



TOWN OF NORTHBOROUGH

Town Offices

63 Main Street

Northborough, Massachusetts 01532

508-393-5019 ~ 508-393-6996 Fax

Approved 9-18-07

Planning Board Meeting Minutes August 21, 2007

Members Present: Rick Leif, Don Hewey, Bob Rosenberg, George Pember, Michelle Gillespie

Others Present: Kathy Joubert, Town Planner; Fred Litchfield, Town Engineer; Sandy Brock, Nitsch Engineering; Anthony Donato, Nitsch Engineering; Dave Woodbury, Saint Gobain; Juann Khoory, Shepley Bullfinch Richardson and Abbott, Architects

Chairman Leif opened the meeting at 7:00 pm.

Presentation by Saint Gobain RE: Expansion Plans at Goddard Road

Kathy Joubert, Town Planner; Sandy Brock, Nitsch Engineering; Dave Woodbury, Saint Gobain; and Juann Khoory, architect, presented information on future expansion plans for Saint Gobain as follows:

- Have had two in-house meetings with staff
- Plans are at preliminary stage
- In order to stay in Northborough they must expand
- Have had a good relationship with Town and Town Administrator
- Want to master-plan site through a site plan approval including several phases
- Use allowed by right
- Will build out over 10 -15 years
- Came to introduce themselves and give overview before officially filing
- In 2006, approximately a 50-billion euro company with 208,000 employees around the world
- Northborough one of three present research and development centers for high performance material sector
- Others in Shanghai and France - Saint Gobain headquarters in France
- Decided they want to expand research and development center in Northborough
- Over past 4 years, site has grown from 100 research staff and technicians to 307 presently
- Have exceeded capacity of building - are using trailers as temporary structures to house staff
- Working on phase 1 of master plan - shown in drawings submitted
- Want to make sure we can continue to expand to approximately 730 research staff
- Master plan represents buildings necessary to meet capacity

- Important for Saint Gobain that master plan would be approved through normal process
- Looking to get assurance/consent on master plan before investing and starting phase 1
- If can't get it, they will have to move their operation to another part of the country or world
- In process of building parking on Marlborough side of property
- Parking will be finished in late November
- Want input now to have all information they need before filing
- Trying to take proactive approach – conforming to zoning – calculating maximum size
- State permit needed for increase in parking spaces due to limited access highway
- South side is Goddard Road

Phase 1

- 730 employees and 730 parking spaces
- Will be seeking green building certification
- Series of stormwater basins installed
- Will bring in and use some products they manufacture
- Campus will be maintained generally the same way
- Entrance will be slightly adjusted
- Will be up to maximum lot coverage – addresses worst-case scenario
- Small changes to drainage
- Changes to utilities – relocation, increasing mechanical systems
- All new utilities and systems – will be prepared for total future expansion
- Acoustical, traffic, Geo-tech, lighting and drainage addressed
- 2-story existing building and links
- Connector areas are common spaces for meetings and large gatherings
- Connectors will be two stories – 196 feet long and block is about 92 feet wide
- Connecting two levels to maximize flow of people in the building
- Creating outdoor spaces and court yard to promote nature and good life on campus
- Want to preserve the existing trees
- A long-term goal to replant trees on site
- Setting now is very conducive to working
- Products manufactured by company include high performance specialty ceramic materials and performance plastics
- Thrust bearings and jet engines
- Abrasives branch in Worcester in former Norton Company plant
- Make grinding wheels, sandpaper
- Super-abrasives – thin materials to slice silicon conductors
- Largest manufacturer of flat glass – used for wind shields
- Looking for next 2 decades at products they haven't developed yet
- Will research and develop at time the world needs them
- Started company in 1665 in France when Queen of France needed mirrors
- Same mirrors still there today

Rick Leif

- Is there a proto-type scale of some of these products?
- Would this plant create a proto-type or would it be created somewhere else?

