

**MINUTES OF BUSINESS MEETING
HELD BY THE PLANNING AND ZONING COMMISSION
OCTOBER 4, 2021**

MEMBERS PRESENT:

In Person: Eric Prause, Chairman
Patrick Kennedy, Vice Chairman
Dean Ott
Electronically: Michael Stebe, Secretary
Jessica Poland

ALTERNATES PRESENT:

In Person: Julian Stoppelman
Electronically: Bonnie Potocki
Teresa Ike

ALSO PRESENT:

In Person: Gary Anderson, Director of Planning
Megan Pilla, Senior Planner
Kyle Shiel, Senior Planner/Comprehensive Planning
Electronically: David Laiuppa, Environmental Planner/Wetlands Agent
Nancy Martel, Recording Secretary

The Chairman opened the business meeting at 7:00 P.M.

WE 1339 TOLLAND TURNPIKE LLC – Modification of Area of Disturbance and update of topography to reflect additional placement of surplus loam material at 1339 Tolland Turnpike. – Erosion & Sedimentation Control Plan (2021-068)

Ms. Val Ferro, Good Earth Advisors, introduced herself. Ms. Ferro reported that in late June, before appearing before the Commission for the modification from the car parking to truck parking, Staff had questioned an area that neither she nor Jim Petropoulos could answer. The construction crew had great intentions to protect wetlands, use erosion control measures, and select a wonderful pollinator mix to stabilize the area. However, the crew made the assumption that they could drop unneeded soil into areas that were outside of the area of disturbance. The situation grew more complicated due to the large storms, and the area experienced flooding. The contractor could not see the two culverts due to vegetation and they covered the culverts, which created the flooding. The culverts were dug out to alleviate the flooding, necessitating this appearance before the Commission, according to Ms. Ferro. She visited the site a couple of days later. The plan specifications were displayed, and Ms. Ferro detailed the problematic area. The construction team reported that they did not know what to do with the material, and apparently

there was not a good response to their inquiries. She pointed out the areas where the soil was dropped.

Mr. Laiuppa and Staff worked with them to develop a solution. Ms. Ferro remarked that they took out additional soil to alleviate the drainage and they will repair the culverts, which were not designed to their standards. A ditch alleviated the flooding, and they intend to create a grass natural swale that will hug the new soil area that has been stabilized. She noted that there is a wetlands system hundreds of yards to the west and the grass swale has been picking up storm flow and directing it westward since the facility has been in operation. It has never been deemed a wetland and they are not sure how the soil will respond, but they will restore it back to the existing condition.

Mr. Jim Petropoulos, Hayner/Swanson Land Surveyors/Civil Engineers, stated that upon inspection, they had done a fairly good job of placing the surplus soil in such a manner that it appeared fairly naturalized, the grading was not problematic, there were no sight distance issues with the driveway and the grass planted was fairly well established. He explained that he and Ms. Ferro, working with Staff, put together a set of plans that represented what was there originally in 1980.

Ms. Ferro reported that they have addressed all the comments from Staff. They are planning to commence the work, if this is approved, and they are working closely with the construction team.

Mr. Ott stated that he noted the plan calls for straw bale areas, and asked if they have thought of using any other products other than the straw bale.

Mr. Petropoulos responded that there are a number of other products. He stated that they prefer straw rather than hay because it does not contain much deleterious material that could travel to the wetlands to the west. The work would take 4-5 days to construct the swale and get it loamed, seeded and established. He added that they would be open to other options.

Ms. Pilla, confirming Ms. Ferro's comment, noted that the applicant addressed the majority of the Staff comments that came from review. There is one minor technical comment remaining, but otherwise Staff is satisfied with the plans.

Mr. Prause questioned whether Staff reported any damage that might have been done. Ms. Pilla reported that, from an Engineering standpoint, there was no concern regarding the existing infrastructure or the pump station, which is to the south of one of the locations.

Mr. Laiuppa commented that he visited the site several times, and there are no wetlands on the site. He stated that he spoke with Ms. Ferro about a substantial patch of invasive species just north of the western stockpile area to the right of the anti-tracking pad. A good compensation, considering the problem encountered, would be to treat the invasives to prevent spread, which he stated was discussed with Ms. Ferro. The plantings are a wildflower mix as opposed to a grass mix (which has a higher density of stems). He recommended the silt fences be built back until the ground is more stabilized, and suggested mixing non-competitive grass into the area to help stabilize.

Ms. Ferro interjected that is already in the works after speaking with the property manager. She stated that she told the property manager not to commence until she speaks with Mr. Laiuppa.

