

**MINUTES OF PUBLIC HEARING
HELD BY THE PLANNING AND ZONING COMMISSION
OCTOBER 7, 2013**

ROLL CALL:

Members Present: Eric Prause, Chair
Andy Kidd, Vice Chair
Horace Brown, Secretary
Michael Stebe
Chirag Thaker

Alternates: Julian Stoppelman

Absent: Susan Shanbaum

Also Present: Mark Pellegrini, Director of Planning
Renata Bertotti, Senior Planner
Matthew Bordeaux, Environmental Planner
and Wetlands Agent
Ginger MacHattie, Recording Secretary

The Chairman opened the Public Hearing at 7:06 p.m. The Secretary read the legal notice for the application when the call was made.

SHOPPES AT BUCKLAND HILLS, LLC – for development of a restaurant and associated parking at 90, 96, 98, 100 & 102 Buckland Hills Drive, CUD zone – CUD Preliminary Plan of Development (2013-050)

Chairman Prause noted a typo in the legal notice. This item was advertised as being 25,400 sq. ft. but is actually 26,400 sq. ft.

Attorney James Connor spoke on behalf of the applicant, Shoppes at Buckland Hills, LLC. The applicant requested a waiver to allow the concurrent processing of the applications for the modification of the CUD preliminary site development plan and a CUD final site development plan for 90, 96, 98, 100, & 102 Buckland Hills Drive to facilitate the construction of a Dave & Busters Restaurant.

It has been nearly ten years since the last revision of the CUD preliminary site plan for Buckland Hills. At that time, 2004, the Commission approved use group changes for some of the lots around the shopping center Ring Road from Use Group 1 to Use Group 4, which allows free-standing restaurants. Around that time period, three free-standing restaurants were built. In addition, two generic 7,500 sq. ft. restaurants were shown on the site plans as placeholders on the parcels where the applicant now proposes to build the Dave & Busters Restaurant, which will contain approximately 26,400 sq. ft. of space. In the previously approved CUD preliminary site plan, which Attorney Connor displayed, the lots covered by 90, 96, 98, 100 & 102 Buckland Hills Drive are located in the area referred to as land use area B. On the next slide he displayed, the proposed footprint of the proposed Dave & Buster's Restaurant was displayed. During the initial discussions with Town staff concerning Dave & Buster's, the unique eat, drink, play concept, including the overall size of the building and the amount of interior space devoted to the

use of interactive entertainment was discussed and a decision was made that this location should once again be designated Use Group 1. He listed the uses allowed within this use group and noted that Dave & Buster's will not require a special exception. The building will be located next to the Market Grille Restaurant.

Corey Garro, P.E., oriented Commissioners to the existing conditions map. Lots 14, 15, 16, 17, and 19 are involved in this proposal. To the north is the Market Grille Restaurant and Buckland Hills Drive. To the east is Ring Road and the mall proper. To the south is an empty lot and to the west is lot 19 and Home Depot. The subject site drains east to west and is mostly an open, grassy lot with an existing pedestrian path. Market Grille has a full service driveway, which he pointed out.

Mr. Garro displayed the proposed site plan. The proposed building is 26,400 sq. ft. with 279 parking spaces, including 7 handicapped spaces. There will be two drives servicing the facility. One will be right in, right out only due to its proximity to an intersection. The drive to the south will be a full-service driveway. In the final condition, the driveways will be available to the Market Grille. There will be internal connections to the Market Grille at both the upper and lower drive, providing for smooth access. Several islands are planned to break up parking and to channel traffic around the site. The existing pedestrian path will be relocated to the westerly portion of the parking area. A retaining wall will be built to minimize the grading, as well as a fence along that wall. The guiderail will continue from where it stops now around the site to the south of the retaining wall, where it is no longer required. A proposed crosswalk will connect to the existing sidewalk system to the north on North Magazine Road.

Utilities are available, including water, power, gas, domestic, fire, and irrigation water lines. An additional fire hydrant will be placed in the southwest corner. Telephone and cable is available. The sanitary line will be extended from the Market Grille line and will include grease traps.

Several catch basins and manholes will be placed around the building, outletting into the Market Grille drainage system. Another outlet will be introduced, paralleling the Market Grille system. From that point on, the system will be upgraded. Some of the channel material there now is undermined and falling apart. Scour holes will be introduced to minimize erosion. This is the area where impact to existing wetlands is expected. He expects it to be .009 acres of impact due to the construction of a scour hole. Also .086 acres of the upland review area will be impacted in order to upgrade the system. Hydrodynamic separators were pointed out. The roof system is considered clean water and will not be tied into the hydrodynamic separators. Mr. Garro said the short term disturbance will become a long term improvement to the wetlands in the end.

Mr. Garro displayed the erosion control plan, which includes construction entrance pads, silt fencing, silt sacks, scour holes, an engineered channel at the outlet location, erosion control matting along the slopes and hay bale dams along the inlets to the system during construction.

