

**MINUTES OF BUSINESS MEETING  
HELD BY THE PLANNING AND ZONING COMMISSION  
FEBRUARY 20, 2019**

**ROLL CALL:**

Members Present: Eric Prause, Chairman  
Patrick Kennedy, Vice Chairman  
Timothy Bergin  
Jessica Scorso

Alternate Member Sitting: Teresa Ike

Alternates: Julian Stoppelman  
Charles Sabia

Absent: Michael Stebe, Secretary

Also Present: Matthew Bordeaux, Senior Planner  
Gary Anderson, Director of Planning &  
Economic Development  
Katie Williford, Administrative Secretary

Time Convened: 7:03 P.M.

**NEW BUSINESS:**

HIGHLAND MEETING ROOM, INC. – To relocate the existing parking, create a one-way internal traffic flow, and expand a portion of the existing building at 127 and 133 Highland Street. – Erosion and Sedimentation Control Plan (2018-121); Special Exception Modification (2018-122)

Mr. James Waskey, Porter Street, Manchester, a member of the congregation, said the applicant came before the Commission in July 2013 for a pre-application review. He described challenges of the site, including poor traffic flow, insufficient parking, minimal indoor gathering or activity space, and signs of wear to the building. The Commission's recommendation in 2013 to locate the parking to the rear of the structure has been accommodated in this proposal, Mr. Waskey stated. A lot line revision was done between 127 and 133 Highland Street in order to have sufficient space for the parking. There will be a separate entrance and exit. An addition on the front of the building will give it a facelift as well as adding a new sanctuary area, which will allow the current building to be used as an entryway, foyer, and activity space. He noted that the applicant also needs a waiver of Art. II Sec. 1.00.02(e)(4) to allow a privacy fence in lieu of the required 8 ft. landscaped buffer.

Mr. Mark Reynolds, Professional Engineer, described the neighboring properties and showed the existing layout of the site. He explained that the lot lines have been modified to reduce the size of 127 Highland Street and increase 133 Highland Street. The site currently has parking in front with no traffic flow, he said, and the proposal is to have one-way flow. The reason for proposing stockade fence in lieu of the 8 ft. landscaped buffer is because of space limitations on the sides of the narrow lot, Mr. Reynolds explained. Regarding drainage, he said everything is designed to

slope from the front toward the rear and the proposal includes a catch basin and oil water separator with an infiltration bed underneath the parking lot. Soils on the site are very favorable so, with a proper oil water separator, drainage requirements will be met without any direct runoff to neighbors, Mr. Reynolds said. The existing utilities are water and sewer, which will not change; the only proposed change is the addition of a gas line along the right side of the building. Regarding erosion and sedimentation control, he stated that the plan is to completely encircle the property with silt fence and provide silt fence hay bale protection around the catch basin inlet. He displayed a rendering and described the proposed landscaping. The revised entrance includes a handicap ramp up to the sidewalk, and the end of the existing building will be boxed out into a covered porch area, Mr. Reynolds said. The lot line revision was approved and filed on the land records, he said. Comments from staff on the site plan have come down to adding notes to the plan; no further substantive changes are needed.

In response to questions from Mr. Prause, Mr. Reynolds stated that the existing stockade fence on the east side of the property is owned by the church, and the intent is to maintain it and extend it slightly in both directions.

In response to questions from Mr. Prause regarding the exit on the east side of the building, Mr. Reynolds said it is 16 ft. wide, which is the minimum standard for a one-way drive. The other side is wider. Mr. Prause asked if there is a sight line issue for cars driving down that exit out to the front of the building, and whether there is any expected walkway or sidewalk there. Mr. Reynolds said there are no doors along that side of building and there is no pedestrian way there.

