

**MINUTES OF PUBLIC HEARING  
HELD BY THE PLANNING AND ZONING COMMISSION  
JULY 21, 2014**

**ROLL CALL:**

Members Present: Eric Prause, Chair  
Andy Kidd, Vice Chair  
Horace Brown, Secretary  
Michael Stebe  
Susan Shanbaum

Alternates: Julian Stoppelman (Sitting for 2014-039,  
040 in place of Mr. Brown)

Teresa Ike

Absent: Donald Palmer

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

The Chairman opened the Public Hearing at 7:05 p.m. The Secretary read the legal notice for the application when the call was made.

MCDONALD'S USA, LLC – (Continued from July 7, 2014) Requesting a Special Exception under Article II Section 24.02.01 (d) for a restaurant with drive-through window at 184-188 Spencer Street, GB zone – Special Exception (2014-039)

Attorney Penny explained that this is a special exception application for 184-188 Spencer Street, which is located at the south east corner of the intersection of Spencer Street and Hillstown Road. The site is 1.24 acres with 185 feet of frontage on Spencer Street and 200 feet of frontage on Hillstown Road. Public water and sewer are available. The property is zoned General Business and contains no wetlands or watercourses. A restaurant is permitted at this site but a drive-through window needs a special exception approval. The average daily traffic on Spencer Street is 15,500 trips per day and on Hillstown Road, 5,300 trips per day.

The proposed building will be 4,300 square feet with a drive-through window. It will be open 24 hours per day, seven days per week. There will be 56 parking spaces with a maximum of 20-30 employees on site at a time. Most employees live close by and do not drive to work. Peak hours for McDonald's are breakfast and lunch on weekdays, and the weekend. The peak of Manchester Community College's traffic is mid-afternoon, which does not coincide with the peak hours of McDonald's. McDonald's has addressed concerns raised by neighbors and the Town regarding traffic and modified its plan.

Michelle Carlson, P.E., said she took a look at the access points based on the concerns expressed at the last meeting. Previously the plan was for full access at Spencer Street and a right in/right out on Hillstown Road. Jim Mayer was concerned with the Spencer Street traffic. The plan was modified to move the Spencer Street access point further from Dr. Bottaro's driveway. The

Spencer Street access driveway will be a full in and a right out only. The Hillstown Road access driveway will have a full out but no left-in turn.

The detention basin has been decreased in size and is 5 feet further toward Hillstown Road. It will be screened by existing cedars and pines along the Hillstown Road, which together with the steep slope block it from the view. The Spencer Street driveway was placed further away from the Dunkin Donuts driveway.

Ms. Carlson displayed an exhibit showing vehicle trip data. The A.M. weekday peak will add 80 new cars or 160 vehicle trips, the P.M. peak will add 58 vehicles, or 116 vehicle trips, and the Saturday midday peak will add 104 vehicles or 208 vehicle trips. McDonald's is not a high traffic generator as it services vehicles already on the road in the area. The Hillstown Road/Spencer Street intersection functions at a level of service "E" during the P.M. peak and a level of service "C" during the Saturday peak. Jim Mayer has agreed that a level of service "C" or "D" is acceptable for a commercial driveway. When Wal-Mart is added, the level of service will drop to an "F" during the P.M. peak and a "C" during the Saturday peak. However, when the widening of Hillstown Road takes place, the level of service will then be a "D" during the P.M. peak and a "C" during the Saturday peak.

Ms. Carlson relayed that she met with Jim Mayer, who did some traffic counting at Dunkin Donuts. At its peak there are 280 trip generations.

In response to questions from Mr. Prause, Ms. Carlson said a sign saying, "Do Not Block" will be placed on Hillstown Road before the McDonald's driveway. Any delay to traffic will be on the McDonald's site and only for a small duration of time. There is no siteline issue with the driveway. When the road is widened, the left turn only lane will not go beyond the McDonald's driveway so cars will still only be crossing one lane of traffic. There will be signage inside the McDonald's driveway at the Spencer Street exit as well.

Yu Yung Ling, Traffic Engineer, said the driveway configuration will prohibit left turning onto Spencer Street. There will be signage for no left turns as well.

In response to a question from Mr. Brown, Ms. Carlson said people leaving McDonald's on Hillstown Road will have to wait for a gap in traffic. Under normal conditions there is no backup.

In response to questions from Ms. Shanbaum, Ms. Carlson said the detention basin is 3 feet deep at its deepest point. There will be a chain link fence around it for safety reasons.

Mr. Pellegrini referred to a memorandum from Jim Mayer, Traffic Engineer, dated July 18, 2014. The access/egress on Spencer Street as revised is expected to operate well. The Hillstown Road will operate at an acceptable level of service. He recommended the "Do Not Block" sign that Ms. Carlson referred to earlier. There will be a higher than average delay during peak hours of college traffic.

Ms. Bertotti said there are three staff comments remaining that are technical in nature and can be addressed on the final plans. The office received an e-mail from Dr. Bottaro who reviewed the revised plans and is in agreement with the changes. He continues to worry about the traffic on Hillstown Road.

In response to a question from Mr. Kidd, Mr. Pellegrini said he believes both the left turn lane and the sidewalk are approved and in line for funding. The Engineering Division is in the preliminary design stage of the road widening.

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

Sandy Viardi, 22 Star Farms, asked what the peak hours actually are.