Erosion & Sedimentation Control Plan (2021-068)

MOTION: Mr. Kennedy moved to certify the erosion and sedimentation control plan for the modification of the area of disturbance and to update the topography to reflect additional placement of surplus loam material at 1339 Tolland Turnpike with the modifications as specified in memoranda from:

1. Megan Pilla, Senior Planner, dated October 4, 2021.

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

Mr. Stebe questioned whether there should be a notation in the motion of the ad hoc conversation between Mr. Laiuppa and the applicant regarding the seeding and loaming.

Mr. Anderson felt that could be handled administratively as long as the Commission is comfortable with Mr. Laiuppa and the applicant making those decisions.

A discussion was held between Mr. Ott and Mr. Prause regarding amending a motion or making a modification.

ADMINISTRATIVE REPORTS

Mr. Shiel presented the Parks & Facilities master plan. He reported that, for the last year, he has been involved in a multi-departmental effort with Recreation, Public Works and Planning on the Parks & Recreation master plan. The plan was posted online after it was presented to the Board of Directors in August.

Mr. Shiel described the staff team and the consultant team, which was comprised of landscape architects, park professionals, and a professional surveyor who polled town residents. The goal was to look at programming and physical facilities and to see where the town is, what needs to be updated, and what should be done in the future, creating guideposts for investment and programming going forward.

The major plan elements, he continued, were:

- Discovery – The consultants get to know the town.
- Community Engagement – Especially difficult during the COVID-19 pandemic.
- Analysis – Programming, trends, connecting the parks via a trail network, inventory and testing of all parks.
- Conceptual Visions – Selected a couple of parks based on feedback and some design interventions.
- Implementation – How to turn the recommendations into reality.

For community engagement, Mr. Shiel presented pictures of a socially distanced trick or treat event last year; online engagement on the Town's "Your Voice Matters" website; and a virtual town hall via Zoom.

Some of the questions posed were:

- What parks are you interested in?
- What parks should the team drill down on in more detail for proposals; i.e., Case Mountain, Center Springs, Globe Hollow and the Community Y.

Overall themes were:

- Manchester is a proudly diverse community, but aging, and what does that mean for recreation trends and programming?
- How to change going forward?
- Respondents mentioned selected parks, which influenced the analysis and conceptual planning.
- Trails.
- Aquatics was popular, including swimming, aquatic facilities, water, fitness and outdoor recreation, especially during the COVID-19 pandemic.

Mr. Shiel explained that the trails section is based on connecting Manchester's parks via multi-use trails. They created a conceptual trail, which he explained in detail. The aspirational goal of the trails piece is to allow people to go from park to park using the trail system. Mr. Shiel reported that the railroad is planning to turn the railroad over to the State soon, and there will be a viable connection soon between the Hop River Trail and the Cheney trail.

Based on the survey and Staff input, reported Mr. Shiel, they looked at seven different parks in total: Globe Hollow, Nebo, and Charter Oak as one linear piece; Robertson and Union Park; and Northwest, the Nike site, Case Mountain and Center Springs. Mr. Shiel presented the conceptual plans for each of the parks, and detailed those plans. A particularly important piece of the plan is to relocate the skate park, and the planned location was explained. The goal is to present an appealing and inviting area that is well lit and safe to attract people of all ages.

According to Mr. Shiel, the short term goals are:

Recreation

- Programming for teenagers
- Mental health
- Continue equity plan

Parks

- Center Springs (ongoing)
- Case Mountain Concepts (Engineering, DPW and Planning)

- Nebo and Charter Oak West (small scale projects)

Trails

- Updating catalog
- Classifying trails
- Maintenance between Town Staff and volunteers

Mr. Shiel pointed out that the Repurposing Schools Committee, Library Task Force and Senior Center are big tasks. The recommendation is, as the consultant and Staff teams review their studies and prepare recommendations in the next year or so, there needs to be a dialogue and coordination of efforts.

Mr. Stoppelman remarked that he heard for the first time that the railroad will be turned over to the State for the rail trail.

Mr. Anderson explained that this is the gap between the Cheney Trail and the Hop River Trail, which was an active railroad previously. The railroad has agreed to abandon it and turn it over to the State and the Town will work with the State to transition that into a multi-use trail.

Mr. Kennedy questioned how far down the line freight travels.

Mr. Anderson stated that his understanding is that they go to Sanford & Hawley.

Ms. Potocki praised Mr. Shiel's presentation. She questioned how far into the conceptual plans residents' input was requested.

