

## **PLANNING BOARD**

**TOWN OF GREENFIELD, MASSACHUSETTS**  
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### **GREENFIELD PLANNING BOARD** **Minutes of November 18, 2010** **Greenfield High School Cafeteria, 1 Lenox Avenue**

The meeting was called to order at 7:08 p.m. with the following members:

**PRESENT:** Roxann Wedegartner, Chair; Linda Smith, Vice-chair; Mary Newton, Clerk; Clayton Sibley; James Allen; and alternate Joshua Parker.

Also present were Mayor William Martin; Eric Twarog, Director of Planning and Development; Jeff Terrell of WHAI; Anita Phillips of the Greenfield Recorder; and members of the public.

#### Public Hearings

- a. (Continued from November 10, 2010) - Greenfield Investor's Property Development, LLC, Proposed 135,000 square foot retail store off French King Highway (Tax Map R04, Lot 44; Tax Map R05, Lot 23)

Wedegartner continued the public hearing at 7:10 p.m. The following project proponents were present: Tim Sullivan of Goulston & Storrs; Patrick Dunford of VHB; and Donna MacNicol of MacNicol & Tombs, LLP. Wedegartner announced the sign-up sheet and explained the rules of the Board's public hearing process to the audience and announced that the public hearing is being recorded and asked if anyone else was recording the hearing. Jeff Terrell of WHAI responded yes.

#### Project Proponent's Presentation on Traffic and Access

Tim Sullivan of Goulston & Storrs gave a summary of the presentation and introduced Patrick Dunford to the Board. Mr. Dunford of VHB presented an overview of VHB's Traffic and Access Study (\* PowerPoint slide handout of presentation dated November 18, 2010 is hereby made a part of the meeting minutes). Allen inquired how the residents of Canada Hill Road, which is discontinued, will be dealt with in terms of pedestrian access to the site. Mr. Dunford responded that there are no existing sidewalks in this area to tie the site into. Allen asked about Maple Street and whether a traffic signal would be warranted there. Mr. Dunford responded that based on his analysis and experience that a traffic signal at this location would not be warranted. Mayor Martin inquired about any left turn restrictions on Wunsch Road and whether a bus stop will be provided at the project site. Mr. Dunford responded that they will ensure that Wunsch Road will be a safe condition and that they will be providing a bus stop at the project site. Mayor Martin also inquired on how traffic monitoring and mitigation will be handled. Mr. Dunford responded that this could be a condition of approval and that they would work with the Board, town staff, and BETA Group on the specifics of the condition. Mayor Martin asked about left turn restrictions proposed for Wildwood Avenue and how the additional police enforcement required would be handled. Mr. Dunford responded that enforcement is key to making the left turn restrictions viable. Mayor Martin asked about the Gill-Montague Bridge reconstruction project and whether that was factored in their study as well as potential new development that may be spurred by this project. Mr. Dunford responded that a build-out analysis is typically a municipal function but not a part of their study. Newton asked about a traffic signal at the intersection of Beacon Street and High Street due to the hospital and medical offices in the area. Mr. Dunbar responded that Beacon Street is more of a concern than Maple Street and that they will look into this further. Smith inquired why queuing was not analyzed. Mr. Dunford stated that they have done engineering analysis on queuing but was asked by BETA Group to put the data into a more user-friendly format which they will do. Wedegartner inquired about by-

pass traffic. Mr. Dunford defined by-pass traffic and stated that the industry standard is 25% and that they have used 10% to stay conservative.

### **BETA Group Peer Review Presentation on Traffic and Access**

Kien Ho introduced himself and described the purpose of a peer review. Mr. Ho stated that approximately 30% of the projected traffic will be coming from south of the project site which is why they recommended the seven (7) additional intersections to include in the study. Mr. Ho stated that the background growth rate of 1% is reasonable and acceptable for this study. Mr. Ho stated that in terms of trip generation, utilizing the land use code under ITE of “shopping center” for this study is acceptable and yields the greatest number of vehicle trips (most conservative in terms of numbers). Mr. Ho stated that the use of 10% for by-pass and diverted trips is conservative. Mr. Ho stated that in terms of Level of Service/Gap Analysis, the project proponent only utilized two intersections and recommends that all the study intersections be included in the gap analysis. Mr. Ho stated that the queue analysis needs to be part of the Level of Service analysis which will be worked out with VHB. Mr. Ho stated that the proposed left-turn restriction for Wildwood Avenue will place a burden on the residents of this area and on law enforcement. Mr. Ho also stated that traffic calming techniques could be utilized as a mitigation strategy for Wildwood Avenue which would require agreement from 60-70% of the residents of the road pursuant to ITE’s Traffic Calming Design Manual. Mr. Ho stated that the Route 2A/Adams Road, Federal Street/Silver Street, Beacon Street/High Street, Maple Street/High Street intersections are classified as high hazard areas. Mr. Ho stated that the Town’s Engineer Larry Petrin has been and will continue to be involved with this project. Mr. Petrin has suggested that Gill Road be utilized as a bicycle/pedestrian path way. Mr. Petrin has also recommended that a mitigation fund be established for a 6-month/12 month traffic monitoring follow-up once the project is constructed. Mr. Ho stated that BETA Group would work with the Town Engineer for the amount of the monitoring/mitigation fund. Finally, Mr. Ho stated that the poor condition of the pavement on High Street will need to be addressed.

