



BELLINGHAM PLANNING BOARD

5 COMMON STREET
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August 28, 2003 Meeting Minutes

- **Present at the meeting:**

Richard V. Dill (RVD), Chair
Edward W. Guzowski, (EWG), Vice Chair
Brian J. Sutherland (BJS), Secretary
Roland R. Laprade (RRL)
Arthur P. MacNeil (APM)
Glenn C. Wocjik (GCW), Alternate

Other officials: Stacey Wetstein (SJW), Town Planner
Beth E. Partington (BEP), Coordinator

BJS: Motion to accept 8/14/03 Meeting Minutes.

APM: Second. Vote: 5-0, approved.

- **81-P Edward Estates, conveying land to the Conservation Commission.**

RRL: Motion to sign the 81-P for Edward Circle, plan of land to be conveyed to the Conservation Commission, dated 8/11/03.

EWG: Second. Vote: 5-0, approved.

- **JPI Update from BJS:**

BJS stated the public hearing is continued to Thursday, 9/4 at 7:30.

RRL stated the decision isn't a very good one, but it's as good as we're going to get.

BJS would like a letter sent to the ZBA from the Planning Board stating that this isn't the best intent for the Town, but it's as good as we're going to get.

RRL stated the Conservation Restriction does nothing. It's wetlands. We wanted them to not be able to use the wetlands in calculating the industrial land, but it allows them to do that.

BJS agreed. He felt like they had pushed all along for the Town's standards and by-laws to be upheld. There are over 50 conditions attached to the decision, so it's not like nothing was done, but it's not completely following the Town's regulations. If they pushed too hard, JPI could just appeal and the state would give it to them cart blanche, with no conditions.

RRL stated the wetlands are being counted in as part of their development. WS development owns it and can count it in theirs. We didn't want them to be able to count it in.

BJS stated we wanted them to A. either purchase the additional land, or B. reduce the # of units. They said they meet the regs for the state, that we don't need to comply with your local regulations.

RVD stated you fought the best battle you could and you got the best we could get. You put in a lot of time throughout this process and have done a good job. We appreciate that.

Ron Picard, a member of the Board of Selectmen, asked if legal counsel was sought for density.

BJS stated yes, Rich Hucksam, from Boston, has represented the Town throughout this process and that he specializes in 40B.

RP stated they claim low cost and affordable units are going according to the Boston Market. If so, the figures are going to be much higher than rates in this area.

BJS stated that was figured into the formula for the cost of the units.

The Board discussed that SJW would write the letter, BJS would proof it and the Board would come by and sign it before next Thursday.

- **Sunken Meadow Estates:**

RVD: read a letter into record from Bruce Lord, stating his mother was ill and his engineer had been ill and he needed to continue.

BJS: Motion to grant the extension to Bruce Lord for Sunken Meadow Estates through 11/1/03.

APM: Second. Vote: 4, approved, 1, nay (EWG), motion approved.

BJS: Motion to continue the public hearing for Sunken Meadow Estates Definitive Subdivision to 9/25/03 at 8:15pm. Vote: 4, approved, 1, nay (EWG), motion approved.

Mark Brady expressed his anger at the continuance. His father-in-law is in the hospital and he made it here. He thinks Mr. Lord should have made the effort.

BEP stated she phone Mr. Brady and Mr. Bissonette during the day to let them know the hearing was continued.

Mr. Brady thought it was important that he attend.

Mr. Bissonette thanked the Board for calling him and letting him know.

RRL asked if we got a response from Town Counsel regarding ownership of the road.

SJW stated no.

RRL stated if we had gotten an answer from Town Counsel and the ownership of the road wasn't an issue they could vote to deny the subdivision.

- **Planner's Report, Stacey J. Wetstein:**

SJW stated she had met with Paige Duncan, the former Town Planner and they discussed projects the Board was working on and discussed the direction they should go.

RRL stated he has something in mind for low income. He'd like to put something together and will submit it to the Board.

