

PLANNING BOARD

TOWN OF GREENFIELD, MASSACHUSETTS
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GREENFIELD PLANNING BOARD

Minutes of June 18, 2009

Greenfield Police Station

The meeting was called to order at 7:01 p.m. with the following members:

PRESENT: Roxann Wedegartner, Chair; Linda Smith, Vice-Chair; Mary Newton, Clerk; Jim Allen; Clayton Sibley and alternates Tracey Sutphin and Tim Gorts.

Also in attendance: Eric Twarog, Senior Planner/GIS Coordinator; and Anita Fritz from the Greenfield Recorder.

Approval of Minutes

MOTION: Moved by Sibley, seconded by Newton and voted 5:0 to approve the meeting minutes from June 4, 2009.

Public Hearings

7:00 p.m.: Franklin Regional Transit Center (FRTC) - Development of a two-story, 24,000 square foot building, parking area for 25 vehicles, 8 bus berths, and a bus turn-around.

Wedegartner opened the public hearing at 7:05 p.m. and read the public hearing notice. Wedegartner explained the rules and procedures for public hearings to the audience. The following people were present as part of the applicant's team: Tina Cote, Administrator of the Franklin Regional Transit Authority (FRTA); Jake Toomey of FRTA; Linda Dunlavy, Executive Director of the Franklin Regional Council of Governments (FRCOG); Bill Steffens, David Farmer, and Ralph DeNisco of McMahon Associates; and Charles Rose and Whitney Hudson of Charles Rose Architects. Tina Cote gave an overview of the area covered by FRTA and of the FRTC project. She stated that this project will be a "net zero" project in terms of energy usage. David Farmer reviewed the project schedule with the Board and where it currently stands. He stated that this project will be the first "green" transit center in Massachusetts. He introduced Charles Rose, architect for the project, to the Board.

Charles Rose gave a PowerPoint presentation on the project and described how the project fits in with the overall downtown revitalization effort going on. He presented photos of key civic buildings and others in Downtown Greenfield. He reviewed the proposed site plan and showed the orientation of the proposed building and elevations of the building. He stated that the energy needs of the building will be met on site through the use of photo-voltaic and geothermal technologies. He showed a future connection to the railroad tracks, parking for 17 spaces and the bus turn-around. Allen questioned whether shadowing would occur on the proposed building from the future parking structure off Olive Street. Mr. Rose stated that it would not. He reviewed access to and from the site, proposed open space and vegetation, existing conditions, layout plan, grading plan, utility plan, elevation in relation to Bank Row. He also presented the first and second floor layouts and stated that they worked hard with FRTA and FRCOG on the layout of their future office space. He stated that the hope is to use any excess heating to melt snow and ice on the concrete surrounding the building. He described the perforated screen that will cover a portion of the building for heat reflection purposes as well as the proposed solar wall on the building. Mr. Rose reviewed with the Board self-generation options to include wind power, solar panels, and geo-thermal options. Sutphin inquired whether the solar panels will be installed on the roof. Mr. Rose stated that they try to avoid installing them on roofs because of visual concerns. The Board inquired why the roof for the

proposed building is flat. Mr. Rose stated that they designed the building to match the existing buildings in the area which mostly have flat roofs. Wedegartner asked about the large expanse of the flat roof. Mr. Rose stated that the building is still in the design phase. Allen stated that the proposed building looks “extremely modern” for an older community. Mr. Rose stated that about 95 percent of the building design is based upon meeting the “green” goals for the building while about 5 percent is to match the building into the existing fabric of the community.

Ralph DeNisco reviewed the permitting requirements of the project as well as the on-going coordination with the Town. He reviewed the traffic evaluation prepared for the project. Sutphin inquired whether the building will be LEED certified. Mr. Rose stated that due to the added cost, they will not seek LEED certification but that the project would likely meet LEED Gold Standards. Gorts asked if the line of site at the Olive Street/Bank Row intersection will be an issue. Mr. Rose stated that they will look into this further. Gorts inquired whether the on-street parking on Olive Street will be eliminated. Mr. DeNisco stated that the on-street parking on both sides of Olive Street to the site will be eliminated. Gorts asked if bus drivers were consulted for the design of the site. Jake Toomey of FRTA stated that they were consulted. Smith inquired how handicapped people will be dealt with in terms of being able to get to the FRTC. Ms. Cote stated that they have considered this issue and may provide shuttle buses to the transit center. Allen inquired whether larger buses like motor coached will utilize the facility. McMahon Associates stated that this facility was designed to handle larger buses. Allen expressed concern on egress and ingress for the site. Sutphin inquired whether there will be a taxi cab waiting area. Ms. Cote stated that taxi’s will use the parking area for this purpose. Newton expressed concern on the number of proposed parking spaces for the large office space proposed. Ms. Cote stated that staff of the FRTA and the FRCOG will be parking at the court house parking lot as they do now. Mr. Steffens stated that federal money for transit center projects cannot be used to construct parking for non transit uses. Sibley expressed concern on the proposed location of the handicapped parking spaces and stated that people would have to cross the bus lane to enter the facility. Mr. Farmer stated that the current design is due to the topography of the site. Smith inquired on how long the buses wait. The response was 20 minutes. Sibley inquired on trash storage and was shown the proposed location of the trash bins. Wedegartner opened the hearing up for public comment.

