

**MINUTES OF PUBLIC HEARING
HELD BY THE PLANNING AND ZONING COMMISSION
SEPTEMBER 21, 2020**

VIRTUAL MEETING HELD VIA ZOOM

ROLL CALL:

Members Present: Eric Prause, Chairman
Patrick Kennedy, Vice Chairman
Michael Stebe, Secretary
Jessica Scorso
Jessica Poland

Alternate Members: Julian Stoppelman
Bonnie Potocki
Teresa Ike

Also Present: Gary Anderson, Director of Planning
Megan Pilla, Senior Planner
David Laiuppa, Environmental
Planner/Wetlands Agent
Nancy Martel, Recording Secretary

The Chairman opened the Public Hearing at 7:00 P.M. The Secretary read the legal notice when the call was made.

REVISED AGENDA

MOTION: Mr. Stebe moved to revise the agenda to move Application 2020-054 to the end of the agenda. Mr. Kennedy seconded the motion and all members voted in favor.

TOWN OF MANCHESTER – For renovations to Buckley Elementary School, including additions, site improvements, upgrades to the parking lot, improvements to the drop-off loop area, minor modifications to athletic ball fields, and landscaping improvements at 250 Vernon Street. – Special Exception Modification (2020-057); Erosion and Sedimentation Control Plan (2020-058)

Mr. Randall Luther, TSKP Studio, introduced himself. Mr. Luther displayed the site plan for the revision of Buckley School. He also showed the layout of the school and described the history and enrollment of the school. The existing site driving patterns and parking lots were detailed, as well as the proposed plans. Mr. Luther pointed out that, from a security perspective, currently there are parents and members of the public all over the campus.

The proposed plan was displayed and detailed by Mr. Luther. He noted that to the south of the building is public domain; staff, buses and service will park to the north. There will be a clear delineation.

Mr. Luther pointed out the new main entrance on the south as well as a secondary entrance to the west. There will be a new classroom addition to the northwest. In addition, there will be a play area to the north, he stated, as well as a pre-K play area to the west. Mr. Luther discussed the elevations on each side of the building. The current bike/walker sidewalk will remain. The details of the building materials, roofing and windows were reported by Mr. Luther.

Mr. Stebe appreciated the design but referred to the Town-approved sustainability guidelines. He questioned whether more pervious pavement had been considered, as well as solar options.

Mr. Luther acknowledged the large impervious areas. The building is planned to be net zero with the intent that the building will generate as much electricity over the course of the year as it uses. In this case, the building will be entirely electric, consuming no fossil fuels. He added that no public school in Connecticut or Massachusetts has achieved a net zero building yet. Pavement will be removed from the staff parking lot to the north, according to Mr. Luther.

Mr. Darin Overton, Licensed Professional Engineer and Project Manager, Milone & MacBroom, introduced himself. Mr. Overton explained that, though it appears there is a large expanse of impervious material on the south side, the impervious surface will be more efficient. Paving has been eliminated on the north side as well as a strip of parking and impervious pavement around the bus loop. Mr. Overton, referring to the site plan, pointed out the pitch of the parking and a bioretention basin; there is also a bioretention basin to the west of the loop.

Mr. Overton reported that the results of soil testing showed it is not good for infiltration and some shallow ledge was encountered. He explained that the bioretention basin has an underdrain to make sure it runs dry. It will provide for storage, no peak increase in flows vs. existing conditions, and water quality management. The storm water will go into the basins, filter through the special bioretention soil mix into the underdrain, and be discharged from the site. Mr. Overton added that it will look like a landscaped area, and will be a green infrastructure method of disconnecting impervious and treating the water quality.

Ms. Scorso praised the layout, in terms of security for parents and buses, and said it is the best that she has seen. She asked for clarification of the main office and entryway.

Mr. Luther displayed the floor plan and explained the new construction details along with the main office area. He pointed out the areas of the school that can be utilized after hours while having the classroom area locked. The main office area has a panic button that will close and lock the doors to the entire classroom wing.