In response to a question from Mr. Prause, Mr. Reynolds confirmed the proposed parking in the rear is currently a grassed area. Mr. Prause asked if the catch basins in back will go to the infiltration system for treatment and then discharge into the soil, rather than into a discharge pipe. Mr. Reynolds confirmed that was correct. There is no formal drainage in this section of the street, and currently there is no defined path for drainage from this area. The soils are so well drained that water does not sit there for long, he said. He confirmed there will be no impact to the Oak Grove Nature Center area. The parking lot is proposed to be completely curbed and is designed to the 100-year storm event, Mr. Reynolds stated.

Mr. Prause asked if the brick pavers that are currently in the southwest corner of the parking lot serve a function. Mr. Waskey stated he was unsure how the pavers got there, but they are not part of the proposal and will be removed.

Mr. Bordeaux said there are four sets of outstanding staff comments from himself, Engineering, the Zoning Enforcement Officer, and the Environmental Planner. Most of the comments are minor and technical, he said.

Regarding the special exception use, Mr. Bergin asked if the application covers both 127 and 133 Highland Street. Mr. Bordeaux responded that that was the way the application was submitted; the first step was a lot line revision, which included both sites. If the lot line revision map has been filed, the subject activities are specific to 133 Highland Street. Both addresses were listed, in the event that the lot line revision has not been officially filed.

Mr. Bergin noted that the driveway at 127 Highland Street is proposed to move from one side of the house to the other, and asked if that requires any erosion and sedimentation controls. Mr. Bordeaux said no application is required for that activity because it is not related to the subject

special exception. Mr. Reynolds stated that erosion and sedimentation control measures for that driveway installation are included in the site plan.

Special Exception Modification (2018-122)

**MOTION:** Mr. Kennedy moved to approve the special exception modification under Art. II, Sec. 4.02.02 to relocate the existing parking, create a one-way internal traffic flow, and expand a portion of the existing building at 133 Highland Street, and to approve a waiver of the landscaped border pursuant to Article II, Section 1.00.02(e)(4), with the modifications as specified in staff memoranda from:

1. John DiBiasi, Assistant Town Engineer, dated February 14, 2019; and
2. Matthew R. Bordeaux, Senior Planner, dated February 12, 2019; and
3. James Davis, Zoning Enforcement Officer, dated February 7, 2019; and
4. David Laiuppa, Environmental Planner, dated February 5, 2019.

Mr. Bergin seconded the motion and all members voted in favor.

The reason for the approval is that the proposed activity meets the special exception criteria.

Erosion and Sedimentation Control Plan (2018-121)

**MOTION:** Mr. Kennedy moved to certify the Erosion and Sedimentation Control Plan. Ms. Scorso seconded the motion.

Ms. Ike asked whether the modifications that were required for the special exception modification also apply to the erosion and sedimentation control plan. Mr. Bordeaux replied that once staff receives one set of revisions they will be reviewing for both applications, but if the Commission would like to include the modifications in the motion, it would be appropriate.

**AMENDED MOTION:** Mr. Kennedy moved to certify the Erosion and Sedimentation Control Plan with the modifications as specified in staff memoranda from:

1. John DiBiasi, Assistant Town Engineer, dated February 14, 2019; and
2. Matthew R. Bordeaux, Senior Planner, dated February 12, 2019; and
3. James Davis, Zoning Enforcement Officer, dated February 7, 2019; and
4. David Laiuppa, Environmental Planner, dated February 5, 2019.

Ms. Scorso seconded the amended motion and all members voted in favor.

VANLOSE ENTERPRISES, LLC – Special exception modification per Art. II, Sec. 24.02.01(h) to construct a building addition and canopy to the existing automobile dealership building and modify the exterior of the existing building at 80 Oakland Street. – Special Exception Modification (2019-002)

Attorney John LaBelle represented Vanlose Enterprises, the owner of 80 Oakland Street. Mr. Steve Carter, a member of Vanlose Enterprises and operator of Mazda of Manchester, and Eric Peterson, an engineer from Gardner and Peterson, were also present.