APM stated he would like to see true affordable housing, not moderate, because the average citizen cannot afford the affordable housing that JPI is offering.

EWG stated moderate housing is pretty expensive. He feels traffic should be our number one priority.

BJS felt traffic should be a prioritization as well.

RVD feels the sign by-law is important to be proactive before this town gets filled with flashing neon signs like Las Vegas. It's a no-brainer.

RRL stated it's not necessarily a no-brainer. It's been tried to have passed at town meetings in the past and been by-passed or voted down.

SJW stated she would put the projects together and present them to the Board. The Board agreed that traffic was priority number one, and that Chapter 40B zoning could be worked on in parallel. We would wait to see what SJW was able to put together.

- **RK Plaza, Pulaski Boulevard, Development Plan Review Public Hearing:**

BJS: Motion to waive the reading of the public hearing notice.

RRL: Second. Vote: 5-0, approved.

Rich Halworth, representative for ESS Associates, explained there weren't any clear applications for the Major Business Complex.

SJW stated at the very least, you need to submit a letter stating your intentions.

RH stated they're happy to provide the supplemental information. He stated this is an odd situation, where it's considered a pre-existing non-conforming use.

EWG felt he would like the Development Plan and the Major Business Complex Special Permit to run concurrently.

Dave Baker presented the proposal. It is a pre-existing shopping center that they're trying to make improvements to. He introduced the members of the project team: Rich Halworth, Art Scarnio, Jonathan Kurtzman, Jim Leech, the representative for Unibank, that they do not own.

He discussed the traffic signal for the plaza, which is the responsibility of the owner to provide. They went to the Board of Selectmen and had several meetings. They looked at the traffic analysis to see if a signal was even warranted and it is.

The existing street is rated a level F. They created a stacking lane and room for a bypass lane. They got comments from Bruce Campbell and Associates, the Town's traffic consultants.

This is a 1970's shopping center and a sea of asphalt. Stop and Shop purchased the lease.

Rich Halworth stated the drainage and storm-water would be improved by the development. Clean roof run-off can re-charge into the ground. Utility improvements necessary will be made. Lighting will be upgraded. The entire parking lot will be improved aesthetically.

BJS asked if the side exits were planned on being used and if they are currently in use.

RH stated they are.

DB stated Stop and Shop required them to design the parcel so the trucks can enter from the front entrance.

Ron Picard, 1113 & 1115 Pulaski Boulevard asked, "as far as raising the site and enhancing, are you still connecting to sewer?"

RH said yes.

RP requested that they make sure these people don't end up with wet basements.

RH stated the basic premise is a reduction in pavement, so there would be a better absorption of water. There will be landscaping and trees and there is also a net reduction in the sanitary sewage flow. They are razing the existing building. Using the concrete on site to be crushed and used as clean fill, the new building will be elevated three feet. The parking lot will also be higher, sloping to meet with the abutting

properties.

Harvey White, 20 Carrier Ave, stated he has water in his basement currently and worried if they're raising the parking lot, how that will affect his property.

RH sated the resident is very close to ground water and that condition can't be changed, but the goal is not to exacerbate it.

RRL asked the difference in elevation between the proposed parking to the residents' back yards.

RH said the slope of the parking lot will meet his yard.

Claire Carrier, 10 Carrier Ave, concerned regarding traffic. It's a small street with only six houses and he wonders if they will be able to keep the truck traffic off the street.

Jim Baker said that Stop and Shop designs their entrances and parking lots so that trucks can enter through the front and drive down the main entrance to go around the building. That was one of the reasons that the building was set as far back as it was. They'd be willing to put up a jersey barrier if the residents and town wanted it that way.

Art Scarnario, Traffic Engineer, stated this is not a virgin piece of property. It's an existing property that if this doesn't get approved, it will be re-tenanted. There are no crosswalks. The exit/entrance is very large and confusing. People don't know which one to go in. This plaza warrants a light, yet it will increase queuing. Yes, lights increase rear-ender accidents, but you're not going to have fatalities. They're proposing physically widening the road, providing a turn lane and a through-way lane with a fully actuated signal, such that if the center is not busy, flow continues on 126. Crosswalks with push-button pre-empts, a left turn lane onto Bellingham Street, with a thru-travel lane.

