

**MINUTES
CHARLESTOWN PLANNING BOARD
JANUARY 21, 2014**

Members Present: Robert Frizzell (Chair); Sharon Francis (Vice-Chair); Steven Neill (Ex-Officio) James Jenkins, Pat Royce, Rose Smith-Hull,

Alternates Present: John Bruno, Richard Lincourt

Staff Present: David Edkins – Planning and Zoning Administrator

CALL TO ORDER: Mr. Frizzell called the meeting to order at 7:00 PM. He advised that regular member Roger Thibodeau, is not present and called on alternate member Richard Lincourt to replace him for this evening's meeting. Noting that meetings are tape recorded, he asked that anyone wishing to speak identify themselves for the record.

APPROVAL OF MINUTES OF JANUARY 7, 2014:

Mrs. Francis moved to approve the Minutes of the January 7 meeting, as written. Mrs. Smith-Hull seconded the motion. Mrs. Royce noted that Dominic St. Pierre's name was misspelled in the minutes. With six members in favor, the Minutes were approved as corrected. Mr. Neill abstained as he was not present at the January 7 meeting.

ZAREMBA PROGRAM DEVELOPMENT, LLC. – 9,240 Square Foot “Dollar General” Retail Store – 20 Sullivan Street and 113, 117-119 Main Street – Map 118, Lots 90, 98 & 99 – Zones B (Business) and E (Mixed Use): Matt Casey of Zarembo Group, Chris Nadeau of Nobis Engineering and Nick Sanders of VHB were present on behalf of the applicants. Mr. Nadeau noted that he had submitted a checklist of items required for a major site plan application and asked if the Board wished to go over that. Mr. Edkins noted that the completed checklist had only reached him via email this afternoon and he had not had an opportunity to review it. Mr. Nadeau reviewed the changes that have been made to the plans since the last time the Board considered it.

- They are negotiating to convey the easternmost driveway off Sullivan Street to the abutting property owner. This consists of about 1,700 square feet.
- This results in an increase in the impermeable surface. To mitigate this they have eliminated four parking spaces. This leaves a total of 26 parking spaces.
- A sidewalk has been added along the Sullivan Street side of the property. They will give the Town an additional 500 square feet so that the sidewalk will be on Town property.
- With these changes, the request for a waiver allowing 60% lot coverage increases to 61.7% even with the removal of the four parking spaces. They have agreed that the HVAC pad can be gravel rather than concrete and a small turnaround in the parking lot can be eliminated reducing the waiver back to 60%
- Propane tanks will be buried rather than above ground as previously proposed.
- The guard rail along the R&K Towing property line will be removed.

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- Landscaping near the front entrance on Main Street has been modified to improve sight distances exiting the driveway.
- Arbor vitae screening has been added around the dumpster and HVAC pad.
- As a result of discussions with the Fire Chief some landscaping and a stockade fence have been removed to enhance access to the south side of the building which is only about 15 feet from the medical center.
- The applicants will consider the use of non-combustible materials on the south wall of the building.
- The applicants are now willing to put a sprinkler system in the building.
- Lighting has been modified so that none of the light poles will exceed 15 feet in height to prevent light “spillage” onto abutting properties.
- Some minor modifications have been made to the stormwater management plan, which now includes an operation and maintenance plan for the drainage system. There is a one-foot separation between the bottom of the infiltration gallery and the seasonal high groundwater table which meets the state standard. There is a 3 foot separation between the bottom of the detention areas and the seasonal high groundwater table. The site can handle a 50 year storm before overflowing into the state stormwater system on Main Street.
- Since the last meeting the applicants have received their Driveway Permit from the NHDOT which includes the ability to discharge excess stormwater off the site.
- The Driveway Permit from Sullivan Street has also been approved by the Charlestown Highway Superintendent.

Matt Casey of the Zaremba Group stated that as a result of comments made at the last meeting Dollar General is willing to restrict the hours of garbage pickup. They are also willing to post signs providing for “No Truck Idling” on the site. With regard to architecture, Mr. Casey stated that Dollar General will be preparing its own Sign Permits and whatever gets approved will be installed on the building. The siding has changed from a beige color to all white with black trim elements and a black metal roof.

Mr. Nadeau referred to a plan showing truck turning movements on the site and illustrating that the amount of pavement is necessary to allow delivery trucks to maneuver on the site. In response to a question from Mr. Frizzell, Mr. Nadeau stated that trucks would not have to go out onto Sullivan Street to maneuver into position on the site; they would only exit onto Sullivan Street when leaving the site. Mr. Lincourt asked if truck delivery would be during business hours. Mr. Nadeau replied “yes” and explained that large truck deliveries only come once a week and only take about half an hour. They would call ahead and the affected parking spaces could be coned off. Mr. Bruno asked if the painted areas on the pavement at the corner of the building could be curbed and landscaped. Mr. Casey replied that this was considered and could be done but they were concerned that this could impede snowplowing. Mr. Bruno asked if the trees shown in the snow storage areas would be damaged or otherwise impede snow removal. Mr. Nadeau will have his engineers take a closer look at this. Mrs. Francis added that salt in the snow could damage the landscaping. Mr. Neill noted that the applicants had previously stated that they would probably have to have snow removed on the site. There was discussion as to the possible effect of salt on the groundwater.