Mr. Shiel reiterated that they did the survey and the focus group, which gave information on what residents wanted. Then the consultant and engineering team put together the conceptual plans based on input. Considering COVID-19, there was not a preliminary or draft period after which the plans were drawn up. Because the plans are conceptual in nature, are not funded and will not begin next year, these are the first crack in response to comments. The designs will be refined as they go along.

Ms. Potocki recommended publicizing the concepts to the residents that responded. After that, perhaps another survey would be beneficial. She suggested a permanent display in a public place; i.e., the Town Hall or the library, perhaps with a postcard or e-mail for residents to submit their thoughts.

Mr. Shiel responded that, in the next month, the information will be distributed in an issue of Better Manchester focused on the Park Plan; at an event at WORK_SPACE on Monday, October 25 with an art exhibit focused on the master plan; and with more social media outreach.

Ms. Poland reported that she is the Communications Liaison for the Repurposed Schools Committee (RSC). As such, she would like to get the community input as there are four schools

and they just hired a consultant for Robinson, Washington, Martin and Nathan Hale. She speculated whether they had met with the leadership of the RSC.

Mr. Shiel remarked that he had not, but Chris Silver, Director of Leisure, Family and Recreation, staffs that mission. He suggested that she reach out to Mr. Silver, as he will be doing the full promotional material and the effort will take place this month. Or, she can e-mail Mr. Shiel and he will be happy to provide her any material that she needs.

Ms. Poland asked if Mr. Shiel can send the community survey to the RSC. She said she is the Communications Liaison and he is more than welcome to send it to her. Ms. Poland explained that the RSC needs community input and she would love to have his community input to add to hers to give to their consultant.

Mr. Ott also praised the presentation and the work that has been done thus far, especially on Charter Oak Park. He noted that the master plan is still in flux, and he questioned whether there was a particular project for the Town to focus on first.

Mr. Shiel reported that, based on the replies received, the skate park idea is a high priority, as they have already invested a lot in Charter Oak and it would be a continuation of that. Charter Oak connects to downtown and, according to feedback, seems to be getting the most traction.

Mr. Anderson interjected that Mr. Shiel, Mr. Silver, and the consultants did do a larger presentation for the Board of Directors. To Mr. Shiel's point, there is an opportunity now with federal money to prioritize things.

Mr. Prause also praised the hard work that has been done. He stated that he had a hard time orienting the Manchester Community Center concept in relation to North Main Street.

Mr. Shiel displayed the Community Center conceptual plan and described the area in detail.

Mr. Anderson interjected that the building is on the corner to have a bigger presence in the area. It is ironic because, in urban renewal in the 1970's, the Town did the opposite when changing the area. The idea would be to focus attention on that corner.

Mr. Prause noted that this will be good input for the Plan of Conservation and Development with this project, the School Reuse Committee, and the library; it will all filter into the POCD. He noted that, at Washington School, the basketball courts will be expanded to where the baseball field is currently.

Mr. Shiel explained that the existing basketball court will be pushed in to create a buffer with the adjacent houses. Next to the basketball court would be a multi-use area for soccer, racquetball, flag football, etc. It was his understanding that there is not much baseball played there.

Mr. Prause questioned how much input has been received from the Historical Commission, etc. He noted he has seen pictures of people playing baseball there over 100 years ago. That is not to

say it must be kept there. He speculated how much of the master plan was run by the Historical Commission and Historical Society to respond to any historical concerns that may come up.

Mr. Shiel replied that no, they have not been consulted, as at this stage it is conceptual. It did make them more cautious and conservative on the north, Robinson concept. Because it is in the Union Village District, they were unclear whether it would impact the designation of the district. Out of caution, Mr. Shiel reported, the decision was to keep it in the concept, work around it and at a later date a historic expert will make that determination.

Ms. Potocki advised that historic structures or buildings be kept in mind because, if they are seeking any federal funding, Section 106 will come in from the State Historic Preservation Office (SHPO). They will want to provide an opinion.

Ms. Poland asked Mr. Shiel for a general idea of who was part of the survey; i.e., community members from that area or different areas.

Mr. Shiel reported that they paid more for a statistically valid survey, which had to match the demographics of Manchester and geographic distribution so it was not clustered in one part of town.

Ms. Poland, acknowledging this is a concept, noted Mr. Shiel's vision of a community center. She stated that every survey they have had for the four schools had reported that everyone wants a community center. Obviously, there cannot be a community center in a school. Ms. Poland is interested in how that particular school was chosen as a community center.

