



Town of Hudson

Internal Traffic Committee

78 Main Street, Hudson, MA 01749
Tel: (978) 562-2989 Fax: (978) 568-9641

Minutes of Meeting – August 26, 2016

A meeting of the Town of Hudson's Internal Traffic Committee (ITC) was held on Friday, August 26, 2016. John Blood, Fire Chief, convened the meeting at 10:00 AM.

The following ITC voting members were in attendance:

John Blood, Deputy Fire Chief
Richard Dipersio, Police Captain
Eric Ryder, Director, Public Works
Jeff Wood, Building Commissioner

The following non-voting ITC members were in attendance:

Jack Hunter, Director of Planning and Community Development
Kristina Johnson, Asst. Director of Planning and Community Development

The following individuals were also present:

Attorney Joe Moreira
Lew Colton, Architect
Robert Chrushiel, Hancock Associates
Tome Green, Hudson resident

SITE PLANS

46 Church Street (CONTINUED)

Attorney Anthony Moreira introduced himself to the Board and noted that Lew Colton, Architect for the proposed project is in attendance and can answer any site plan-related question. Attorney Moreira provided an overview of the background context with the proposed project, which will entail a teardown and rebuild in an SB zone. He indicated that initially that the plan initially was to enlarge from a two-family to a three-family; and, while obtaining a building permit, it was discovered that building was structurally unsuitable for the proposed project. Attorney Moreira informed the Board that the proposed project now entails the teardown of the existing building and the construction of a four-unit townhouse, and that the proposed project will require approvals from the Planning Board (PB) and the Zoning Board of Appeals (ZBA).

Jack Hunter mentioned that Attorney me with the Planning Department to discuss the 25-point site plan review checklist. At this meeting, Planning Department Staff formulated questions for the applicant to address, most of which are PB-related including lighting, fencing, and landscaping. Lew Colton informed the Board that there a planting schedule has been completed and will be added to the plans prior to the PB review Mr. Colton also indicated that site lighting will be installed at the exits and entrances doors and will ensure that the photometrics do not cause light spillover onto adjacent properties. Mr. Hunter reminded Mr. Colton that a cut sheet for the lighting must be furnished for the Planning board. Finally, Mr. Colton stated that he did not have plans for the fencing; however, he indicated that a standard cedar stockade fence will be erected. Mr. Hunter reminded Mr. Colton that a cut sheet for the fence will also need to be furnished for the Planning Board.

Jack Hunter then inquired about the pavement cross-section requirements relative to the materials and binders, to which Eric Ryder responded that there are no requirements on site, but that there will be at the roadway encroachment. Mr. Ryder reminded the applicant that handicap access and tip downs must be provided at the

curb ramps. Mr. Colton acknowledged the requirements and indicated that the pavement materials will consist of 6 inches of compacted soil, 6 inches of gravel, 2 inches of binder, and inch of top coat, which will be shown on the plans.

Setbacks

Captain DiPersio inquired about that driveway that goes around the back of the property and whether there is an offset, to which Mr. Colton said no. Chairman Wood noted that this area constitutes open space and cannot be used for a driveway, storage per the definition of “open space” in the Zoning By-Laws. It is his interpretation that the side and rear setbacks, by definition constitutes open space, and therefore cannot have roadway, parking within it. Both Mr. Hunter and Ms. Johnson asked for clarification, and Mr. Wood read the definition of open space out loud. Continued discussion ensued about the allowed uses and what actions would be required by the Zoning Board of Appeals. Mr. Hunter stated that applicant would need to obtain a special permit from the ZBA to alter a non-conforming use; and, Ms. Johnson inquired if they would now need variance from the ZBA for the side setback per Mr. Wood’s zoning interpretation.

Fire Protection

Captain DiPersio asked Chief Blood is if the proposed access driveway in the rear could accommodate the department’s fire trucks and apparatus. Chief Blood reminded the applicant that the plans need to show the turning radius for the larges piece of equipment with a single axle , which would require 45 feet to safely execute the turnaround. Mr. Colton indicated that there is indeed 35 feet; but, Chief Blood reminded Mr. Colton fire equipment executing that turnaround cannot strike the fence. Attorney Moreira then stated that Zoning By-Laws only requires 20 feet, to which Mr. Ryder responded that the plans need to show at least 20 feet from the edge of the outside fence to the dividing fence at the property lines. Mr. Hunter suggested to Mr. Colton that he have an engineer lay down a template on the site plans and then cite the turning radii in the narrative. Chief Blood further reiterated his discomfort with what was being shown on the plans, and he believes that the truck will have difficulty executing a 20 foot turnaround on a 15-foot driveway with a fence close by, and especially when there will be piles of snow. And finally, Chief Blood inquired about the location of the sprinkler system, to which Mr. Colton responded that it is shown on the utility plan. Mr. Colton noted that the domestic water service is via a one-inch pipe and expects a six-inch pipe for fire service. Chief Blood emphasized that the FHD connection to the hydrant on the right-hand side of the property needs to be within 100 feet, and reminded Mr. Colton to think carefully about this when laying out the feeder lines on the plans.