Mrs. Francis asked if the new drainage system on Main Street is sized to take the stormwater overflow from the site. Mr. Edkins read an excerpt from the NHDOT driveway permit requiring maintenance of the stormwater chamber and referencing the plan which shows the overflow into the Main Street system. Discussion ensued regarding the capacity of the new Main Street stormdrain system and the new Depot Street stormdrain system into which it discharges. Mr. Edkins will look into the sizing of these systems. Mr. Frizzell pointed out that the applicants' drainage system is designed for a 50-year storm whereas the Town's regulations only require a 25-year storm design.

Mr. Frizzell opened the floor to public comment/questions. Aare Ilves asked if the requirement that trees be planted at least 8 feet from a property line just applied to new projects or to all trees. Mr. Edkins stated that it was just for new projects as there are obviously many existing trees that are closer than 8 feet from a property line.

Mr. Nadeau introduced Nick Sanders of VHB Engineering to discuss the traffic issues. Mr. Sanders noted that the NHDOT Driveway Permit has been issued based on the DOT's review of the Traffic Study he had prepared. He noted that the trip generation rates used in the Study were based on counts from another Dollar General store in the month of April. He noted that at the last meeting Mr. Bruno questioned whether April was an appropriate month to use for such counts. To answer this question, Mr. Casey contacted Dollar General and they reported that based on sales data their business is fairly consistent throughout the year with a modest bump in the month of December. Mr. Sanders added that per DOT specifications traffic design data must be taken from data for surrounding streets and that the data for Route 12 shows that traffic is higher during the summer months so he seasonally adjusted their data to reflect summer traffic conditions. Based on these factors Mr. Sanders does not see the need for further adjustment of the figures used in the Study. Mr. Sanders also noted that their Study determined that a left turn lane on Route 12 is not warranted and the DOT concurred with this determination. Mr. Sanders stated that they also took another look at sight lines from the driveway exits as requested by the Board and determined that they far exceed DOT standards. Mrs. Francis noted that sight lines for vehicles pulling out onto Main Street from Sullivan Street can sometimes be impeded by cars parked at R&K Towing. A brief discussion ensued regarding the traffic issues at this intersection.

Mr. Jenkins suggested an alternative site layout to facilitate trucks unloading on the site. Mr. Nadeau replied that they have looked at many different layouts and this one appears to work the best. Mr. Jenkins also suggested an alternative location for trucks to park when unloading. Mr. Casey stated that this was a good suggestion that the applicants would look at.

Aare Ilves asked if it was necessary to have a left turn out of the driveway onto Sullivan Street. A brief discussion ensued where it was determined that it was logical to provide turning ability onto Sullivan Street in both directions.

Mr. Frizzell suggested the Board review the application checklist. Mr. Edkins noted that the completed checklist had only been provided to him at about 3:00 this afternoon and he had not had an opportunity fully review it. He noted that he very much appreciated the efforts of the applicants in putting together a checklist that can be used for future Major Site Plan applications. After discussion it was agreed to defer review of the checklist until the next meeting.

Mr. Frizzell asked if Board members had questions or comments on the changes that had been presented tonight. Mr. Bruno asked if the site was hydraulically capable of infiltrating stormwater given its flatness and the relatively small distance between the bottom of the drainage structures and the seasonal high water table. He questioned whether a hydrogeological study of the site should be considered. Mr. Nadeau replied that they rely on formulas and guidance documents from the State in developing stormwater management systems. He added that in his 20 years as an engineer he has never been required to perform a hydrogeological study for a project this size. Further discussion ensued on drainage issues.

Mr. Bruno asked if the foot-candle plan had been revised to reflect the new lighting plan. Mr. Nadeau displayed a photometrics plan of the site showing the light levels at various locations on the site. Mr. Bruno also asked whether the project could meet sound level standards given that the HVAC unit is so close to the property line. He noted that if it were necessary to enclose the unit after the fact it could raise setback issues. He also noted that one of the light poles appears to be in the middle of the stormwater detention area.

Mr. Bruno asked if there would need to be a boundary adjustment to convey the driveway to the abutter. Mr. Edkins noted that both a boundary adjustment and a voluntary merger would be necessary but these should be done after the site plan is approved; they should be made conditions of the site plan approval.

Mr. Frizzell brought up the letter from the Fire Chief and asked if the applicant had adequately addressed his concerns. Fire Chief Charles Baraly stated that he had spoken with the applicant and he was satisfied that the revisions described by the applicant earlier in the meeting met most of his concerns. He added that he would like to see the south wall of the building be constructed of non-combustible material given the close proximity to the medical center next door. Mr. Casey replied that this could be done but expressed concern that it could detract from the building's appearance. Mr. Edkins noted that this wall was the least visible section of the building. Mr. Casey agreed to look at options to provide non-combustible materials on the south wall.

