

Sutton Planning Board
Minutes
March 11, 2013

Approved _____

Present: W. Whittier, R. Largess, S. Paul, T. Connors, D. Moroney, J. Anderson
Staff: J. Hager, Planning Director

General Business:

Motion: To approve the minutes of 2/25/13, D. Moroney
2nd: T. Connors
Vote: 4-0-2, S. Paul and J. Anderson abstained as they were not present at this meeting.

Form A Plans:

71 W. Millbury Road – S. Lajoie reviewed the plan with the Board. It shows one new 4.22 a buildable lot being cut from a larger lot totaling 9.51 a. The new lot will have frontage on Griggs Road and the remaining 5.26 a. lot with house will retain its frontage along West Millbury Road.

Motion: To approve the Form A plan for Popham Family Trust dated 2/20/13 showing one new buildable lot on Griggs Road, R. Largess
2nd: D. Moroney
Vote: 6-0-0

Correspondence/Other:

West Side Road Status - The Planning Director reviewed a letter dated 2/12/13 with the Board. The letter summarizes constraints and alternatives with the newly approved west side connector road that runs parallel to Route 146 south between the Whitins Road/Main Street exit in Sutton and the Lackey Dam exit in Douglas. The roadway was designed to open up nearly 400 acres of industrial land for development in the two towns. S. Paul asked why these constraints weren't considered in the original design and approval process. J. Hager noted the Bedoin sequence of removal constraint only recently came to light, the Sutton archeological issue was known but until detailed engineering got underway it was not fully understood what a significant constraint and high cost item it could become, and the relocation of Pyne operations is only one of time and an alternative to this constraint would be developed only because the exercise will be undertaken for the other constraints. The Towns of Sutton and Douglas are working to obtain the additional funds to evaluate the cost of pursuing these alternatives which will expedite road construction.

Reaffirm Bridle Path Covenant Extension – J. Hager explained that the original extension the Board signed back in 2012 was lost and she asked the Board to vote to reaffirm the original vote.

Motion: To reaffirm the vote to extend the Bridle Path Covenant originally taken on 9/20/12,
R. Largess
2nd: D. Moroney
Vote: 6-0-0

Potential Bylaw change for school signage – The Board tabled this discussion to the end of the meeting in order to proceed with scheduled items.

Public Hearing (Cont.) – South Town Crossing – 171 Worcester Providence Turnpike

Unibank Signage - Dave Glispin of Sunshine sign had requested a brief meeting with the Board relative to the signage for Unibank within this plaza. The Board decided to hear this issue before the overall project hearing re-commenced.

Mr. Glispin stated his client would like more signs that the bylaw allows. The bylaw allows up to two advertising signs and only one can be freestanding. He showed the Board renderings of the free standing sign which they propose as well as a building rendering showing the building mounted signage they would like to install. Unibank would like to have a sign over their main entrance and also a sign on the wall of three of the other sides of the building for visual exposure from these directions, particularly from users inside the plaza.

J. Hager noted the bylaw is clear on what is permitted, what is not clear is if relief can be legally sought from this provision. Can a variance be obtained for the number of allowed signs or is this in effect a use variance which is illegal in Sutton?

Mr. Glispin added that an additional concern is that if his client installs the free standing sign they have designed; technically they cannot have a panel on the project's pylon sign along Route 146.

R. Largess noted the sign bylaw and the Route 146 overlay bylaw were enacted to ensure that Sutton would not begin to look like the Spags section of Route 9 where there is so much signage that it is all a blur. Any decision the Board makes really sets a precedent. He feels two signs are enough.

D. Moroney noted the bylaw is clear on a maximum of two signs.

S. Paul said he is sympathetic to the applicants desire to have exposure from the back and front of the building in this case but that the bylaw clearly didn't anticipate this particular type of situation.

J. Anderson and T. Connors concurred with D. Moroney that the bylaw is clear that the maximum is two signs.

The Board expressed that they are not necessarily opposed to at least a portion of Mr. Glispin's argument, but that they are bound by the bylaw. They confirmed they feel that increasing the number of signs is not a dimensional change it is allowing a use which would not otherwise be allowed, therefore a variance is not applicable.

J. Hager noted the applicant's counsel has every right to put forth an alternative argument which the Board can then refer to Counsel for opinion at the applicant's expense. The majority of the Board was firm in their belief that a variance would not be applicable, but agreed they would likely refer the matter to Counsel if the applicant pays for the request.

It was noted variances had been granted for the previous project and that a package is being prepared for similar variance requests which could include this signage. P. Doherty showed the Board various view shed renderings and expressed his belief that a variance would be applicable here given the unique constraints.

