

Planning Board Minutes May 3, 2011

Members Present: Chair Ernie Allain, Regular Members Lucien Langlois, Greg Estrella, Fran Cusson, David Morin, Aline Boucher, Ralph Collins; Alternates: Richard Cassidy, Martha Cregan, Ex-Officios: Tom McCue, Sue Tremblay.

Absent were Laura Jamison and Andre Duchesne

Others Present: Jay Poulin, Lucie Remillard, Thomas Sweeney, Barbara Sweeney, Barbara Tetreault, Berlin Daily Sun; Pam Laflamme, City Planner

Chair Allain called the meeting to order at 6:30 p.m.

Public Comments - There were no comments.

Minutes

Ms. Cusson moved with a second from Mr. Morin to accept the minutes of the April meeting. So moved, the motion carried.

Lot Merger

Ms. Laflamme explained that the Water Works has run into a problem with title inconsistencies because titles were not in the same form of ownership. All deeds have now been legally changed so that they are in same form of ownership and BWW wants to merge the three lots into one property. Map 119/Lot 258; Map 119/Lot 259; Map 119/Lot 260

Mr. Morin moved to approve the merger of lots: Map 119/Lot 258; Map 119/Lot 259; Map 119/Lot 260; on Willow Street; Mr. Collins seconded and the motion carried.

Site Plan Review

Mr. Langlois declared that he is a Water Commissioner and would not vote on this proposal though he is prepared to answer any questions.

Jay Poulin of HEB Engineering explained that a significant improvement project is planned for the Berlin Water Works property on Willow Street. He thanked the Board for approving the lot merger which will allow the project to continue without significant waivers from zoning.

The proposal calls for the former M & M garage to remain. There will be a 950 square foot addition to the office and a new maintenance garage approximately the same size as the existing garage. A special exception was granted by the ZBA for building height of 26 feet. The new facility will address building code issues such as ADA accessibility; maintenance garage issues with safety and additional parking. New access will provide visitors with parking that no longer requires backing out onto Willow Street.

There will be a handicap ADA acceptable parking space close to the front entrance, landscaping and a lit flagpole. A granite curbed sidewalk is proposed along the property. There will be an area to safely off load supplies as well as eight spaces of employee parking and a new fence along the property. The gate will be brought into the site so that vehicles are off the road when opening the gate. There will be significant renovation to the office building to improve the lay out and efficiency as well as a larger meeting room. An effort will be made to better insulate the building, provide new mechanical, electrical services, and a new roof. The new garage will be a prefabricated metal building.

Mrs. Boucher moved to accept the application as complete; Mrs. Cusson seconded and the motion carried.

Board Comments - Chair Allain called for questions or comments from the Board.

Mr. Morin confirmed that there will be no gravel storage on the site. Mr. Langlois commented that gravel is not stored at the end of River Street and there is no anticipated storage taking place at the Willow Street facility.

Mr. Morin asked if shoreline or flood zones are an issue in this case. Mr. Poulin indicated that they checked and neither are need special consideration. Mr. Allain asked about snow storage and Mr. Poulin acknowledged that it would be much the same as it is now though the drainage will be improved. Mr. Morin asked if the entrance and exit would be affected by the concrete for the trestle. Mr. Poulin said that most deliveries would come from Hillside and he did not feel that line of site would be affected.

Mrs. Cusson asked about external lighting. Mr. Poulin stated that entrances and exits on the building would have down turned lighting; in addition the flagpole will have up lights. There was some concern about the sidewalk ending and walkers cutting the corner at the former M & M garage. The concern was that there would be truck traffic there. Mr. Poulin noted that striping for pedestrians could be included

Mr. Poulin added that they are also looking at energy efficiency with a goal of zero net energy. Photovoltaic panels are planned with rooftop units and potentially placing solar panels on the ground.

In response to a question from Mrs. Cusson, Mr. Poulin indicated that the existing garage, (the former M & M) is still going to be actively used for storage of equipment and access will remain the same for BWW personnel. Mr. Estrella questioned the 3 phase electrical update and its ability to work with solar panels. Mr. Poulin noted that Lee Carroll is doing the electrical design.

Mr. Morin asked about signage and Mr. Langlois explained that there would be some directional signage, the BWW logo as well as the street number on the building. There are no deliveries at night so there is no plan to light the signs.

Public Hearing – Chair Allain opened the public hearing at 7:03 p.m.