Currently level of service is graded an F. With the signal, the level of service goes to a level B. The volume to capacity ratio during peak is .86 and on a Saturday morning is .79. We're discussing 2007 growth rates of 4%. This will range 15-17 vehicles queued at the light, Saturday, 14-16, which will all be processed.

If this site is re-occupied the way it is, it will be much less developed.

EWG stated you're talking about an improvement from a level F to a level B. What's it going to be like on Wednesday, the day before Thanksgiving in 2020.

AS stated there's a theory "You don't design churches for Easter Sunday. You don't design stores for Holidays." They're widening the lane for a through-way lane.

EWG asked what do we do to get this to a level A? Back in 1993, the people in Market Basket didn't plan for Easter Sunday and every Sunday is an Easter Sunday. You need to plan for that now and do the most you can.

AS stated we don't have the frontage to widen it further.

Ron Picard commends RK for widening. He asked if there is a limitation for the length of the widening. He suggested putting in a second signal in front of his business entrance.

RRI agreed that it should be put in.

AS stated with two signals you don't get the desired level of service. The development of the light is set up so that if the traffic doesn't flow, we can look at the traffic again and put the second light in down the road. He also stated you could do nothing, re-occupy the plaza as it is and do nothing.

RRL stated a lot of engineers have looked at the situation in the center of town and a light was part of the solution, why wouldn't a light be part of the solution for Bellingham Street? So you're saying if there were two lights, you'll have a lower level of service, but safer.

John Murray of Pool Pro and Spa company across from the site stated they used to hire a cop the day before Thanksgiving and Christmas. When Ames and Almacs were in their hay day, they generated a lot of traffic. I see this as a 100% improvement. I love the traffic. I make a lot of money from the traffic.

Gert Frank, operate a business in Blackstone stated they also are looking for the traffic. They are 100% for this. Their business suffered when Ames and Sav A Lot went out of business.

Harry Picione stated when you put the light there, I won't be able to get out of the house.

R. Picard requested a second light. The houses, the people that live there, the little stores, are not being inconvenienced by this business. He stated the other businesses and houses on the boulevard will have no signalization. They're never going to get out of their driveway again. The traffic may or may not work.

AS stated that what you have now is random arrival. Gap platooning will be created. When the queue disperses, there will be pockets of time to get out onto the roadway.

Mr. Murray stated he hopes they take care of Mr. Picard's driveway, but let's not lose sight of the fact that they could re-tenant the building the way it is. The main thing is that the majority of the building is in Blackstone. Let's pitch the building to be mostly in Bellingham. Let's welcome these guys in; let's be business friendly.

DB stated we're trying to do a first class development. We'll go back with our team of engineers, work on the project with your ideas and comments and come back in. He

stated the gas station will be in the front of the lot and that Bellingham would get all the tax dollars from that. It would balance out.

BJS: Motion to continue the public hearing for RK Plaza to 10/9/03 at 8pm.

RRL: Second. Vote: 5-0, approved.

Roger Ducharme, owner of Rotatori, stated business has been down 50% since the plaza closed. He feels this will help. He looks forward to them coming in.

Armand Froment, a resident of Woonsocket, also stated the existing building is 104, 000 square feet, this is 65,000 square feet. He asked, "Is it like the one in Walpole?"

JB stated that it is based on the Walpole store, but slightly smaller.

- General Business:

BJS: Motion to pay the bills.

APM Second. Vote: 5-0, approved.

The 9/11 meeting was discussed. RVD decided that since nothing was on the agenda for that night, the meeting could be cancelled.

APM: Motion to adjourn.

RRL: Second. Vote: 5-0, approved.

Minutes Accepted on: _____

9/25/2003
(date)

Beth E. Partington
(prepared by: Beth E. Partington)

9.25.03
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