Parking

Captain DiPersio inquired about the layout and the dimensions of the parking spaces shown on the site plan, and he noted (especially for parallel parking) that the tightness of the spaces could cause vehicular conflicts. Mr. Colton acknowledged the issue and stated that the balancing the landscaping requirements with the parking requirements. He stated that an extension of the parking spaces could necessitate a reduction in landscaping. Mr. Ryder reminded Mr. Colton that any expansion of impervious surface will have an impact on site stormwater retention calculations.

Eric Ryder mentioned that the applicant needs to understand that they will be responsible for verifying the conditions of the existing sewer lines, and whether tying in four (4) additional units will impact future flows. He underscored that the applicant is responsible for all upgrades required to accommodate future flows.

Chief Blood moved to have ITC approve the site plan to move forward to the Planning Board subject to the applicant satisfactorily addressing all issues raised at this meeting. Seconded by Eric Ryder. 4-0-0

181 Main Street

The Attorney (name was inaudible on the recording) on behalf of William Caruso, owner of the Shell Station at 181 Main Street introduced himself, and noted that Mr. Caruso has been operating businesses in both Hudson and Marlborough for many years. Further, the attorney introduced the franchise owner of the Gourmet Donuts—the potential tenant of the proposed drive-through restaurant.

Robert Chrusciel, site Engineer with Hancock Associates provided an overview of the site plan.—both the existing conditions and the proposed conditions. The proposed project entails the demolition of the existing 733 square foot car wash and the adjacent canopy at the present Shell gasoline station, and the construction of a 604 square foot drive-through restaurant, which would be occupied by a gourmet coffee/donut shop operation. Mr. Chrusciel explained that the proposed project also entails the extension of the existing sidewalk, and noted the proposed layout of the site driveway and drive-through lanes. He then gave an overview of the existing and proposed parking, public and private utility service on the site.

Scott Thornton, traffic engineer from Vanasse and Associates provided an overview of the transportation impact and access study prepared for the proposed project. Mr. Thornton explained that they conducted vehicle counts back in June (prior to the start of school summer vacation) at the site driveways and the following locations: Main Street/Broad Street/Manning Street/South Street extension and the Main Street/Vilo Do Porto intersection. He said that they employed the standard methodology for the preparation of traffic impact assessments and the calculations for the trip generation. Mr. Thornton proceeded to explain that the proposed donut/coffee shop would result in 20 new trips during the AM peak period and 8 new trips during the Saturday peak hour, and adding the existing traffic associated with the site the total trip generation would be 180 total trips during the PM Peak hour and 70 total trips during the Saturday peak hour. With respect to the vehicle queuing, Mr. Thornton explained that the setup will accommodate storage for seven (7) cars, and the results of the queuing analysis showed average queues will be four (4) cars and the maximum queues will be seven (7) cars.

ITC Members raised numerous questions relative to the following:

- internal and external traffic circulation;
- the traffic signal timing at Main Street/South Street/Broad Street/Manning Street;
- queuing vehicles onto Broad Street;
- number of parking spaces to accommodate patrons and employees;
- delivery hours;
- Potential connection to the Assabet Rail Trail
- bicycle Parking.

Jack Hunter indicated that the site plans and the accompanying transportation impact and access study have been forwarded to the Town's peer review site engineer and traffic engineer for review.

Chairman Wood moved to move the proposed site plans along to the Planning Board subject to the satisfactory resolution of internal and external traffic issues raised by the ITC Board. Seconded by Chief Blood. 4-0-0

OTHER BUSINESS

ITC Protocol (Continued Discussion from prior month)

At the July ITC meeting, the Planning Department provided a professional observation of the review of site plans over the past ten months. Both the Director and Assistant Director noted that the Town's approach to site plan review is very different than other communities where they have both worked; and as such, also expressed concerns with the current ITC involvement with site plan review.

Eric Ryder kicked off the continued discussion by expressing his concerns with the current ITC framework for site plan review. It is his belief that when applicants receive approval from ITC that they are all set from a Town permitting standpoint. Under this current framework, he noted that he is not able to discuss the fine details (utilities, drainage, etc.) on the site plans post ITC until applicants are coming to the DPW to obtain any necessary permits. He believes that it would be better if these issues were worked out through a series of meetings. He used the recently continued proposal for 46 Church Street as an example where the architect had a limited understanding of the utility impacts and requirements for a two-family residence. He expressed two concerns: 1) he feels obligated to conditionally approve the site plan; and 2) architects serving as the project designer instead of an engineer for proposed developments can cause problems down the road.

Jack Hunter added that the 181 Main Street proposal approved at today's ITC meeting is a perfect example of the benefit of having the ITC members (along with other Departments like Health and Municipal Light and Power) with the applicant and the Town's peer review engineers sitting in the room together. He noted that sometimes the review of impacts and the discussion of potential mitigation with the applicant take several meetings; and, under the current ITC site plan review framework an applicant must wait for a whole month before meeting again.

