

FALMOUTH PLANNING BOARD MEETING MINUTES

TUESDAY, MAY 4, 2010, 6:30 P.M.

FALMOUTH TOWN HALL, COUNCIL CHAMBERS

MEMBERS PRESENT: Bill Lunt (Chair), Stan Bennett, Becca Casey, William Brogan (alternate), Heddy Snyder (alternate)

MEMBERS ABSENT: David Fenderson (Vice-Chair), Bernard Pender

STAFF PRESENT: Ethan Croce (Senior Planner)

The meeting was called to order at 6:32 pm.

Bill Brogan and Heddy Snyder were appointed as voting members.

1. Approval of April Meeting minutes

Stan Bennett moved to approve the minutes; Becca Casey seconded. Motion carried 5-0.

Administrative Action Items

2. Falmouth Public Schools – 74 Woodville Rd. - Request for site plan approval of a proposed storage garage at the High School. Tax Sheet 300; Map-Lot R05-020. Zoned Farm and Forest & RCZO.

Item approved 5-0.

Agenda Items

3. TideSmart Realty – 380 US Route 1 – Request for site plan review for an addition to an existing office building and a subdivision amendment. Tax Sheet 83; Map-Lot U62-003-001 & U62-002. Zoned BP.

Ethan Croce presented the key issues. The applicant met with staff and the peer reviewer after the submission deadline and has made some changes to the proposal. It is up to the Board to determine what an appropriate amount of parking would be for this site. The applicant has received conditional use approval from the Zoning Board for warehousing and light manufacturing. The applicant is using the industrial use parking ratio of 1 space per 1.2 employees. They meet this standard with five additional spaces. Staff has suggested adding a stop bar to the drive leaving the warehouse but the applicant doesn't believe it is necessary since the parking demand at the new building will be minimal. The main building entrance has been relocated to the south side of the building since their last submission, which changes the pedestrian circulation. The applicant is planning to remove one of the two signs at the site entrance to conform to the ordinance requirement of 100 foot separation of signs. Certain standards for buffering are required in the BP district along Route 1 and Johnson Road. The applicant meets the standards along Route 1, but not along Johnson Road. They have requested a waiver on this requirement. Staff asked for cut sheets and wattages for the wall pack fixtures, which the applicant will submit for review tonight. They are also planning to provide a light at the entrance along Route 1. The building is subject to Route 1 design guidelines, which require all four sides to be treated equally. The west side of the building faces a substantial cliff wall and so the applicant is requesting that this requirement be waived. Staff has suggested additional landscaping at the main building entrance, and additional architectural treatment at the secondary entrance. Tom Emery had suggested lowering the cedar shingling banding to minimize the overhead doors. Any functional elements are required to be shown on elevations if they will be

visible, and are required to be screened. He mentioned that the applicant is at 30-33% impervious surface, which conforms to the 50% impervious surface limitation in the BP district.

Steven Mohr, of Mohr and Seredin, presented the application. They are proposing to add a 10,000 sq foot warehouse addition to the west and south of the existing building. The theory was to fit the warehouse along the ledge face, and connect it to the existing building with a breezeway. He showed a conceptual drawing of what they might do with the property 15-20 years from now. They made sure that what they are doing now ties in with the concept for future expansion. He indicated that they moved the main entrance to the warehouse, in order to make more room for landscaping and to simplify the circulation pattern. The Route 1 buffer varies between 32 and 48 feet in width and it meets the standards. Along Johnson Rd, it is currently unvegetated. They are proposing to plant a double row of flowering crabapples. They have added a few evergreens along that edge, in response to Tom Emery's suggestions. Given the extent of open field and the fact that the building is over 300 feet from Johnson Road, they are comfortable with this proposal. They are also suggesting a row of maple trees along the parking at the warehouse, which will provide some screening as well. He discussed the stormwater management plan; they have their DEP stormwater approval and the SES endorsement of the plan. He discussed the vehicular circulation. They don't feel a stop bar is called for, due to the low volume of traffic. They have submitted the supplemental lighting to the staff. The walls at the entrance are going to be built of stone from the site. They originally had a TideSmart sign on both sides; it does not comply with the 100 foot separation regulation, so they now propose the sign on the northern side. He showed the proposed elevations, including the proposed landscaping. The color and material use scheme is the same as the existing building. They didn't lower the cap as Tom Emery suggested, because doing so appeared to make the top a little too heavy. They have screened the loading bay with privet hedge and trees. He explained that the back side of the building faces the ledge face and really isn't visible to the public.

Bill Lunt asked the Board to discuss the parking ratio issue.

Stan Bennett didn't have a problem with the number of spaces that are shown, but according to the truck turning diagram they will lose 5 spaces whenever a truck comes in.

Bill Lunt felt it was hard to count those as parking when they are lost whenever a truck comes in.

Mr. Mohr said they have removed those spaces from the most recent plans. They will leave the pavement in place, but it will not be striped for parking. Removing those 5 spaces leaves them with 45, which is still three more than would be required.

Becca Casey asked how many employees are in that building.

Mr. Mohr said they are thinking 5-7, but the number is probably 5-10 for use of the warehouse.

Bill Lunt asked how many spaces are in the warehouse parking area.

Becca Casey said 11, including the handicap space.

Bill Brogan thought there was extra impervious area leading into the warehouse parking area.

Tom Greer said they have reviewed that with Mr. Woods, the property owner. Some of that is extra; there is a pickup box for mail and the Post Office wanted to turn around on site without backing up. There are also UPS and FedEx trucks that come in every day, so they would use that extra space. They also needed it so that, if a truck doesn't perform exactly right, there would be extra room to get to the dock.

