



BELLINGHAM PLANNING BOARD

2 MECHANIC STREET
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August 11, 2011 Meeting Minutes

- **Present at the Meeting**

Patricia M. Buckley (PMB), Chairman
Glenn C. Wojcik (GCW), Vice Chairman
Dave Brown (DB)
Peter M. Morelli (PMM)
Peter Pappas (PP) (Secretary) (absent)
Roger Oakley (RO), Associate Member

Other Officials: Stacey J. Wetstein (SJW), Town Planner
Amy Sault (AS), Coordinator (absent)

PMB opened the meeting at 7:00pm.

Cedar Hill Estates, Sharpe Drive, Bond and Lot Releases

Jeff Gagnon, Foresight Enterprises, intended to have all the bond paperwork ready for the Board tonight but it is not. He advised that he could have the information available for the next meeting but wanted to see if the bond amount of \$211,000 is accurate. The Board agreed and SJW advised that Don DiMartino was also in agreement with this amount. Mr. Gagnon advised that he will have the entire paperwork ready prior to the meeting including Town Council's review.

PMB advised Mr. Gagnon that they will be on the agenda for the August 25, 2011 meeting at 7:00pm.

Bellingham Commons II, 191 Mechanic Street, Pad Site Modification, 1st Public Hearing

PMM: Motion to waive the reading of the public notice.

GCW: Second.

Vote: 4-0 Approved. (PMB, GCW, DB and PMM)

George Levine, owner of 191 Mechanic St. LLC, Mark Beaudry of Meridian Associates and Ron Mueller were present for this project. Mr. Levine advised that they are before the Board to discuss the 5,000 sf of retail and restaurant (pad site) located at Bellingham Commons II. Mr. Levine advised that a traffic study was performed as well as some of the tenants of Bellingham Commons II were present.

Mr. Beaudry gave a history of this project including Lot 1 and Lot 2 of Bellingham Commons II (TMC Services). Mr. Beaudry advised that in 2006 the Board (as part of Lot 1) approved the 24,000 sf retail store and a pad site component. This pad site was approved as a 3,000 sf fast food restaurant or a 5,000 sf retail use for a bank with either of these uses being allowed a drive-thru window.

Mr. Beaudry advised that at the time, there were no tenants for the pad site, since this time Mr. Levine has leased both sites out completely. He advised that they are proposing to have the 5,000 sf building with parking as shown. The proposed uses include a total of three tenants: 1) 2,500 sf sit down restaurant that will be known as Bison's, this use would have 68 seats and five employees with no waiting area 2) 1,250-1,500 sf of a take out Chinese food restaurant with no seats. It would have a food preparation area and is purely takeout. There would be three employees and approximately 36 sf of waiting area. Mr. Beaudry advised that this would leave between 1,000-1,250 sf of remaining retail, tenant to be determined.

Mr. Beaudry advised that after the last meeting, the Chinese food tenant expressed interest in increasing to the 1,500 sf, which does cut into the retail a bit and the trip generations. They have analyzed this based on the higher square footage, which would generate more traffic.

Mr. Beaudry advised that based on that tenant mix, they did some parking space calculations which results in the need for 55 parking spaces for the pad site as opposed to the originally approved 50 spaces of parking back in 2006. He advised that Zio Paulo's has less seats and employees than originally proposed. PMB advised that those extra five spaces at Zio Paulo's would need to be clearly delineated. Mr. Beaudry advised that if the Board wants, they will clearly designate those spaces for the pad site. SJW advised that they probably don't need to designate them. RO advised that it does not state in the Bylaws that you can share spaces, PMB advised that she wants it clear because Bellingham Commons II is a big parking lot. RO agreed. DB suggested a sign but commented that people will park where they want anyway.

PMM questioned the decision for the no-waiting area and asked where those patrons will go when there is an overflow or a wait for a table. Mr. Winchen (Zio Paulo's and Bison's owner) advised that they squeeze their way in or leave. He advised that as it is, there is plenty of seating area as you would see at a standard pub. PMM asked again what would happen if people need to wait, Mr. Winchen advised that they would get turned away. PMB asked if it is acceptable to stand up and drink a beer in Bellingham, Mr. Winchen advised yes as long as they are within the building, then it is allowed via the total capacity set by the Fire Dept. and they are trained in "crowd management".