Mr. Shiel responded that it was because of the area, comprised of the Community Y, Whiton and a very high visibility corridor. The general thought was to think about the location first, and if necessary, many Town uses could be combined in one modern building in a visible location.

Ms. Poland stated that the RSC surveyed 100 people in the Spruce Street area. They wanted a community center because it is an anchor, as they no longer have a school. Of course, that area has a majority of people of color.

Mr. Anderson commented that the idea was not necessarily to focus on the buildings because that is the RSC's purview. This was about the parks and the general facilities, not the specific buildings. The thought here was that this could be a place, if it was decided by the Town, Board of Directors and others that this was the perfect spot for a community center, considering the current assets. It was intentionally done so as not to step on anyone's toes, but at some point the job of the consultants was to think big, and it was in direct response to the feedback received.

Mr. Stebe questioned whether this was sent to Mr. Pellegrini, the former Director of Planning and Economic Development, as he spent decades before retirement contemplating that corner development. It will definitely be a great effort to bring these plans to fruition soon. He added that a massive renovation is envisioned for Globe Hollow; it is more than time to do it. It was needed a long time ago. Washington School pool would be renovated, but Robertson is getting the building on top of it. Mr. Stebe questioned the vision for Salters pool, because if the pool is

taken away at Robertson, the next closest is Salters. In his opinion, the community center plan leaves out large chunks of town and he felt that Ms. Poland has a point to be kept in mind.

Mr. Stebe stated that he perused the plan and did not see anything regarding Salters.

Mr. Shiel reported that Recreation thinks about how to distribute the aquatics throughout town to ensure the population has access. That was one of the reasons for the Globe Hollow plan. The other plans for pools and splash pads will follow.

It was Mr. Stebe's opinion that the Town needs this plan in order to prevent stagnation. The goal is for the town to be a thriving, vibrant, inclusive town where people want to come.

Ms. Potocki sought to add an item to the agenda related to the last public hearing. After a discussion regarding incorrect minutes included in the members' meeting packet, it was determined that the seated members at this meeting could approve the minutes.

APPROVAL OF MINUTES

September 20, 2021 – Public Hearing/Business Meeting

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

RECEIPT OF NEW APPLICATIONS

1. **CHRIS QUINN / TKO INSTALLATIONS** – Special Exception Modification (2021-074) – Special exception modification per Art. II, Sec. 9.14.02(a) for proposed new drive-up ATM with concrete pad, bollards, signature canopy, vehicle height detector bar and pole lighting at 1046 Tolland Turnpike.
2. **TRIVIK BUILDERS LLC** – Inland Wetlands Permit (2021-076) , PRD Detailed Site Development Plan (2021-080); Erosion & Sedimentation Control Plan (2021-081) – To combine multiple parcels (including 27 Lillian Drive) to create a single 4.17 acre parcel to be developed into 37 units of residential housing contained in 6 buildings at 321 Oakland Street and 27 Lillian Drive.
3. **JOHN BRENNAN/CSL PLASMA** – Form-Based Zone Site Plan (2021-077) – To gut and remodel existing strip shopping space for a new 38 bed, 14,881 sq. ft. blood plasma donation facility at 425 Broad Street.
4. **MANUEL & LURDES FERNANDES** – Inland Wetlands Permit (2021-078) – For creation of a pond in a current Rural Residential area at 534 Keeney Street.
5. **ASSOCIATION OF MUSLIM COMMUNITY** – Zoning Regulation Amendment (2021-079) – To amend Art. II, Sec. 1.03 of the zoning regulations to permit residential occupancy of an on-site accessory dwelling by a caretaker and family and also an office where the principal use is a cemetery.

Ms. Potocki expressed that, with two schools coming before the Commission again, Martin and Keeney, she believes the Commission was put in a difficult position due to the fact that there was no representative from the Board of Education facilities group. Hence, there were members of the public that had comments and the Commission could not refer to discussions that the facilities group had; i.e., from the Board of Education. She requested that, the next time there is a presentation, there should be a representative from the Facilities group within the Board of Education. Therefore, if questions arise from prior meetings that did not involve Planning Staff, they could respond to those questions for members of the public present.

Mr. Anderson did not disagree with Ms. Potocki, as it was an issue at the meeting.

MOTION: Mr. Kennedy moved to close the business meeting. Ms. Poland seconded the motion and all members voted in favor.

The Business Meeting was closed at 8:25 P.M.

I certify these minutes were adopted on the following date:

October 18, 2021
Date

Eric Prause, Chairman

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