

Sutton Planning Board
Minutes
April 13, 2015

Approved _____

Present: R. Largess, S. Paul, W. Whittier, J. Anderson, M. Sanderson
Staff: Jen Hager, Planning Director

General Business:

Minutes:

Tabled to next meeting.

Form A Plans: None

Endorse Site Plan – Renewable Generation- 49 Worcester/Providence Turnpike

The Board reviewed supplemental landscaping that was added to the plans after an on-site meeting with the abutters, the applicant and their engineer, and the Planning Director. The Board noted they still reserve the right to add more screening if necessary post construction.

Motion: To endorse the site plans for Renewable Generation LLC at 49 Worcester Providence Turnpike dated 3/30/15, by W. Whittier

2nd: J. Anderson

Vote: 4-0-0

Correspondence/Other - None

Public Hearing (cont.) – Proposed Bylaw Changes

R. Largess re-read the hearing notice as it appeared in The Chronicle and re-opened the public hearing.

Attorney Mark Donahue was present representing the petitioner and potential project proponents Sutton Outlook Ventures LLC who owns the undeveloped balance of South Sutton Commerce Park. Karl Norwood and Jim Coull of Sutton Outlook Ventures LLC were present along with Joe Mendola, the Senior Vice President of NAI Norwood Group specializing in Self Storage facilities.

Attorney Donahue began by stating his clients have been trying to develop the final lot in Commerce Park, marketing it to many companies with no success. At this point it is fairly clear that the lot is not practical for a single use and therefore the petitioner would like to propose an amendment to the Zoning Bylaw that would allow a use that will serve as a catalyst for development of the final site but as a fairly innocuous use, will not inhibit further development of the balance of the site.

With respect to why this use is appropriate in the Office Light Industrial District, Attorney Donahue stated the use as they've framed it via the proposed definition is a quality use that is appropriate amongst the other uses allowed in the OLI District. The Town will benefit from real estate taxes for this type of structure that are comparable with existing structures within the OLI. While the use is not a big job creator, the Town benefits from a reduced impact on public services.

The use will not put children in the school system, it will not create traffic issues or excessive noise, and will rarely be in need of emergency services. This very benign use is preferable to other allowed uses in the OLI such as trucking terminals and building contractor's yards. It is a consistent use, if not a preferred use.

With respect to potential concerns with a proliferation of this type of facility "eating up" available OLI land, it was noted the use as framed requires a fairly high investment, and because Sutton and surrounds are rather low density, the market need will be met very quickly, likely in the one structure that the proponent will construct which is intended to be approximately 80,000 s.f. with 600 units. Additionally, the majority of other OLI land, particularly the land in north east Sutton does not have the visibility this use needs, and right now that area does not have the water capacity to serve this or any additional uses.

In terms of design, the petitioner has framed the definition of the use to require a more expensive two story minimum type of structure and because the use is to be allowed by special permit the Board has the ability, along with powers given via site plan review, to effectively shape the aesthetics of these structures to be more attractive and office like as opposed to industrial as they have effectively done in the remainder of South Sutton Commerce Park.

In response to questions about a potential project in Commerce Park. If the bylaw change passes, they would like to be through permitting by late summer and in construction no later than this fall.

W. Whittier stated he had no issues with the proposed bylaw changes.

M. Sanderson felt with the special permitting there were adequate safeguards to ensure quality development.

R. Largess felt the use was a "fit" for the District. He asked if this multiple story, internal access type of facility is designed for a different type of customer than the garage type storage units?

Joe Mendola, a storage expert with the development firm Norwood Group, stated this type of facility is definitely not the equivalent of a garage like other types of storage units. This facility will be very secure and climate controlled to protect valuable furniture and personal belongings.

R. Largess added he thinks this quiet use will be particularly attractive to abutters.

J. Anderson stated he initially had reservations about the use as the Town does not have much land available for business development, only about 7%, and this use will not produce many jobs. He was particularly worried that like solar farms, the use would eat up land otherwise better suited for uses that would produce more jobs. Given the information provided this evening he is comfortable that the use features some beneficial trade offs and is not likely to pop up everywhere. It appears, as defined, the structures will yield similar real estate taxes and the lack of jobs is a trade off for almost no impact on municipal services.

Mr. Mendola stressed that the usual market radius for this type of facility is 3-5 miles and 50,000 people and there is about only 38,000 people within 5 miles of Sutton, they have to go to about 7 miles to reach their numbers. Additionally, people usually don't want to go too far to store their belongings that they might need access to. So, once this facility goes in, it would take someone with "more money than brains" to propose and additional facility. It is likely this use will become a "one and done" use.

(S. Paul arrives)

J. Hager brought S. Paul up to speed by summarizing major points.

S. Paul asked if a facility could be built without public water? Mr. Mendola said anything is possible, but as he believes Code requires this type of structure to be sprinklered, that would be difficult and costly making it more unlikely. S. Paul pointed out that as envisioned, this type of facility could be re-used for a different use if need be.

Motion: To recommend Town Meeting approve the petitioned warrant article, M. Sanderson
2nd: W. Whittier
Vote: 5-0-0

The Planning Director reviewed the proposal to designate approximately 86 acres of land in and around Burnap Industrial Park on Route 146 south at the Millbury Town line as a Priority Development Site (PDS). This designation will give the Town priority for funding for infrastructure improvements. If Town Meeting approves the local designation, the Town will seek state designation jointly with the Town of Millbury who has already locally designated about equal acreage as a PDS abutting the land in Sutton. Water and sewer is available on the Millbury side although it will likely take some legislative action to allow these services to cross the town lines. Once designated as a State PDS, the area is also marketed on State business development sites. The Board agreed this was “good planning”.

Motion: To close the hearing, W. Whittier
2nd: J. Anderson
Vote: 4-0-0

Motion: To adjourn, W. Whittier
2nd: M. Sanderson
Vote: 5-0-0

Adjourned 7:50 P.M.