Attorney LaBelle said the applicant is seeking approval for construction of a 1,575 sq. ft. building addition and an 854 sq. ft. canopy. The addition is located at the northeast corner of the

existing building and the canopy is attached to the addition and immediately to the west of it. The Commission's approval of this special exception modification is required because this is an automobile dealership and the use is a special exception use in the General Business zone, Attorney LaBelle said. The existing building totals 10,879 sq. ft. and the proposed addition would bring it to 12,454 sq. ft.

Attorney LaBelle stated that the proposed addition and canopy have been designed to Mazda standards. The addition would be 26 ft. in height and there would be a vehicle display on the second floor of the addition, facing Oakland Street. The building design includes a substantial amount of glass and the colors will be black and grey, he said. Oakland Street is heavily traveled and this design would allow passing drivers to see the display vehicles.

Attorney LaBelle described the zoning of the surrounding properties and said the proposal will be compatible with the surrounding properties and will not alter the character of the neighborhood or adversely affect property values.

Regarding traffic counts, Attorney LaBelle said some enhanced business might occur, estimated at 12-18 vehicle trips per day, with 2-4 of those being new employees. Access from Oakland Street will continue, he said; it is expected that most customers will continue to use that Oakland Street curb cut because customer parking for both new sales and service is located to the south side of the building, and that parking will not change with the building addition. The canopy on the north side of the building is a requirement from Mazda, to let people access the dealership in inclement weather. There would probably be a relatively minor increase in traffic on Edward Street due to people using that canopy, particularly in inclement weather. However, that traffic would only go in Edward Street about 50-75 ft. before reaching the curb cut. There would likely also be a small increase in traffic on Edward Street because of the planned employee parking in the three lots across Edward Street.

Attorney LaBelle said the building addition will not require any additional lighting. The property is currently serviced by water and sewer. Emergency access is sufficient and is off of Oakland Street. Landscaping on the corner of Oakland Street and Edward Street will remain. There have been some changes to the plans as a result of staff comments, he said.

Mr. Eric Peterson, Gardner and Peterson Associates, said the comments from staff were generally minor. The one major difference is that the original plans called for moving the curb cut on Edward Street further to the west, and on the revision it has instead been kept where it is but expanded, to be wide enough for two-way traffic in accordance with Town standards. This was done to keep the curb cut directly across the street from the existing curb cut for the potential future parking lots across Edward Street. Mr. Peterson said all comments have been addressed and the applicant would accept them as conditions of approval.

Attorney LaBelle noted that, although the windows appear shaded in the architectural drawings, they are actually proposed to be clear glass, not tinted.

In response to questions from Mr. Bergin, Mr. Carter said there will be no change in vehicles displayed. The vehicle display goes up to the corner of Oakland Street and Edward Street on the northeast side, and that space will stay the same. What will be lost is the employee parking that runs from east to west. The display isn't moving, although there will be three additional cars displayed inside the building addition, Mr. Carter said.

In response to questions from Mr. Prause about the proposed removal of a staircase on the corner, Mr. Carter said the staircase is to a basement room that will be eliminated.

Mr. Bordeaux stated that the applicant submitted revised plans just this week. He was not able to reach the Fire Marshal's Office, but all other staff members were satisfied with the revised plans. Mr. Bordeaux recommended approving the application with the modifications outlined in the Fire Marshal's comments, even though applicant has likely satisfied them.

In response to questions from Mr. Prause about landscaping on the north side, Mr. Carter said there is landscaping from Oakland Street going down Edward Street to the curb cut in. There was landscaping past that on the other side but the plantings have tended to do poorly in that area. A segment or two of fencing may be removed and replaced with plantings to balance out the entrance. Mr. Carter said he felt it was a good idea to keep the fence up as much as possible.