Mr. Prause asked for clarification about the drop-off area. He also inquired about the removal of a storm water line under the existing drop-off.

Mr. Luther, noting that the school is K-4 grades, stated that the school administration wants all parents to park their cars, get out and walk their children into the school. There will be sidewalks adjacent to every parking space with clearly-defined crosswalks opposite each entrance.

Mr. Overton replied to the question about the storm water line removal, stating that there is an existing catch basin in the bus loop off the southeast corner of the building. They will be replacing an existing pipe that extends to the parent drop-off and replacing the existing catch basin to modify some of the inverts on the pipes. He went on to detail the storm water collection and underground storage, tying in to the existing drainage pipe.

Mr. Prause questioned the metallic design for the addition.

Mr. Luther responded that they are walking a fine line, trying to give the existing building a facelift to change the image of the building. The metal piece on the Vernon Street side of the building provides cover for exit stairs and will help shade the harsh eastern sun. The material will be used all around the building. As the building will be net zero, stated Mr. Luther, they will be increasing the insulation, resulting in the roof fascia being taller than it is today. He explained that the Board of Education asked whether there should be more windows, but the low sun angles on the east are a challenge.

Mr. Prause remarked that part of the special exception criteria is to address the existing design characteristics and how the new design will match that. Clearly, when making substantive improvements to the building it will look different, which is intentional.

Ms. Potocki questioned the amount of cubic yards of material that will be brought onto the property to build up the southeast. She also inquired about the foundation of the new extension, and whether there is ledge in that area. Ms. Potocki asked about the possibility of blasting.

Mr. Luther replied that they will not be bringing any material onto the property. He reported that they will be cutting into the hill on the south side for the parking lot. There may be a small net export of material, though they are working to make it a balanced site. Mr. Luther explained that they will be using traditional footings. He stated that there is ledge close to the surface and there is a good likelihood that they will hit ledge. There will be no blasting near the building, though they may determine that it may be more cost effective to do some limited blasting in the bioretention area.

Mr. Overton reported that they did a soil test in the two bioretention locations, and they set the bottom based on where they did find ledge. The only materials to be brought on site will be the construction materials, which he described in detail. He assured the Commission that they will be utilizing proper materials to ensure the bioretention basins drain properly. Native soil will be utilized on the north side, Mr. Overton explained.

After a question from Mr. Stoppelman, Mr. Luther stated that the building will be all electric with a geothermal well field to the north. Inside the building, it will be heated and cooled with heat pumps throughout the building, with a dedicated outside air unit for fresh air.

Ms. Pilla reported that there are no comments from Staff. The application is still under review and Staff recommends the Commission leave the public hearing open to allow a more thorough Staff review.

Mr. Stebe asked for clarification about the erosion and sedimentation control to be used, as well as the improvements to the ball fields in the area of the geothermal field.

Mr. Luther stated that the plan is to not touch the baseball field at all. The softball and T-ball fields will be in the well field area and will be relocated slightly from their current configuration.

Mr. Overton reported that they benefit from the watershed on the project being broken up quite a bit as the improvements are all around the school. For the most part, the runoff from the building is controlled; there is a small amount of run-on from the south into the parking area. The erosion control measures will be handled by silt fence and inlet control at the storm water basins. According to Mr. Overton, the construction will be phased in some manner. He acknowledged that the best way to control erosion is to not disturb the soil, and with limited watershed there is limited runoff to control. There will be a stockpile area for the stripped soil which will be surrounded by silt fence.

There was no member of the public to speak.

MOTION: Mr. Kennedy moved to continue the public hearing to October 5, 2020. Mr. Stebe seconded the motion and all members voted in favor.

The public hearing meeting was closed at 7:50 P.M.

I certify these minutes were adopted on the following date:

October 5, 2020
_____ Date

_____ Eric Prause, Chairman

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