Dave Woodbury

- Make materials together in form that is needed to be able to manufacture the project

- 4-component injection system for high performance ceramics
- Process is to get machine tool in, put together materials to make sure it works, test it and when sure of it, machine tool goes to the plant
- We interact with other research centers with high speed fiber connections – passing enormous amount of information
- Will do in-product development work at this center
- As much office space as lab space
- 1st floor of phase one is all labs
- 2nd and 3rd floors are just office cubes – will put those people in permanent space

Michelle Gillespie

- Mass Highway came in and cleared trees along I-290
- Buffer gone and sound traveled inland to residents who had never heard it
- Request you plant more mature trees to replace buffer more quickly

Dave Woodbury

- Mass Highway cleared trees on their property line
- Cleared their right of way right to our building
- Large trees not on our property that buffer it – but owners are not planning to cut them down
- The reality is trees will come down
- Will try to maintain as many trees as we can without causing a safety hazard
- 3-story building will buffer some sound
- By 2014 – 2017 plan is to have first shift with 600 people, second 100-120 people
- Very sophisticated machine tools to do testing of materials – looks at molecular structures, develops materials, tests and validates them
- Machines sit idle – trying to move labor force to do more testing on those shifts
- About 300 people on-site
- A lot of traffic flow is from Sepracor in Marlborough
- Saint Gobain employees don't leave all at once
- Could be 730 people on premises at times
- Part of what Saint Gobain does is host collaborative events and need visitor parking
- Lease parking spaces from Sepracor – a logistical nightmare to get people to our building in bad weather, etc.
- Have about 50 visitors a day
- Sometimes enough parking available – sometimes not

Sandy Brock

- Talked with Town Engineer re: traffic count
- One-to-one parking
- Have talked about surfaces for parking
- All impervious now and have planned for that

Rick Leif

- Would like to see an analysis or presentation on impact of traffic on a periodic basis – weekly or quarterly
- How parking used and traffic as population grows
- What we can expect as to ebb and flow
- Impact on Goddard Road and Solomon Pond Road

- Responsible for making sure that kind of growth is managed on and off campus

Sandy Brock

- Traffic engineer will be looking at traffic at peak hour
- Route I-290 very close
- Most local people will be only ones coming from other directions
- St. Gobain first building on left on Goddard Road
- Sepracor is next building
- Have one building connected by a walkway now

Dave Woodbury

- Have met with Fire Chief Durgin and Captain Hearst
- Fire Chief has spent time reviewing it

Bob Rosenberg

- Sepracor entirely in Marlborough
- Any connection to Marlborough from that industrial area?

Dave Woodbury

- Marlborough has been working with state to try to extend cul-de-sac at Goddard Road to Boundary Street
- That would take traffic from Robin Hill Road to Hudson Street

Bob Rosenberg

- Ought to be looking at what the lack of that connection is
- Goddard Road would be a huge improvement to that
- Would change nature of Goddard Road
- Traffic light needed at Hudson Street and Solomon Pond Road
- All Marlborough traffic cuts through
- Discussion on traffic ought to recognize there's another alternative
- Goddard Road connected to Boundary Street - addresses traffic from Metropolitan Park

Sandy Brock

- Town Engineer has requested status report from Marlborough
- We have no control over it

Dave Woodbury

- With state of bridge infrastructure in Massachusetts, not likely they would get funds to do it
- City manager of Marlborough said "nice to wish for"

Bob Rosenberg

- Should be pushing for give-take from city of Marlborough

Dave Woodbury

- City of Marlborough approved Sepracor with conditions - developer widened Goddard Road, put light in and widened lane
- At the time, it was permitted to include other building Sepracor is building, so total anticipated volume of employees incorporated

Kathy Joubert

- That was Northborough's portion of the mitigation package – light on Solomon Pond Road and widening of Goddard Road

Sandy Brock

- If that happened, wouldn't change what we're doing
- Except make pedestrian crossing of Goddard Road a little difficult

George Pember

- Would you consider a pedestrian bridge?

Sandy Brock

- Until they get 100% drawings, don't have to worry about pedestrian crossings
- Depends on traffic count whether that's needed or not
- Have to have a lot of pedestrians in order to make it economical

Don Hewey

- Based on long-term plan, what are mechanics and process for this?