Special Exception Modification (2019-002)

**MOTION:** Mr. Kennedy moved to approve the special exception modification under Art. II, Sec. 24.02.01(h) to construct a building addition and canopy to the existing automobile dealership building and modify the exterior of the existing building at 80 Oakland Street, with the modifications as specified in staff memoranda from:

1. Shawn Morris, Deputy Fire Marshal, dated February 13, 2019.

Ms. Scorso seconded the motion.

Mr. Prause asked about the Deputy Fire Marshal's comments and Mr. Bordeaux reviewed them. Mr. Prause asked if there was a solution as to where the gas meter will go. Mr. Peterson showed the proposed location on the map and stated there will be two bollards protecting it.

Mr. Prause said, as far as the special exception criteria, there is not much changing as far as interest to the public or any type of safety concern. He said the design is compatible with the rest of the area and fits the building.

All members voted in favor.

The reason for the approval is that the proposed activity meets the special exception criteria.

KRISTINE CARLSON – Request for extension of time under CGS 8-25 for filing approved subdivision plans. – Resubdivision (2018-057) – Request for extension of time under CGS 8-25 for filing approved subdivision plans.

**KRISTINE CARLSON**  
637 South Main Street

Resubdivision (2018-057) – Request for extension of time under CGS 8-25 for filing approved subdivision plans

**MOTION:** Mr. Kennedy moved to approve the request for extension of time under CGS 8-25 for filing approved subdivision plans. Mr. Bergin seconded the motion.

Mr. Bordeaux said the request is the same as the previous extension request. The applicant wishes to extend the time before they have to start paying taxes on individual lots.

All members voted in favor.

The extension is for 90 days, until June 22, 2019.

### **ADMINISTRATIVE REPORTS:**

Mr. Bordeaux reported that an administrative wetlands permit application was approved today for Jon Keane, 4 Fir Grove Road, for a proposed deck in the upland review area. The disturbance is limited to excavation of concrete pier footings for the deck. The applicant is working with the Wetlands Agent to ensure that erosion and sedimentation controls are maintained until the soil is stabilized.

### **DISCUSSION ITEMS**

#### North End Workshop

Mr. Anderson said that Staff is now proposing to hold off on having a workshop. He learned that the budget for this year includes a Park and Facilities Master Plan, and it might be a good opportunity to latch on to that wider planning process to get more people involved and have access to a consultant who could help figure out how to get input from the community. In addition, the SMARTR2 referendum will have an impact on Robertson School and how that is reused. There is also some activity on the co-op property on Apel Place, which may impact the design of that intersection; the design with the two roundabouts may or may not move forward, depending on the reuse of the co-op. Mr. Anderson said staff felt it would be prudent to see how some of these things play out prior to holding a workshop.

Mr. Stoppelman asked if there is any indication what the SMARTR2 plan is proposing for the use of Robertson School. Mr. Anderson said, if the SMARTR2 plan is approved, the school will be used as swing space for the next few years, then after that the Town will have to find a reuse for it. Directors included some money for reuse of empty schools as part of the referendum question.

Ms. Scorso asked if the Planning Department would be the central figure to pull together the three separate initiatives Mr. Anderson had mentioned. Mr. Anderson said it would, along with the Department of Leisure, Families and Recreation. The first time the Parks and Facilities Plan was proposed several years ago, the vision was for the two departments to do it together. They would keep in mind that the individual workshops in different areas of town are driven by the Commission and the 2020 Plan, he said. He said he thought the Commission would get better results by latching on to that other process, because there will be buzz around town about it. The Commission will get better input and leveraging those discussions will be useful, he said.

#### CUD Discussion Follow-up

Mr. Bordeaux said there was a recent workshop about additional uses and how to think about the use of commercial and multifamily buildings in the Comprehensive Urban Development (CUD) zone. He asked for feedback from the Commission prior to submitting a formal application. Some uses are proposed to be added, including indoor agriculture, banquet halls, and conference centers. For conference centers, he recommended one parking space per thousand square feet. The proposal would also change places of worship from a permitted to a special exception use.

