

**MINUTES OF PUBLIC HEARING
HELD BY THE PLANNING AND ZONING COMMISSION
FEBRUARY 19, 2014**

ROLL CALL:

Members Present: Eric Prause, Chair
Andy Kidd, Vice Chair
Horace Brown, Secretary

Alternates: Julian Stoppelman (sitting)
Donald Palmer (sitting)

Absent: Michael Stebe
Chirag Thaker
Susan Shanbaum

Also Present: Mark Pellegrini, Director of Planning
Renata Bertotti, Senior Planner
James Mayer, Traffic Engineer
Ginger MacHattie, Recording Secretary

The Chairman opened the Public Hearing at 7:08 p.m.

CUMBERLAND FARMS, INC. – request a special exception for a gasoline service station and a convenience store at 271 & 275 Main Street and 13 Middle Turnpike East, Business II and Design Overlay zones – Special Exception (2013-078)

Mr. Prause said there were some outstanding questions regarding traffic. The Town’s Traffic Engineer, Jim Mayer, is here to answer any questions the Commission members may have.

In response to a question from Mr. Stoppelman, Mr. Mayer said the applicant requested two-way traffic for both curb cuts and noted that it may be difficult to take a left turn out of the Main Street driveway during peak hours. The applicant’s comment is that drivers would quickly learn to go to the other driveway. Mr. Mayer suggested that if the Commission is concerned about restricting turns, it could review the situation in about a year.

In response to questions from Mr. Prause, Mr. Mayer said the accidents in the area are predominantly rear-end collisions. That is common when there is a lot of queuing. The sign in the Walgreen’s parking lot saying “no left turns” seems to have been effective; there have been no accidents there for the last three years.

In response to a question from Mr. Stoppelman, Mr. Pellegrini said it is Mr. Mayer’s proposal that the site be monitored for one year from its opening. If desired, the Commission can impose a condition of no left turn onto Main Street if it sees the need to do so after one year of operation.

Derek Hugg, the applicant’s traffic engineer, said he agrees with Mr. Mayer for the most part. The majority of the accidents in the street are rear-end type collisions. There have also been several crashes in the Walgreen’s parking lot, which are included in the report. The applicant did

have preliminary discussions with the State's Department of Transportation, which did not seem to be in favor of restricting left turns.

In response to a question from Mr. Palmer, Mr. Hugg said most of the traffic will be pass-by traffic. Currently about 12,000 cars per day go through this area. The traffic estimates add about 5% more traffic than already there; however, he asserted that this will not be adding that many trips to the street. The increase in traffic will be significantly less than 5%.

In response to a question from Mr. Palmer, Mr. Mayer said standards predict 20 customers per gas pump in a peak hour. Out of those 80 customers, one-third would be making a deliberate trip.

In response to a question from Mr. Prause, Mr. Mayer said the Town controls the bus stop locations but he doesn't think the bus stops are an issue. There has only been one incident in this location.

In response to a question from Mr. Prause, Mr. Hugg said fuel deliveries would be in off-peak hours; either early mornings or late evenings.

In response to a question from Mr. Kidd, Mr. Mayer reviewed the three items in his memorandum to Renata Bertotti, dated January 29, 2014. They include the property transfer to the Town to improve turning radius in the future, the applicant's discussion with DOT about extending the southbound turning lane, and the shrubs on the Walgreen's property.

In response to a question from Mr. Palmer, Mr. Mayer explained that if the Town owns the property on the corner, it will not be built on. Equipment can eventually be relocated but there is nothing planned for the immediate future.

Mr. Pellegrini added that it is not Mr. Mayer's recommendation to widen the intersection at this time. It is part of a future improvement project.

Mr. Prause asked if any member of the public wished to speak either in favor of or in opposition to this application.

Ms. Bertotti said the Planning Office received a letter from Messier and Associates, which she read into the record. It expressed concerns regarding the driveway on Main Street, especially during the afternoon and early evening. With unrestricted turning both north and south, there is the potential to cause additional traffic back-up.

Mr. Stoppelman said traffic making a left turn southbound onto Main Street will have a difficult time. He would like to include monitoring and observation of traffic flow for those four blocks in a condition of approval.

The Chairman closed the Public Hearing portion of the meeting at 7:52 p.m.

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