Mr. Beaudry advised that most of the businesses are not open at night so there would be plenty of parking. RO advised that the law advises how many spaces there needs to be whether or not the tenants are opened at different times of day.

GCW advised that that even though they are not having an official waiting area, they still need to account for extra spaces for people waiting for a table. GCW also has a problem with the 1,500 sf takeout restaurant and the 36 sf of waiting area. He thinks they are just making it work and is not realistic. Mr. Beaudry advised nothing has changed since the informational meeting and claimed that the only subject that the Board wanted to discuss was trip generation. RO asked GCW what he thought was a reasonable square footage for the waiting area. GCW advised that the norm is 8x8 or 10x10; RO asked why the 1,000 retail be 900 sf to accommodate for a larger waiting area. Mr. Levine advised they have a utility room which will take up @ 100 ft. GCW is fine with both restaurants, he just thinks that there should be some waiting areas and they are squeezing in the retail.

PMB asked what type of retail, Mr. Levine would like to see a Dr.'s office or professional usage, he has just not had many calls on this space. RO clarified that at least 100 sf would be for utility usage; RO asked how much space of the 900 sf for retail can be used for some sort of waiting area. Mr. Levine advised that he would be happy to give him 50 sf for a waiting area. RO suggested they change the numbers to reflect this. Mr. Winchen advised he averages 68 seatings a day but he could seat 145, he is surviving on less than 1/6 of the Boards previous projection. There was more discussion on the capacity of employees and seating of Zio Paulo's.

PMB advised that the Board understands this but they are just trying to figure the numbers out and what would be best for the Town for now and the future. Mr. Winchen agrees but advised that his business would need to triple in amount of clients for him to be able to meet GCW's concern levels. GCW does not want this to become the same parking issue that Outback has. PMM advised that he would like to see his restaurant succeed. The Board had more discussion on the need for more square footage for waiting area. Mr. Levine again said he would be happy to change the numbers to reflect this increase. SJW advised that the Board needs to deal with what they have been presented, it is not the Board's job to restructure the information that the tenants have given you, it is the Boards job to meet the Zoning Regulations and if there is a problem then the police, building inspector and Board of Health would get involved.

SJW advised that if there is any deviation to these plans then they are going to have to come back before the Board. SJW advised that technically the five spaces being carried over from the main lot needs a parking waiver because due to the regulations, they don't have all the parking that is required. SJW advised that a parking waiver could be given for shared uses as in the Zoning Bylaws. GCW believes that the Board asking to alter the plans to accommodate for more waiting space is a valid point.

PMB reiterated that they need a parking waiver and that GCW is asking for a waiting area. GCW thinks that they are short changing their tenants on the waiting area and what is presented to the Board is unrealistic. The Board and Mr. Levine had more discussion on this topic.

Mr. Mueller advised that he collected new data on the Bellingham Commons II intersection with Mechanic St and prepared a study reflecting his changes over the past five years. He also studied the TMC project. Mr. Mueller advised he focused on PM and weekend times. The trip generation supports all the uses proposed, the change of this pad site from 2006 when originally approved shows that this proposal generates

less traffic than a 3,000 sf fast food restaurant. Mr. Mueller explained that it shows 13 trips less during PM peak and 57 trips less on a Saturday. The next effect of this change is a reduction in approved traffic. His recent study shows that left turns out operate at a level service of C-D level, TMC services study shows that site lines need to be cleared and they have been by Mr. Levine. There is adequate site now on both sides. Mr. Mueller did contact Sgt. Rolls (Safety Officer) to see if there have been any recent accidents and there has been one accident but is not attributed to anything having to do with the intersection and there have not been any more accidents at this intersection.

Ernie Pelletier, Town Resident and the Comic Store owner, advised that he wishes parking were an issue. He has been there since the opening of the building and the average stay of a customer is 5-10 minutes because they know what they want. He claims that the parking spaces are really shared uses because his clients tend to shop the other stores in the plaza in one trip. His busy days are Wednesday and Saturdays mornings which works out well with the restaurant busy hours. PMB advised that she is aware that there is ample parking but the Board's job is to make sure that there is ample parking for this project, she explained the waiver. Mr. Pelletier advised the only time that he has seen a full lot is during the Fourth of July fireworks, he also praised Mr. Levine for his development to encourage the community based businesses and advocated for this project.