Bill Lunt asked the Board about the stop bar and yield sign.

Bill Brogan said the access drive there now is what you would think of as the right of way. He thought the person to the right would think they have the right of way. He was comfortable with a yield sign. A person turning around in the driveway might want to turn in that large area.

Becca Casey was in favor of a yield sign.

Bill Lunt thought most of the traffic would be to the office. They do need to signal to those people coming from the warehouse. Where it is so wide there it would be hard to see a sign, he would be more comfortable with a stop indication right on the pavement.

Mr. Mohr said that was part of their dilemma; due to the width of that throat, a sign is hard to locate.

Heddy Snyder agreed that a line on the pavement would be more effective. She asked about making that entrance a bit narrower, so that it wasn't as much of a free for all.

Mr. Mohr said they have looked at it, and due to the trucks they are limited in what they can do. They can add the stop in the pavement to the plans.

Bill Brogan was fine with the pavement marker, but he would also like to see a sign, as pavement markers are not visible all year, and can fade if not maintained.

Bill Lunt said if it is on the site plan as soon as it starts to wear off it is an enforcement issue.

Mr. Mohr thought that, once the painted marker goes on, the MUTCD requires that a sign go up.

Bill Lunt said he doesn't have a problem with the width of that throat. He asked the Board about the buffering.

Stan Bennett asked how close the applicant is to being in compliance with the Johnson Road buffer.

Ethan Croce said the BP district requires a certain composition of understory trees, shrubs and overstory trees. It is based on linear feet.

Mr. Mohr has done the analysis. The only category in which they meet the standards is understory trees. They are at 40% of the overstory tree standard and they are at 0% of the shrubs required. They wanted to create a more formal buffer; the guidelines contemplate a more natural buffer.

Becca Casey asked what their reason is for the formal buffer.

Mr. Mohr said the opacity along Route 1 is 65-75% with the naturalized buffer. They wanted something much more ornamental along Johnson Road. They added the evergreens for some breakup and background.

Becca Casey asked if they would be closer to meeting the guidelines if they included the 5 maple trees adjacent to the parking, even though they are remote.

Mr. Mohr said that would bring them to 70% compliance with the overstory trees. They feel they get more coverage from those trees with their proximity to the building, but if the Board wanted them to come more into compliance they could move them. The maples are expected to grow to 19 feet tall with a crown spread of 8-10 feet.

Becca Casey asked if they could be relocated if the applicant comes back for the master plan.

Mr. Mohr said they would be movable for another 8-12 years.

Stan Bennett suggested the Board allow this waiver with the understanding that the applicant will likely come back and a future board, if they don't like it, could require more screening at that time.

Becca Casey was okay with that.

Bill Lunt said people will be able to see right in, especially in the wintertime. He hoped that, in the very near future the sight of quarrying is going to go away.

Mr. Greer thought that would go away at the end of this project.

Bill Lunt was comfortable with the waiver.

Heddy Snyder asked if the waiver would be forever.

Ethan Croce said that the minute the property came back to the Board it would be reopened.

Mr. Mohr clarified that the plan they are approving tonight calls for the open area to be flattened, loamed and turned into a meadow.

Stan Bennett moved to grant the waiver on meeting the buffering requirements on Johnson Road; Becca Casey seconded. Motion carried 5-0.

Ethan Croce asked if there was a limitation on how often the meadow can be mowed.

Mr. Mohr said they are not proposing anything. It will be seeded out with a meadow mix, with wildflowers. They have talked about a spring mow and a fall mow to keep the woody invasives out. It will not become a lawn.

Bill Lunt was more comfortable with it being a little wild instead of a lawn.

Mr. Mohr asked about not treating the west façade of the building.

Stan Bennett asked how much it would save them. Mr. Greer said \$6,000-\$8,000.

Becca Casey was comfortable with their proposal not to treat that side. She is pretty happy with the entry door being moved, which corrected many of the pedestrian issues. Overall she is happy with the elevations.

Bill Brogan, Heddy Snyder and Bill Lunt were all comfortable with the plan as proposed. The Board will not require that side of the building to be treated.

Ethan Croce asked if the Board wanted to see any of the revisions that were submitted after the submission deadline.

Bill Lunt was comfortable with staff having reviewed that material. He asked about screening for the ground light fixtures. Day lilies are for a short period of the year; he asked about a more permanent screening for those.

Mr. Mohr said he was fine switching those to a low-growing evergreen.

Stan Bennett left the meeting.

Becca Casey said it is such a low mounted sign; you could use a fixture that was recessed into the ground. She liked evergreens.

Bill Brogan and Heddy Snyder agreed.

The Board was willing to make the screening of fixtures a condition of approval.

Ethan Croce asked about lowering the cedar shingles. On the elevation it looks like the door was raised or the cedar was lowered.

Mr. Mohr said it has not been lowered. Mr. Emery wanted it lowered so that it embraced that cap.

Ethan Croce asked about additional landscaping around the main entrance. Mr. Mohr said they are not proposing any.

Bill Lunt felt the building look pretty good and he saw no reason to change that.

Bill Brogan went to the site and he noticed that there are currently no erosion control measures, after the fill permit approved a few months ago.

Mr. Greer has a meeting with the contractor tomorrow, and he will tell them.

Ethan Croce read the proposed conditions of approval. Mr. Mohr agreed to those conditions.

Becca Casey moved to approve the application, with conditions as read by staff and with the condition of the stop bar and sign; Bill Brogan seconded. Motion carried 4-0.

Meeting adjourned 7:39 pm.

Respectfully submitted,

Melissa Tryon
Recording Secretary