Bill Brewer – Town of Buckland

Mr. Brewer expressed concern on the lack of taxi cab waiting areas, especially for the future if passenger rail is re-established at the site. He stated that there may be lawsuits if these are not provided.

Peter Miller – 10 Sanderson Street, Greenfield

Mr. Miller inquired whether the railroad history of Greenfield and the immediate area was considered in the design of the building. Mr. Rose stated that it was not but that a display area showing this history could be provided. Mr. Miller expressed concern about the layout of the proposed parking and stated that there should be a dedicated covered drop-off area.

Mark Zacheo - 89 Crescent Street, Greenfield

Mr. Zacheo expressed concern about potential noise from the facility as he owns the building next door as well as emissions from idling buses. He inquired about hours of operation and bus idling rules. Ms. Cote stated that the hours of operation will be 8:00 AM to 5:00 PM Monday through Friday for the FRTA and FRCOG offices. Ms. Cote also reviewed idling laws which state that buses cannot idle for more than 5 minutes and that FRTA is considering their own policy of no more than 3 minutes idling. Mr. Zacheo also expressed concern about safety issues with the current layout proposed.

Don Pearson – 74A Wells Street, Greenfield

Mr. Pearson expressed concern about traffic safety and suggested that Olive Street be a one-way street to Hope Street. Discussion ensued on the possibilities for on-way traffic on Olive Street. Mr. Pearson stated that taxi and passenger traffic should be separated. He also expressed concerns about the history of the area not being highlighted by this development.

Jerry Lund – 30 Simon Keets Road, Leyden

Mr. Lund inquired on the three buildings recently purchased by Jordi Herold and the intent to renovate the facades with historic tax credits. He expressed concern on the design of the FRTC and that the building façade on the west side should be broken up with windows or some other technique. He suggested that it could be a great view.

Whitty Sanford – 954 Reeds Bridge Road, Conway

Ms. Sanford asked if Goshen stone could be used in the design of the building. She stated that the civic nature of the building should somehow be highlighted (murals, Goshen stone, etc.). Mr. Rose stated that wood is being considered in the design of the building and that they would love to use stone on the building if the budget allows for that.

Tom Miner – 954 Reeds Bridge Road, Conway

Mr. Minor stated that he and his wife were involved in the purchase and restoration of the Connecticut River Watershed building on Bank Row and that they factored in the history of the building and area in its renovation. He stated that he does not believe that the proposed building fits in the community. He stated it will be a regional facility so there needs to be allowance for more public comment on the design of the building. Ms. Cote stated that 40 communities were notified of a public forum on the design of the building.

Linda Dunlavy (FRCOG) – 4 Alone Drive, Hadley

Ms. Dunlavy stated that they have been working many years with FRTA and GMTA on this project and that Congressman Olver strongly supports this project. She stated that she likes the proposed design of the building.

John Andrews – 46 Canada Hill Road, Greenfield

Mr. Andrews expressed concern about potential construction issues with this site to include underground streams and culverts. He stated that his father worked in this area and wanted this brought to the Board's attention.

Nancy Hazard – 30 Spring Terrace, Greenfield

Ms. Hazard stated that she is excited about the "net zero" building. She expressed concern about the lack of a covered drop-off area for the elderly and handicapped.

Discussion ensued on potential designs for the site layout and one-way options for Olive Street. Wedegartner inquired on the design of the future rail platform.. Mr. Zacheo mentioned the relief on the Ford of Greenfield building and asked what will become of it. Discussion ensued on potential uses for the relief. Wedegartner asked the Board for discussion on whether to close the public hearing.

MOTION: Moved by Allen seconded by Newton, and voted 5:0 to continue the public hearing to July 16, 2009 at 7:00 p.m.

Twarog pointed out to the Board an extension request on the application of the Shelburne Falls Congregation of Jehovah's Witnesses for site plan approval for 261 Mohawk Trail.

MOTION: Moved by Smith seconded by Allen, and voted 5:0 to grant the extension request of 45 days on the application of the Shelburne Falls Congregation of Jehovah's Witnesses for site plan approval for 261 Mohawk Trail.

The Board took a recess at 9:35 PM and re-convened at 9:45 PM. Mr. Seffens of McMahon Associates stated that he sees two primary concerns on the proposed site layout: 1) left-hand turn onto Bank Row from Olive Street and 2) providing a covered drop-off at the facility. He stated that they will do a live-run of buses to see how far buses need to pull out onto Bank Row to see. The Board discussed potential layouts for the parking area. The Board discussed potential taxi use of the facility and potential taxi stand areas. Mr. Steffens described the Pittsfield transit center and how they use a hotline for taxis. The Pittsfield transit center has active Amtrak lines and intercity buses and still use a hotline for taxis. He stated that mini-vans and shuttle buses will be utilizing the bus drive. The Board discussed the proposed design of the building. Wedegartner questioned whether some relief could be put on the west elevation of the building. Mr. Rose stated that he is interested in using the

transportation reliefs at the Ford of Greenfield site. Smith stated that she likes the proposed design of the building and site especially the greenery incorporated into it. The Board discussed the issue of incorporating modern architecture into the community. Gorts stated that he likes the proposed design of the building.

Adjournment

MOTION: Moved by Sibley seconded by Newton, and voted 5:0 to adjourn the meeting at 10:30 p.m.

Respectfully Submitted,

Eric Twarog, AICP
Senior Planner/GIS Coordinator