Kathy Joubert

- The development of Forbes Road was master-planned – several buildings built over time for one company
- Staff explained to Saint Gobain that the master plan proposal would go through site plan review
- Uses allowed by right – review like any other site plan
- Would put phasing in the site plan and times when applicant would have to come back to board for progress reports

Sandy Brock

- Drainage done on worst case scenario for master plan
- A lot of effort put forth to anticipate the future

Kathy Joubert

- Sepracor came to Northborough Planning Board
- Only way to get to their property was using a road in Northborough
- Definitive subdivision approved for them to go through Northborough
- Mitigation package was part of it
- Goddard Road and Bearfoot Road town-built roads in early 1980s
- Intention was that Goddard Road was brought to town line as a cul-de-sac and Marlborough committed to bring it thru to Boundary Street

Sandy Brock

- Want to go ahead with whole master plan
- Don't want to spend money if they can't build out
- Process is the key

Kathy Joubert

- Would be done like any project today with a site plan

- If considered a substantial change, would have to come back to board – whether ZBA or Planning Board
- Could be every 5 years or some other number
- Can keep informed on building permits, etc., on a continual basis
- Discussed with Saint Gobain by staff – master-planning the site makes sense

Rick Leif

- Key question is if anyone had any problem reviewing a fully-developed site plan that may take years for it to be finished out

George Pember

- Magnitude of project demands complete plan to fully understand it
- Updates every 2 years, etc.

Rick Leif

- See overall plan – once seen it, say its ok and do it
- Don't see us changing the plans every other year

Bob Rosenberg

- Is that what the applicant is requesting?

Dave Woodbury

- Approval would be to proceed with master plan and if we deviate from master plan, we'll come back, present and go through process again
- Goal to have everything submitted to you to achieve this before December
- Parking out to bid – site plan approval received
- Met with Marlborough about component in Marlborough
- Marlborough has no objection and Saint Gobain will be receiving written approval from Marlborough shortly

Sandy Brock

- For them it's a staff review
- Will give us a letter saying that
- Offered to duplicate submittals to them but don't need it for whole master plan

Rick Leif

- 2017 a long way off
- Would have to have the ability to bring it back for review at some point
- Has to be an ending point that you could commit to for us to have the right to bring you back to review

Dave Woodbury

- Would be glad to come back on 5-year basis for validation
- First 5 years – 1 approval
- Second – takes you to 10 years
- Third phase – 15-year build out

Rick Leif

- If 15-year window granted and not finished in that time, applicant would have to come back for further approval even if not substantial changed – would be condition of approval

Dave Woodbury

- Agree that if company is not finished in 15 year time frame, we will come back to Planning Board for refileing

Rick Leif

- Will expect to see what phase 1 looks like and what other phases will look like in the future

Sandy Brock

- Yes, key is parking
- Master utility in first phase
- All will come in a master utility room
- Won't have details for buildings
- For first phase will have everything – other buildings conceptual
- Won't have details of all the other buildings
- Want us to be on same page

Don Hewey

- Based on discussion and infrastructure included in phase 1, predisposed to say yes to this

George Pember

- Gut feeling was 10 years

Dave Woodbury

- 10 years is an issue for us

Kathy Joubert

- Their business plan is a 15-year process
- Any master plan is a 15-20 year window
- Staff thought 15 years was extremely realistic and would make perfect sense

Michelle Gillespie

- It says we're committed to build-up in that area

Don Hewey

- If all structures there for the full project, not going to be able to change it
- If all accounted for and it works, don't have a problem
- Variables are traffic and road

Bob Rosenberg

- What causes it to expire?

Kathy Joubert

- Would put a condition in decision

George Pember

- Is Goddard Road as wide as it's going to be?

Kathy Joubert

- If extended into Boundary Street, don't expect it would be wider than it is

Bob Rosenberg

- It's already three lanes wide

Sandy Brock

- Capacity is pretty high

Kathy Joubert

- Would say most likely Solomon Pond Road would have to be widened – between the light and the Hudson Street intersection
- Narrows at light heading towards Northborough

George Pember

- Also crosses a stream where it narrows
- Height of building regulated by bylaws?

Kathy Joubert

- Yes, 60 feet and that can be increased up to 80 feet
- For every foot in excess there shall be added 2 corresponding feet of width and depth

Rick Leif

- Agreement that we grant approval – they have 15 year window
- Once 15 years expired if it wasn't done, another future update could mean attaching changes/conditions to the plan
- A by-right project – doesn't require a permit
- Sounds like a good idea

Old/New Business

- Membership sheet signed for Registry of Deeds
- Official vote was taken to amend the contract for Community Opportunities Group by increasing the budget by \$3440.00 in order to cover additional subcommittee meetings.
- ZBA applications for August 28th and September 25th meetings were summarized by Town Planner