Martin Ritter, 58 Star Farms, asked about traffic going south on Hillstown Road and turning into McDonald's. He doesn't think people will grant the right of way and we will see more accidents as a result. There has been discussion about the acceptable level of service, but he questioned the acceptable level of accidents and injuries. These will certainly increase. He does not think people will obey the "Do Not Block" sign on Hillstown Road. He noted the islands on the plan that are referred to as corrugated, mountable islands. He thinks that means people can drive over them and would like to see something a little more insurmountable. Mr. Ritter suggested widening the road and then reevaluating this application.

Gail Gretsmocker, 68 Star Farms, is concerned that there will not be a traffic light at the new restaurant. She noted the number of accidents that occur at Wendy's just down the street and said she is very concerned. It's not just students that use Hillstown Road, but also people coming into Manchester from Glastonbury.

Marianne Ritter, 58 Star Farms, agrees with the previous speaker's comments. She is concerned about people in the vehicles, including school buses. The left turn is difficult. She watches people trying to exit Manchester Community College; it is not fun. The bridge freezes very quickly in winter; it could be very bad with this additional driveway.

Colleen Callahan, 68 Star Farms, said she has waited ten minutes in traffic to get down Hillstown Road to Spencer Street at times. The cars coming out of the college have no patience. There was recently a horrific accident at this same intersection and now we will be adding McDonald's to that. Kids have no patience and do not obey the traffic laws. She suggested McDonald's choose another property along Spencer Street and suggested several. At this intersection there is already a Shop Rite; adding McDonald's and then a Wal-Mart will be a disaster. This is too much traffic for this area.

Scott Williams said he grew up on this corner and remembers when a car went through the house that has now been demolished. Nobody has mentioned the traffic coming out of the Shop Rite parking lot. He suggested people go observe the area. The idea that people will obey the traffic signs is absurd.

Ms. Callahan said she agrees with Mr. Williams about the Shop Rite traffic. She can never take a left out of Shop Rite.

Ms. Ritter, on the subject of Shop Rite traffic, said it is nice to stop and let someone out of that driveway, but she doesn't stop for fear of someone rear ending her as they come whipping around the corner behind her.

Ms. Viardi said that unless one lives near there they have no idea of the speed with which people travel on Hillstown Road. There was a horrific accident in the fall that shook houses in the

neighborhoods. Accidents are going to happen and people that live nearby see it day in and day out. She predicted that a car will end up in the detention basin.

Yu Yung Ling, Traffic Engineer, responded to public comment. Peak hours are 7:00 to 8:00 A.M., 3:00 to 5:00 P.M. and Saturday 12:00 P.M. to 2:00 P.M. The speeding on Hillstown Road is a police enforcement issue. The average wait time is about 35 seconds per vehicle.

In response to a question from Mr. Prause, Ms. Carlson said the exit from the Shop Rite site is 125 feet to the north of the proposed McDonald's driveway.

Attorney Penny said the applicant submitted three traffic reports for this proposal. The first paralleled the Wal-Mart report and focused on the P.M. peak traffic. The Town's Traffic Engineer said McDonald's is a breakfast operation and the A.M. peak should be studied as well, so the applicant did this and submitted the A.M. peak information to the Town. The third study was also done in response to the Town's Traffic Engineer. This report was done in the last two weeks by adding 40 vehicles to the driveway on Hillstown Road as requested by the Traffic Engineer. Every study consistently established that McDonald's is not a large traffic generator, particularly during the P.M. peak hours. The streets at this intersection will continue to operate at an acceptable level of service. The professionals are consistent in saying that the streets and intersection will function safely and adequately. Secondly, everyone agrees that commercial traffic is necessary to support a commercial corridor and commercial enterprises. It was a failure of the State to address problems created by enlarging its campus and intentionally moving traffic off local roads to Hillstown Road to get to the interstate.

The public hearing on this application was closed.

TOWN OF MANCHESTER PLANNING AND ZONING COMMISSION – to delete Article II Section 9.14.02 (f)(8) of the zoning regulations from Article II, and insert it in Article IV as a new section (Section 23); to revise Article IV Section 23.02.05 to delete the requirement that railings and fences of sidewalk cafes must be removed and stored indoors when the sidewalk café is not in operation; and to revise Article IV Section 23.03.03 to allow the Town to remove sidewalk cafes for snow removal – Zoning Regulation Amendment (2014-051).

Mr. Pellegrini explained that in 1993 the Planning and Zoning regulations allowed sidewalk cafés on public sidewalks to encourage outdoor dining in certain neighborhoods. Since the regulation was adopted in the Downtown District, several operations set up outdoor dining. One owner has requested the ability to place a more substantial barrier that will be more attractive and more secure, but not as easy to put up and take down. The Downtown District's only concern was for snow removal but that will not be a problem. Most restaurants don't serve outdoors when the snow flies. The Department of Public Works has reviewed the changes and has no concerns.

Ms. Bertotti said Town staff reviewed the application and has no outstanding comments.

In response to a question from Mr. Prause, Mr. Pellegrini said the decision to prohibit operation will be made by the Town of Manchester. If there are emergency conditions or anticipated severe snow, the Department of Public Works would advise these businesses not to operate outdoors.

Mr. Prause asked if any member of the public wished to comment either in favor of or in

opposition to this application. No member of the public came forward at this time.

The Chairman closed the Public Hearing portion of the meeting at 8:45 p.m.

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