once he had the Board's permission, he could go out and do the field work. They were more than willing to co-operate with the Board. They had every intention of complying with the Board's wishes. They requested an extension of time and permission to put the cul-de-sac on the Horseshoe Drive side. Langlais stated if the Board said yes to this they would be putting one foot in the door to approving the subdivision. Consultant Herr told him they had already made the same commitment last month when they gave him the first extension of time. Sampson stated they had taken this up with the Board of Health Monday evening and they had no objection as long as their rules were followed. On a Langlais-Rotatori motion the Board voted to accept an extension of time to October 13, 1978 with Hart abstaining.

Thomas Clark showed the Board a letter from Town Clerk certifying Mill Street as an accepted street and asked the Board to sign his plan of six lots. Clark told the Board he had talked with Gerard Daigle and Clark was willing to go along with whatever he wanted him to do. If Daigle wanted catch basins he would put them in. There was already a six inch water line on going down the street and he would just extend it. Langlais brought up the width of the street saying after putting in the paving, etc. the street would be very narrow. Clark again stated he would do whatever Daigle wanted him to do. Board signed the plan of six lots as voted on the meeting of July 20, 1978.

Clark asked the Board to rezone his shopping area, shown as Lot 1 on the plan, from B-1 to B-2. There is approximately 2-3 acres. Board agreed to hold a public hearing on September 28, 1978 at 8:30 P.M. Herr will draw up an article for publication.

Herr gave the Board copies of an amendment on Foundation Location as drawn up in 1972. Langlais stated his feelings that he would like to see this become a reality. Herr will draw up another up-dated article, changing the may to will, the Zoning Agent to Building Inspector and eliminating the 5". Brisson felt it was a good idea, it would just certify that the plan meets the required zoning.

The proposed shopping center was discussed. Murray made a motion to write the developer a letter stating the Board would like to see the shopping center here but that they would have to go through the site plan review. No second. Brisson stated right now they don't want us to do anything. Board agreed the secretary should send a letter to Abrams thanking them for coming to our meeting and presenting the Board with their proposed shopping center plans. Enclosing a copy of the zoning laws and saying we would be willing to help them in any way.

Meeting adjourned at 10:45 P.M. on a Langlais-Brisson motion, unanimous.


Sergio Rotatori, Clerk