SJW advised the Board that if they want to vote on the waiver as presented with a condition that in the next two weeks they reorganize their space to add to the waiver and the wording for the motion. The Board, Mr. Beaudry, Mr. and SJW discussed how to handle the waiver for 15 spaces and the waiting space areas. RO advised that he is not in favor of any waiver for any parking because a president is set. RO advised that the law was written for a reason and waivers are given too frequently and if the law is not going to be followed than why have it?

RO advised that he can change the square footage to meet the obligation that is required. GCW advised that the Board is able to give this waiver because the stores in the plaza offer different busy times for each store. RO and GCW had some more discussion on the waiver. RO referenced Cranberry Meadows; he stated that they should have been offered a waiver. PMB advised that that is different because they didn't have enough parking to begin with.

SJW read Section 3312 - Allowed Reduction of the Zoning Bylaws. SJW advised that Mr. Beaudry needs to show a plan that shows where the 15 spaces can be fit in, she believes that there is some latitude for the Board to say that this parking area has an overabundance of parking so the waiver is taken from existing spaces. Mr. Beaudry advised that he wants to keep some green space, DB advised the Board is not asking him to pave it, just to show that there is adequate room to add them if need be. RO has a fundamental concern with this and asked to see it on paper from Mr. Beaudry.

GCW: Motion to close the public hearing.

DB: Second.

Vote: 4-0 Approved. (PMB, GCW, DB and PMM)

GCW: Motion to approve the Pad Site Modification to make the 5,000 sf retail and modify it to be 1,500 sf for fast food, 2,500 sf for restaurant space, 1,000 retail space with a parking waiver for 15 spaces and is contingent upon shown planed reserve.

DB: Second.

Vote: 4-0 Approved. (PMB, GCW, DB and PMM)

General Business

GCW: Motion to sign the June 23, 2011 and the July 14, 2011 meeting minutes.

DB: Second.

Vote: 4-0 Approved. (PMB, GCW, DB and PMM)

GCW: Motion to sign the vouchers.

DB: Second.

Vote: 4-0 Approved. (PMB, GCW, DB and PMM)

Planners Report / SWAP Parking Grant Update

SJW advised that at the SWAP meeting they started initially talking about their research into parking bylaws. SJW included some information in the Board's packages with a spread sheet on ideas and were discussed at the meeting. She suggested to the Board to read through them and see what they like for this Town.

SJW discussed a study in Victoria, Canada and it explains a modern take on parking bylaws. She advised that SWAP's mandate of the grant is to look at reducing impervious surface, shared parking, and incentives for people who have overbuilt parking to change them, etc. SJW is currently going through a manual to adjust the Town's parking ratios. SJW is realizing that gross floor area by ITE standards is the most standard use. She advised that the Town is not yet ready to apply for the SWAP grant. There will be a public hearing on all the info when it is ready to present.

SJW is meeting with Denis Fraine, Mary Chaves and Ann Odabashian regarding moving forward on the Town's affordable housing initiatives as part of the Housing Production Plan.

PMB asked if Shores at Silver Lake III is continuing, SJW advised she has not heard from them and they have missed their deadlines for advertizing in the paper.

SJW advised that there will be one more shuttle time added to both morning and afternoon runs. The south route is being worked on and some services are being added. All information will be available on the website.

MINUTES OF THE PLANNING BOARD

August 11, 2011

DB: Motion to adjourn.

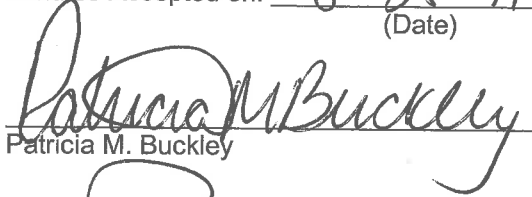
PMM: Second.

Vote: 4-0 Approved (PMB, GCW, DB and PMM).

Minutes Accepted on: _____

8-25-11

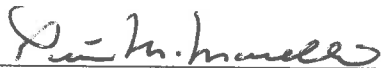
(Date)




Patricia M. Buckley



Peter Pappas



Peter M. Morelli



(Prepared by: Amy Sault) (absent)

Glenn C. Wojcik



Dave Brown