Mr. Anderson noted that, during the workshop, there was concern that those uses were allowed by right.

Mr. Bordeaux said stand-alone multifamily or multifamily above the ground floor commercial are currently allowed by special exception. The ability to have several floors of multifamily housing above a commercial structure would only be permitted in a building of 200,000 sq. ft. or larger and within half a mile of existing mass transit, which is quite limiting. Staff suggests allowing up to 60 ft. in height for a building, still within half a mile of existing mass transit, but in a commercial space of only 100,000 sq. ft. For consistency, because the maximum building height for multifamily structures in the General Business zone was changed to 50 ft., this draft proposes a maximum building height of 50 ft.

Mr. Stoppelman asked how Mr. Bordeaux arrived at the suggested 1,000 sq. ft. per parking space for conference centers. Mr. Bordeaux said he did research on other communities that have conference centers. Mr. Stoppelman said he thought that was too little. Mr. Bordeaux said he had not had a chance to talk to the Traffic Engineer to see how that lines up with other uses.

### Sidewalk Plan

Mr. Bordeaux said staff would like to update the Sidewalk and Curb Plan by April. The Town Engineer will update the map for all projects that were done in the last five years, and then the Commission can reconsider the list of priority areas for filling in gaps. A public hearing must be held and the Board of Directors has to approve the plan, Mr. Bordeaux said. He hoped to hold a public hearing on March 18th in conjunction with the regular meeting.

Mr. Bordeaux referred to a discussion during the hearing on the subdivision on the corner of Line Street and South Main Street, about the appropriateness of the bituminous path that was required per the Sidewalk Plan. He suggested perhaps the Commission would want to take a close look at where those bituminous paths are called for and their appropriateness. Mr. Sabia asked if the bituminous path was to get access to the new development. Mr. Bordeaux said it was not; a bituminous path is called for on rural roads instead of a concrete sidewalk.

Mr. Prause asked how many more subdivisions are possibilities for removing additional sidewalks, where there are streets with sidewalks on both sides. Mr. Bordeaux said there were three on the last plan. For one of them, between Pitkin Street and Porter Street, it was determined that it would be appropriate to keep the sidewalk, based on the neighborhood's feedback. According to the Town Engineer, Mr. Bordeaux said, they would try to hold a neighborhood meeting or reach out to individuals in the neighborhood for their input. Now there are just two locations where that reduction option would be considered, he said.

Mr. Bordeaux said he would send out a draft of the plan and the list of priorities, so the Commission could see those that have been completed and some that have been added, based on the Town Engineer's recommendation.

### **APPROVAL OF MINUTES:**

#### January 23, 2019 – Public Hearing/Business Meeting

**MOTION:** Mr. Kennedy moved to approve the minutes as written. Ms. Ike seconded the motion and all members voted in favor.

**RECEIPT OF NEW APPLICATIONS:**

**WOODBIDGE MILLS, LLC – Inland Wetlands Permit (2019-006); Special Exception (2019-007)** – Request a special exception per Art. II, Sec. 9.14.03 for multifamily historic mill conversion with 24 units of senior housing at 501 Middle Turnpike East.

**HARTFORD CDC, LLC – Erosion & Sedimentation Control Plan (2019-008); Special Exception Modification (2019-009)** – To add a 199,466 sq. ft. addition to the existing 300,650 sq. ft. warehouse building and to construct a new 8,400 sq. ft. recycling facility at 61 Chapel Road.

Mr. Stoppelman asked if the Woodbridge Mills application includes removing part of the building. Mr. Anderson said the applicant’s intent is to remove a non-historic portion of the building.

**MOTION:** Mr. Kennedy moved to adjourn. Mr. Bergin seconded the motion and all members voted in favor.

The Chairman closed the business meeting at 8:38 P.M.

I certify these minutes were adopted on the following date:

March 18, 2019  
Date

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Eric Prause, Chairman

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