

STURBRIDGE ZONING BOARD OF APPEALS
MINUTES OF
WEDNESDAY, MARCH 9, 2016

Present: Elizabeth Banks
Margaret Cooney, Chair
Thomas Earls
Kevin Kelley, Clerk/Vice/Chair
Fidelis Onwubueke
Maryann Thorpe
Michael Young

Also Present: Diane M. Trapasso, Administrative Assistant
Judi Barrett, RKG Economic Planning & Real Estate, Consultant
Michael Andrade, Graves Engineering, Inc.
Robert Engler, SEB, LLC (40B Consultant)
Branden St. Laurent, NBM Realty
Nick St. Laurent, NBM Realty
Matthew St. Laurent, NBM Realty
Andy St. Laurent, NBM Realty
William Van Duzer, Fuss & O'Neill
Jennifer Conley, Conley Associates

The meeting was held at Center Office Building – Meeting Room – 301 Main Street.

Ms. Cooney opened the meeting at 6:30 PM.

The Board introduced themselves.

CONTINUATION OF THE PUBLIC HEARING – THE APPLICANT SEEKS A COMPREHENSIVE PERMIT UNDER M.G.L. CHAPTER 40B TO ALLOW THE CONSTRUCTION OF “FIVE LEAVES AT STURBRIDGE” A 103 UNIT APARTMENT COMPLEX TO BE LOCATED AT 152/158 MAIN STREET. THE SUBJECT PROPERTY IS OWNED BY NBM REALTY, LLC.

New Materials presented:

Sturbridge Fire Department – Chief Zinther – dated 2/18/2016 – 152 Main Street – Supplement information request

Conley Associates – dated 2/16/2016 – Re: Additional Traffic Information Five Leaves at Sturbridge

Memorandum Fuss & O'Neill – Re: Background Traffic Observations near Sturbridge Plaza on Main Street (Route 131) – dated 2/29/2016 – received 3/2/2016

Management Plan for Five Leaves at Sturbridge – 103 Unit Apartment Complex – NBM Realty, LLC – received 3/8/2016

Mr. Duzer of Fuss & O'Neill stated the segment of Main Street (Route 131) between the traffic signal at Sturbridge Plaza and Shepard Road experiences peak hour congestion. Concern was raised at the January 6, 2016 hearing regarding the scope of the traffic analysis for Five Leaves at Sturbridge development, which did not include this segment in the analysis. Background traffic observations were conducted to assess the potential impact of the proposed site traffic within this segment and to make a recommendation whether the segment should be included in the analysis.

Mr. Duzer stated that Conley Associates, Inc. estimates 29 weekday afternoon peak hour trips (19 southbound, 10 northbound) will travel through this segment. This represents a relatively minor 2% increase in peak hour traffic volumes. As described above, moderate congestion related to the signal was observed, but the queue clears within one or two cycles of the signal. Given that the queue and congestion isn't sustained through the entire hour, the minor trip increase from Five Leaves would not incur a noticeable change to the background traffic condition. Additional traffic analysis for this segment of Main Street is not recommended based on the observed traffic conditions.

Ms. Conley of Conley Associates stated that as requested during the public hearing, Conley Associates, Inc. contacted MassDOT staff. Conley Associates sent an email on January 15, 2016, transmitting the plans, traffic analysis, peer review letter and Conley's response to the peer review. Conley Associates requested MassDOT feedback on the plans and in particular the location of the proposed crosswalk as it had been a concern raised at the public hearing. Conley Associates requested a meeting to discuss the issues with MassDOT. Mr. Nabulsi, of MassDOT provided Conley Associates with comments without holding a meeting. These are the comments:

1. The District would like to see the two driveways entrances to be consolidated so that there is no conflict with the main entrance.
2. It is recommended that the right turn lane length be increased.
3. Who requested the crosswalk? Is it ADA compliant? Is there a landing on the other side of Route 131 and is it ADA compliant?

Conley Associates had requested clarification from MassDOT on item #1 as it is not clear which driveways they would like consolidated. Conley Associates informed MassDOT that the proponent does not control the motel and may not be able to eliminate driveways. Conley Associates will provide the Town with further information as it becomes available.

In response to item #2 the proponent will work to lengthen the right turn lane exiting the site as much as possible.

Conley Associates provided the responses to the MassDOT questions on item #3. MassDOT was less concerned with the crosswalk location and more concerned with ADA compliant connections on either side. The proponent is committed to providing an

ADA compliant sidewalk, and Conley Associates has assured MassDOT of that compliance

The Board had the following concerns, comments and questions:

- Placement of the Hamilton Inn sign hinders vision of oncoming vehicles
- Exit right turn only – Ms. Conley stated that the exit is shared for right and left turns
- Where will the school bus stop be located - out on Route 131 or inside the complex – Mr. Andrade stated that they still haven't had a meeting with the school department concerning the school bus stop – Mr. Andrade stated that usually meetings with the school happen after approval – Ms. Barrett stated that maybe you could have the conversation with the school now
- Building #1 too close to the road – does it have to be three stories – not enough green space
- Issue with the orientation of the buildings – visual impact from Route 131 – can emergency vehicles get to the open space area – Mr. Andrade stated that they can
- At a site visit in December it was noticed that there is a drop in the back of the open space area – Mr. Andrade stated that the area will be fenced in
- Will there be a storage building – Mr. Andrade stated that will be on site somewhere in the garage and the applicant doesn't foresee any other structures
- ZBA is limited in the decision making – will the project be more detrimental to the area – details are being addressed efficiently
- Concern with the flat roofs – snow removal from the roofs – Mr. Engler stated that there will be an Architectural Review meeting on March 16, 2016

Mr. Andrade stated after their meeting with the Fire Chief, the plans had been revised to add a fire lane for access to the rear of building #3. The surface of this fire lane will be grass and constructed with a GrassPave turf reinforcement system that is designed to provide structural support for fire equipment loads while maintaining a pervious surface. Chief Zinther has requested that we conduct an analysis for rescue of persons from the fourth floor balcony located furthest from the fire lane such that it can be accommodated with their new aerial ladder truck which is capable of a maximum ladder length of 100 feet.

Chief Zinther was satisfied with the revised plans.

Mr. Engler stated that “40Bs” have rules and regulations to follow to make a site safe. There are already unsafe conditions that exist that need to be enforced at the local level.

There were abutters present at the meeting and had the following comments, questions and concerns:

- Concerned about traffic using Fairview Park Road as a cut thru
- The Hamilton Inn sign hinders site

- Concern about the impact to the wetlands
- Concern about blasting – what kind of coverage will homeowners have – Mr. Andrade stated that if blasting takes place – there is a pre-blast survey – before – during – after – State Fire Marshall Office for the permits
- Too many people – too much of an impact for a small area
- Plowing of snow
- Sewer and water pressure
- Why is the Architectural Design meeting closed to the public – Ms. Barrett stated that it is not a Board meeting

Ms. Barrett stated that the Board has 180 days from the time you open the meeting which was November 18, 2015 to May 16, 2016.

Motion: Made by Mr. Young to continue the Public Hearing for Five Leaves at Sturbridge to April 6, 2016 @ 6:30 PM at Center Office Building.

2nd: Ms. Banks

Discussion: None

Vote: 7 – 0

CORRESPONDENCE

None

OLD/NEW BUSINESS

None

NEXT MEETING

March 16, 2016 @ 6:30 PM Center Office Building – regular ZBA meeting

April 6, 2016 – 40B - 6:30 PM Center Office Building

On a motion made by Mt. Young, seconded by Mr. Onwubueke, and voted unanimously, the meeting adjourned at 8:55 PM.