Comprehensive Zoning Subcommittee Review

Rick Leif

- Joint meeting of ZBA and Planning Board scheduled on August 28th for purpose of getting combined feedback/general feeling on Section 07-04

The Board members discussed the following items of Section 07-04:

- Discrepancies between chart and text
- Flow of new zoning – members generally liked it – makes sense and is easier to follow
- Table and definitions have to be carefully synchronized

- New beneficial uses brought into bylaw by consultant
- Need to make a difference between contractor yard and storage yard
- Conditions (“provided that”) taken out and moved into design/development standards
- Helpful for Subcommittee and Planning Board to send questions/comments to Judi or Kathy
- Goal for August 28th joint board meeting – to have both boards in agreement or present comments/questions
- In order to bring new zoning bylaw to 2008 town meeting, Boards will need to agree on the document

Michelle Gillespie

- Accessory apartments in residential A district will be allowed with special permit. What was rational for only that district – should be allowed in all residential districts?
- Signage for home occupations
- Difference between home personal service and home occupation – need clarification
- Restrictions for bed and breakfasts – need clarification
- Advertising – question on signs for home occupations – need clarification

Bob Rosenberg

- Uses not allowed – Industrial zone obnoxious uses not recognized – must be careful to define it, must be enforced

Kathy Joubert

- Past Planning Board worked with consultant and specifically focused on industrial districts
- IA and IC were merged into one district IA and created new set of uses allowed and permitted
- Community Development Plan – focused on residential and commercial
- Zoning Comprehensive Project is to examine all zoning districts and the entire zoning bylaw

Bob Rosenberg

- Subcommittee – have maybe gone too far in redefining industrial district
- Need to have complete package to send to Town Meeting – have work ahead of us
- Education use – not exempt under “services” – need clarification – means not being operated under definition of Department of Education
- Institutional use as hospital and hospital in industrial zone – inconsistency
- Need to be prepared and make a presentation at the joint meeting

Rick Leif

- Get feedback to Judi from rest of members
- May be some unintentional deletions and omissions
- Special Permit Granting Authority (SPGA): ZBA to do variances and Planning Board to do special permits and site plan
- Talk about politics surrounding who does what and territory grabbing
- Judi steering subcommittee: would make sense to have Planning Board as SPGA for non-residential areas – business and industrial where significant development going on
- Concern of ZBA Chairman and other members is ease of filing for applicant – should limit amount of times applicants need to come before town boards
- Other ZBA members leaning towards Planning Board as SPGA for all site plan

- Or Planning Board as SPGA across board and where variances required, applicants would file with ZBA and Planning Board would submit comments
- Compromise could be if applicant is requesting a variance and also needs a special permit and/or site plan review, applicant is shifted to ZBA for review of project. Could add a footnote stating that when variance involved, special permit moves to ZBA.

Bob Rosenberg

- Applicants will find a way to only go to ZBA and have entire application before ZBA and bypass Planning Board. People will apply for variances just to go to ZBA and not Planning Board

Kathy Joubert

- Variances not routinely given – will not stand up in court if appealed – nobody would apply for variance just to go to ZBA – would not risk their financing
- When we started this, wanted to make it so it wasn't difficult for people to do business in Northborough. Need a transparent process that is easy to follow for any applicant whether that be a homeowner or large industrial landowner

Don Hewey

- Part of rationale is that we are elected, not appointed – different make-up in this board than the other one and Planning Board meets twice a month

Kathy Joubert

- Planning Board can be elected or appointed in any town. Being one or the other does not make the board better or more productive
- ZBA would meet more than once if necessary
- Refer to Chapter 40A for responsibilities of Planning Board and ZBA
- Planning Board is much more about long-range planning – charged with master planning
- ZBA very specifically special permits, variances and appeals that are exceptions to the rules
- Applicant will go to the ends of earth to try to avoid a variance
- Criteria for a variance is almost impossible to meet
- Don't see any downside if in this community the ZBA ends up as SPGA in some cases
- Example – The Loop applicant applied for use variance and also asked to continue on for ZBA to do the special permits

Michelle Gillespie

- Agree with compromise Rick suggested

Rick Leif

- Board members need to prepare for August 28th joint meeting and send any questions or comments to Kathy and Judi before the meeting.

Meeting adjourned 10:35pm

Respectfully submitted,

Debbie Grampietro
 Planning, Engineering & ZBA