The schedule for construction is from the fall of 2013 to the fall of 2014. It is expected to be completed in two phases. The existing traffic to the Market Grille will be maintained during the first phase. All work will be done in the southwestern portion of the site. During phase two, the work will shift over and the traffic for Market Grille will be utilizing a paved pathway. Phase one construction will take place during the fall and winter of 2013 and will be concentrated in the pad area. In the spring, work will be completed on berms and walls. In May or June of 2014, phase two work will begin.

Mr. Garro reviewed the landscaping plan, with emphasis on introducing native species, requiring low maintenance. Approximately 48 trees and 576 shrubs will be planted along with perennials and ground cover. Three types of turf will be used. The total effect of the final landscaping will provide an increase in open space of about one-half acre.

An intensive traffic study was completed and there will not be adverse impact to any intersections around the site.

Michelle Wright, Project Manager, gave Commissioners an overview of Dave & Buster's Restaurant. It was founded in Dallas, TX in December of 1982 and has a successful track record in the restaurant industry. It is a full-service restaurant and also provides an extensive assortment of interactive entertainment. It is currently located in 25 states across the U.S.

Tom Smicklas, Architect, displayed a slide with a site plan and reviewed the floor plan. Elevations were displayed showing a single story building. Some of the materials were listed. Bright, fun colors were incorporated to represent what is going on inside. The second elevation is the main entry with the large canopy. He displayed some three-dimensional drawings of the main entry and views around the building representing the feel and shape of the building. Both day and night views were displayed. Mr. Smicklas submitted a material board to Commissioners.

In response to a question from Mr. Prause, Mr. Garro said the traffic study compared existing use to the proposed use. There will be no impact with the addition of the new restaurant.

Mr. Brown said it is unfortunate that they are throwing away one of the finest views in Manchester. The building faces in entirely the opposite direction.

In response to a question from Mr. Kidd, Ms. Bertotti said the Town's Traffic Engineer concurred with the traffic study finding; he had no outstanding comments.

Mr. Kidd commented that the exterior has a pretty vivid paint color scheme and wondered if there are any variations available. In a recent application from Home Depot, the Commission curtailed their use of orange and this seems to have even more orange.

Mr. Smicklas said what was presented is Dave & Buster's brand and new marketing scheme. It can be arranged in a different manner but at the end of the day, this is their color palette.

Mr. Stebe noted the ring of lights around the full roofline and the additional flood lights. He wasn't sure that fit in with the other buildings in the area. He appreciates the continuity of the branding but is concerned about the lighting. He asked if there is lighting in the rear, or on the western edge.

Mr. Smicklas said the LED fixtures provide a blue wash, which was illustrated in the three-dimensional computer design. The light is oriented toward the mall and limited on the backside of the building. There are parking lights as well.

Mr. Brown also brought up the recent experience with Home Depot and its proposed extended use of orange. Home Depot was very cooperative.

In response to a question from Mr. Prause, Mr. Smicklas explained that the walls that jut out are called fins. One hides the trash yard and the other is to even out the look of the building. Mr. Prause expressed concern about so much white facing west. He would like the applicant to think of a way to keep it more subtle.

Mr. Prause asked if any member of the public wished to speak either in favor of or in opposition to this application. No member of the public came forward at this time.

Ms. Bertotti reviewed Town staff comments, which were minor and technical in nature.

In response to a question from Mr. Stebe, Mr. Smicklas said the arcade area is 10,000 square feet, the dining area is 3,000 square feet, and the bar area is 1,500 square feet. The back of the house uses about one-third of the building's space.

In response to a question from Mr. Brown, Mr. Pellegrini said only excavation could begin without approval.

Ms. Wright said Dave & Buster's would not be comfortable starting construction without approvals. The interior and exterior are intimately related to each other. She noted the objection to the white wall and pointed out that the Fairfield Inn is primarily white. Dave & Buster's has chosen colors reflecting the neighboring buildings.

Mr. Thaker said this proposal is for one of the most prominent sites in the area. When the building was designed, it does not seem that the architect took orientation of the building and the site into consideration. He is concerned that the back of the building is facing Hartford. He thinks the design could have been done differently to use the potential of the site.

Mr. Kidd said this is a cookie cutter design. He wondered if the applicant actually came up with the color scheme to match the hotel or if that just happened. He asked if there are any other choices for keeping in line with the surroundings.

Ms. Wright said she was in town months ago taking photographs of the mall, adjoining buildings, the hotel, and surrounding streets. That info was also conveyed to the architect. It was their finding that the color palette for Dave & Buster's was compatible with the surrounding businesses. The majority of businesses have what is called "trade dress" which provides customers immediate recognition.

The public hearing on this application was closed at 8:31 p.m.

NOTICE: A DIGITAL RECORDING OF THIS PUBLIC HEARING CAN BE HEARD IN THE PLANNING DEPARTMENT.