City Councilor Lucie Remillard expressed concern about traffic coming out onto Hillside Avenue. She stated that the Traffic Safety Committee has worked on that area, moving the traffic light line back so that buses would have the ability to make the turn. Mr. Poulin did not feel that BWW generated enough traffic to make the problem worse. He added that having traffic come out on Hillside is safer than having visitors back out of the existing parking lot onto Willow.

Chair Allain closed the public hearing at 7:05 p.m.

Board Discussion

Mr. Morin confirmed that the plans have been through technical advisory with Police, Fire, Planning, Public Works, and Code Enforcement. Mr. Morin asked about snow storage. Mr. Poulin replied that storage will be on site into a grassed area. Drainage, and snow melt will be into a vegetated swale that will come to a sediment basin and then into the river. Mrs. Cusson confirmed that no salt is used on the premises.

Mr. Cassidy asked if porous pavement was considered and Mr. Poulin noted that it is tough to do here because of the weather; it's a good idea when there is not a lot of sanding on the property.

Mr. Poulin said that upon approval, Water Works wants to tackle this project this year and a bid opening would be held in June.

Seeing no reason to attach conditions, Mr. Morin moved to approve the site plan; Mrs. Cusson seconded and the motion carried. Mr. Langlois abstained.

Design Review

Ms. Laflamme introduced Thomas Sweeney who is planning to open a thrift store at 273 Pleasant Street. She stated that neither the applicant nor the Board is bound by any discussion during design review.

Mr. Sweeney stated that he eventually wants to move here from Greenfield, NH and would live on the second floor of 273 Pleasant and have a thrift store on first floor. He indicated that he has sold merchandise on EBay and knows how to buy and sell.

Ms. Laflamme established that the project is taking a residential property and turning it to commercial use and mixed occupancy. The applicant has been working with Joe Martin for zoning and building inspection. Ms. Cusson confirmed that the business will be in the downtown zone. Mr. Langlois asked if there will be outside storage was informed by Mr. Sweeney that there is a shed on the property that they intend to utilize. Mr. Morin asked about parking in the back for a personal vehicle. Mr. Sweeney said that there are four parking spaces for the business and a survey will determine additional parking. Mr. Morin noted that deliveries on trailers and trucks may be difficult and Mr. Sweeney mentioned that they could perhaps excavate the rock wall to establish additional parking. The Sweeney's will return next month for Site Plan Review.

Route 110

Ms. Laflamme reported that over the weekend Jeff Taylor and Company did a Charrette that included a walking tour of the properties involved and listening sessions to get feedback from the public. The exercise was productive in the landscape design and there were ideas for public spaces that will be left once the project is complete. There will be big spaces on Third Avenue large enough to sell property to encourage commercial building there. Community gardens or a park were also suggested. DOT has a budget and they will do their best to implement design for future use.

The next mitigation activity is Saturday morning May 14 9-12:30 with an architectural historian talking about historic renovation and Poof Tardif will be there as well to collect neighborhood history. Lynne Monroe will be going into homes and documenting.

Downtown Master Plan Update

A RFP is due Monday regarding the plan. A subcommittee will do interviews and recommend a consultant.

Other – there were no other items.

Public Comments

Barbara Tetreault confirmed that the due date for the Downtown RFP is May 9.

Member Comments

Ms. Cusson commented that she is viewing the meeting from a different perspective as a member rather than Chair.

Planner's Comments

Thursday June 2 is the ribbon cutting ceremony for Bickford Place.

Energy Committee, Ms. Laflamme reported that the local energy committee made progress by reviewing the Master Plan chapter on energy. They are very active and have good insight. They will have recommendations for implementation items. They talked about zoning for solar installation and windmills.

Route 110, Ms. Laflamme indicated that the State will not demo Route 110 houses until September. They will put the whole project out to bid in March and begin the project in 2013.

Hutchins Street, the EPA sent back information about the Hutchins Street realignment. They won't give risk assessment; however they gave a sense that they did not find anything in their record that would prevent the project from moving forward.

Windmills, Ms. Cusson asked about the plan for windmills on Jericho Road. Ms. Laflamme said that financing the project has been difficult. There have been several inquiries of people wanting to purchase asking what they would have to do. One of the conditions placed was to have a legal access from Route 110 to their property. Up until now the

developer has not sought out a guaranteed right to get to property. He may be working on that part more diligently.

Next Meeting, Ms. Laflamme stated that June 7 will be the Board meeting for Mt. Jasper and the Sweeneys's may be ready.

Mr. Morin moved to adjourn; Mrs. Boucher seconded and the motion carried. The meeting ended at
7:45 pm