Mr. Frizzell asked if Robert Scott, owner of R&K Towing, had any concerns regarding the removal of the guardrail on the common property line. Mr. Scott replied that he was generally satisfied with the plan but would like to speak with the applicant about how the area would be treated. Mr. Edkins noted that this area would be landscaped with various trees and shrubs.

Albert St. Pierre introduced himself as a board member and building committee member of Springfield Medical Care Systems (SMCS) which owns the medical to the south of the site. His committee has discussed the project and determined that it will not negatively impact their property and they are in fact happy that the property is being cleaned up. They are planning improvements on their own property and feel that this will make the whole area look better. The SMCS therefore supports this project.

Mr. Lincourt noted that one set of traffic arrows shown in the parking lot appears to be reversed on the plan. Mr. Nadeau will check on this and make necessary corrections. Mr. Lincourt suggested that the crosswalk crossing the Main Street driveway should be painted.

Mr. Frizzell expressed concern that there would be a utility pole in the middle of the new sidewalk on Sullivan Street. Mr. Nadeau replied that the sidewalk would be located inside the telephone pole and there will be a green space between the sidewalk and the street. Mr. Neill asked how wide the sidewalk would be. Mr. Nadeau replied 5 feet. It was noted that there is a guy wire on the pole that may need to be moved.

Mr. Ilves asked if there would be curbing on the sidewalk on Sullivan Street. Mr. Nadeau replied that there would not.

There being no other discussion Mr. Bruno moved that the application be continued to the next meeting on February 4. Mrs. Smith Hull seconded the motion. With all in favor the motion was approved.

DOLLAR GENERAL – Sign Permits (2) – 117 – 119 Main Street – Map 118, Lots 98 & 99 – Zones B (Business): Mr. Edkins reported that the original Sign Permit applications submitted by Zaremba Group were withdrawn but new Sign Permit applications have been submitted by Dollar General through its sign contractor. The 2 proposed signs total nearly 150 square feet in area which is roughly 6 times what is allowed. He recommended that the sign permits be denied on the grounds that they do not conform to the Town’s Regulations.

Mr. Bruno moved that the sign permits be denied on the grounds that they do not conform to the Town’s Regulations. Mrs. Smith Hull seconded the motion.

Mrs. Francis offered an amendment that the applicants be provided with a copy of our sign regulations. Mr. Edkins replied that he had already done so.

With all in favor the motion to deny was approved.

ROGER & NANCY THIBODEAU – Voluntary Merger of Existing Lots – Birch Drive & Stevens Street – Map 233, Lots 50 & 52 – Zone E (Mixed Use): Mr. Edkins called the Board’s attention to a map illustrating the proposed merger and briefly explained it.

Mrs. Francis moved that the merger be approved as proposed. Mr. Jenkins seconded the motion and with all in favor the motion was approved.

PLANNING & POLICY ISSUES

Proposed Zoning Amendments: Mrs. Francis noted that she had suggested a couple minor editorial revisions to Amendments. In Section 8.5.3 c. she suggested that the words “construction of” be removed immediately before the words “new dwellings for the housing...” since the word “new” implies construction. She also suggested that the word “may” be substituted for “shall” in paragraph g. of the same section.

Mr. Bruno moved that the proposed amendments be submitted to the voters for approval with the minor editorial revisions suggested by Mrs. Francis. Mrs. Royce seconded the motions and with all in favor the motion was approved.

ADMINISTRATION & CORRESPONDENCE

Mr. Edkins called the Board's attention to two items of correspondence:

- A letter from a group of Henniker residents expressing concern over some proposed legislative changes to the term "Agritourism" and urging people to contact their legislators and ask that they oppose the legislation.
- A letter from the Forester at New Hampshire Electric Coop stating that they wish to trim and cut some trees on Old Acworth Stage Road as part of the maintenance of their electric lines. The letter acknowledges the need for a public hearing because Old Acworth Stage Road is designated as a Scenic Road pursuant to NH statutes. The letter asks if the Board wishes to schedule a site visit as part of the hearing process and if the Board would like the trees marked in advance of the site visit. After a brief discussion the Board agreed that a site visit should be scheduled and that the trees to be removed should be marked. It was suggested that a map and photographs be provided. It was agreed that the hearing be scheduled after mud season.

Mrs. Francis inquired about a new sign that she recently noticed which has not received Board approval. Mr. Edkins reported that this sign has already been called to the attention of the new enforcement officer.

ADJOURNMENT:

There being no other business, Mrs. Smith-Hill moved to adjourn the meeting. Mrs. Francis seconded the motion. With all in favor, the meeting was adjourned at 8:51 PM.

Respectfully submitted,
David Edkins, Administrator

Minutes Filed: 1-28-14

(Note: These are unapproved Minutes. Corrections, if necessary, will be found in the Minutes of the February 4, 2014, Planning Board meeting.)