Chief Blood reiterated similar concerns about having site plans reviewed at an ITC meeting, and believes that approving site plans today is risky. He believes that ITC has an obligation to conditionally approve site plans mostly because ITC meets only once a month, and that is inconvenient for applicants trying to move forward with their projects. Further, Chief Blood stated that from an economic development perspective Town needs to be more aggressive in working with applicants to move their projects forward. Eric Ryder added that it makes more sense to have the all of the departments sit in the room together and vet out all of the site plan issues before advancing to Planning Board. Jeff Wood reminded everyone that the applicants should not have an understanding that ITC approves the site plan; however, Eric responded that many applicants believe that once they received ITC approval/blessing that they are "good to go" in many respects.

Jack Hunter then provided a snapshot as to how other municipalities handle the interdepartmental review of site planning. Both Jack and reminded the ITC Board about the provision in the Hudson Zoning by-laws that require ITC review of site plans prior to Planning Board review and approval. An in-depth discussion amongst the ITC Board about the merits of removing the requirement in the Zoning by-laws for ITC review of site plans. All agreed that ITC is the appropriate forum to handle transportation issues and requests raised by the Board of Selectmen and/or members of the public, but the ITC site plan requirements should be removed from the Zoning by-laws. Eric Ryder recommended that the Planning Department investigate all feasible measures to streamline the review of site plans; all agreed with Eric Ryder's recommendation. With the blessing of the ITC Board, the Planning Department would like to move forward with a spring Town Meeting warrant article for said action.

Creation of Parking Spaces on Central Street (Continued Discussion from prior month)

Kristina Johnson kicked off the discussion by providing an overview of the discussion that took place at the prior month's ITC meeting (see ITC minutes from July 29th) relative to this issue. For disclosure purposes, Kristina mentioned to the Board that the Planning Department had been approached by a potential applicant wishing to open a medical marijuana dispensary at 131 Coolidge Street, adjacent to the proposed four parking spaces on Central Street. The potential applicant has also met with the Police Chief to discuss the proposed dispensary.

With respect to the procedure to approve the creation of four parking spaces within the Town right-of-way, Kristina expressed confusion about ITC's direction from the prior month. Per the vote at the July meeting, the ITC Board directed Kristina to move forward with obtaining a vote of approval from the Board of Selectmen.

Because this request was not a taking of Town property and the Town's Traffic Rules and Orders does not prohibit parking along that segment of Central, Kristina asked the ITC Board for direction and clarification as to the appropriate approval mechanism. Chief Blood also asked for clarification of this issue to understand the appropriate approval mechanism. Jack Hunter also mentioned that the Town Administrator believes that this request would only be subject to issuance of the "work permit" by the Department of Public Works. (DPW) After discussing the request one last time and recognizing that there would be no amendment to the Traffic Rules and Orders, all agreed that the decision to approve the request rests with the DPW.

Chief Blood moved to rescind the motion from the last month's ITC meeting to send the Central Street parking request to the Board of Selectmen, and that the approval of this request is subject to the review and approval of all required permits from the Department of Works. **Seconded by Jeff Wood. 4-0-0**

OTHER ISSUES RAISED BY MEMBERS NOT ON THE AGENDA

Hudson 150 Parade

Chief Blood explained that the Hudson 150 Committee is respectfully requesting that the ITC Board send a recommendation to the Board of Selectman regarding a parking ban on the day of the parade.

Chief Blood moved to direct Kristina Johnson—on behalf of ITC—to forward a recommendation to the Board of Selectmen to institute a parking ban on September 18th from 9:00 AM-4:00 along the parade route (188 Central Street to the Main Street/Tower Street intersection). All cars parked during this timeframe along the parade route will be subject to being ticketed and towed. **Seconded by Eric Ryder. 4-0-0**

Main Street/Lewis Street Intersection Improvements

Eric provided the ITC Board with an update on the status of recommending improvements at this location. He reminded everyone that at the November Town Meeting there was an article on the warrant for the signalization of this intersection, which was withdrawn. In recent months, Eric and the two Chiefs have met with the traffic engineers to get a better understanding of the engineering required and the cost for the installation of a signal. Given the high cost of installing a traffic signal, alternative, lower-cost improvements are being investigated. Eric will keep the Board informed of future progress.

Tom Green- Citizen Issue 542 Main Street

Mr. Green raised a concern about the recently approved site plan for the development at 542 Main Street. In particular, he is concerned about the loss of the 3-foot shoulder to accommodate the turning radii for the new site driveway in located between Sauta Farm Drive and Brook Street. He noted that this section of Main Street is highly used by cyclists, and wondered if there were any conditions for minimizing the loss of the shoulder. Jack Hunter noted that there was no discussion of this issue as part of the site plan review process, but he would be happy to send the plans to Eric Ryder to see if anything could be done.

Jeff Wood moved to adjourn the meeting. **Seconded by Eric Ryder. 4-0-0**