Overall Project - Patrick Doherty of Midstate Engineering was present on behalf of the applicant. Also present were Attorney Brodeur, Eric Bazette, P.E. and Owner, Michael O'Brien.

Mr. Doherty noted the project team met with MassDOT again, adjusted their design further, and is awaiting review and approval of their final off site drawings. They have received correspondence from MEPA noting no further review is necessary. They have also received correspondence from Wilkinsonville Water stating they will provide the water requested for the project.

Mr. Doherty explained the main issue with MassDOT was the potential for traffic exiting the site onto Route 146 north conflicting, or weaving, with traffic pulling into the deceleration lane for Pleasant Valley Road. They have adjusted their exit to a nearly ninety degree stop, so exiting traffic will pull directly out into travel lanes as opposed to sliding into what is the deceleration lane for PV Road. Mr. Doherty also reviewed the addition of lanes along Boston Road noting this will provide adequate lanes to tie into any future curb cuts and lane additions by Aggregate for development of their site.

W. Whittier asked about the truck route within the site noting the circulation space to the south of the grocery store is very tight.

Mr. Doherty showed the truck route off Boston Road and approaching the grocery from the north with an ample area for trucks to turn around behind the building so they would not be traveling along the south of the building and then having to pass in front of the store which the store does not allow.

R. Largess asked what the time frame will be for start of building. The proponent confirmed they hope to start this summer.

S. Paul asked for a more thorough description of travel from Central Pike up to and past the site. Mr. Doherty explained how this will occur.

D. Moroney had some concerns with the volume of traffic heading east on Boston Road and possible stacking issues.

J. Anderson had some concerns about the traffic along Pleasant Valley Road particularly at its intersection with Boston Road.

Jeff Walsh of Graves Engineering, the Town's consulting engineer, explained the number of lanes planned for Boston Road.

Chris Contois of 85 Boston Road had major concerns with traffic along Boston Road and how it will affect travel as well as the sound it will produce and its effect on their current way of living.

R. Nunnemacher of 24 Singletary Avenue asked if the pavement width will be increased on Pleasant Valley Road. It was noted any changes to Pleasant Valley are part of MassDOT's project. J. Hager stated there will be geometry changes at both ends of the road, culvert improvements, and resurfacing but she did not know if the road would be widened.

R. Largess asked what purpose Pleasant Valley Road serves other than access to the soccer fields? It was noted this roadway will now carry all travelers that wanted to go west on Boston Road from the intersection as north bound left turns are being eliminated at this intersection. R. Largess noted it truly is time for the flyover (grade separated intersection at Boston Road and Route 146 – Boston Road goes up and over the highway) to occur and perhaps we should just fix the intersection once and correctly.

S. Paul asked about traffic studies. It was noted two traffic studies have been done by different entities and both are consistent in their numbers and suggested mitigation. The studies do not say the changes will eliminate backups, they say the changes will allow the roadways with this new traffic to operate with about half the backups currently experienced.

W. Whittier asked if future plans for the flyover would cause more changes at the project entrance. P. Doherty said that project will not change anything at their entrance.

James Renaud of 13 Marble road reaffirmed concerns about Pleasant Valley Road. J. Hager noted there were many public meetings relative to the roadway changes MassDOT is about to commence, but if the Board thinks it will help, she will request one of MassDOT's engineers be present at the next Board meeting to take any questions although this will likely not change the design which is about to go out to bid. Jeff Walsh overviewed the changes proposed by MassDOT.

Jim Renaud of 85 Boston Road asked if a 5 way intersection with the project driveway along Boston Road is plausible. This land is not owned by the proponent and this type of configuration would actual cause more concerns.

J. Hager summarized the applicant will provide off site roadway plans for their mitigation, architectural and signage drawings, revised site plans, and a point by point written response to comments for the next meeting.

Motion: To continue the hearing to March 25, 2013 at 7:45 PM, R. Largess
2nd: D. Moroney
Vote: 6-0-0

Potential Bylaw change for school signage – The Board reviewed an e-mail dated March 11, 2013 and proposed bylaw change aimed at allowing an LED changeable message sign at the school complex on Boston Road.

The Lions Club has offered to donate the sign which would allow staff to change this message from inside the building. The sign would provide messages such as graduation dates and other school to community announcements.

The Chairman noted there is as similar sign at Uxbridge High and it is hideous. The majority of the Board felt that electronic signs such as this, and internally illuminated signs in general do not belong in the residential districts. They will not sponsor or support this type of change. They are happy the Lions Club is so supportive and suggested a similar sign inside the lobby of one of the schools. The majority of the Board is not opposed to manual message board signs for school use to keep the community informed but was adamant that what is proposed is going backwards.

Motion: To adjourn, D. Moroney
2nd: R. Largess
Vote: 6-0-0

Adjourned 8:38 PM