Wedegartner expressed some frustration on final resolution of outstanding traffic/access issues and asked when they would be resolved. Mr. Sullivan responded that due to family situations such as their chief engineer’s wife having a baby, that they are a little behind but that they will have all issues by the end of December. Smith inquired about the abutter’s traffic study and asked for a response to the different numbers provided in that report. Mr. Dunford responded that VHB’s Traffic/Access Study utilized the “Gravity” model in addition to the proportional approach and is confident in VHB’s approach and numbers. Mr. Ho stated that there are many ways to develop trip distribution numbers but for large retail projects, the “Gravity” model is the industry standard. Mr. Ho also stated that the proportional approach is typically used for smaller, non-retail projects. Smith inquired about the critical gap analysis and stated she was surprised by the numbers that suggest that Greenfield residents are aggressive drivers. Mr. Dunford responded that the numbers are lower than the Highway Capacity Manual which is typical for New England drivers. Mr. Dunford stated that VHB through out the bottom 15% (3 seconds or less). VHB will be providing BETA Group with their backup data and work with them for consensus/resolution. ***Smith made the following points: 1) that VHB is using figures that were less than the default critical gap figures indicating very aggressive drivers in Greenfield, 2) that the project proponents did not present queuing figures which is required under MDR, and 3) that the project proponents did not use the current proportion of cars driving north on High Street on their way to Stop & Shop which is also a regional draw. Smith pointed out that all of these representations have the effect of underestimating the amount of traffic approaching from the south and the impacts of that traffic.*** Allen inquired about the one proposed access drive to and from the project site. Mr. Dunford responded that every project is different in terms of constraints on access. He has seen sites with 3-4 access drive and others with just one as is the case for Greenfield. Mr. Dunford stated that due to engineering/environmental constraints that only one access drive is the only reasonable option for this site. He stated that with the proposed traffic signal, he believes that this site will work with only one access drive. Mayor Martin pointed out that traffic coming in from Deerfield would likely come down to Maple Street to High Street. Sibley inquired whether BETA Group agrees with the Capacity Analysis. Mr. Ho responded yes and no. Yes on Level of Service and no due to the need to review backup data on queuing. Smith inquired on LOS and pointed out the loss beyond C for some intersections. Mr. Dunford responded that a LOS of D is acceptable per standard engineering practice but that Greenfield’s regulations call for a

LOS of C. He stated that at signalized intersections, re-timing of the lights as well as increased signage can improve conditions. Mr. Ho stated that in terms of LOS of D or worse, that things can be done to improve delay times. Mayor Martin inquired about the recently improved intersection in town and how LOS has improved. Mr. Ho responded that timing improvements has improved delay times and queuing issues.

### **Public Input Portion of Public Hearing:**

#### Jim Hutchinson - 136 Main Street, Greenfield

Inquired about retaining wall and fencing at the site access drive entryway and whether the sand bank would support the access driveway with all the projected traffic. Mr. Sullivan responded yes. Mr. Hutchinson commented that Gill Road would be good for a bicycle/pedestrian access way.

#### Al Dray – Deerfield

Stated that he is into community issues and has written many “My Turns” about the proposed “Big Box” store. He pointed out an editorial he wrote on traffic impacts to High Street and stated that he is aware of many cut-throughs. He also stated that the tenant may be more than one as indicated by the size of the proposed parking lot and that he will be doing a “My Turn” to fill in the gaps of his comments.

#### Patricia Marcus - 71 High Street, Greenfield

Stated that she is the Executive Director of the Greenfield Coalition for a Sustainable Future. Stated that the request for an independent Community Impact Analysis still stands and that they support a reasonably sized discount department store.

#### Steve Ronhave – High Street, Greenfield

Stated that there are many homes and businesses on High Street serviced by natural gas so he is concerned about potential gas explosions as a result of the increased traffic on High Street and the age and condition of the infrastructure.

Mayor Martin responded that he has been in communication with Berkshire Gas about the condition of their infrastructure and that they stated that their infrastructure is in good condition.

#### Ralph Gordon – 14 Wunsch Road, Greenfield

Inquired why Canada Hill Road and Wunsch Road were not included in the traffic study. Expressed concern about lights from night traffic impacting the area and about entering/exiting Wunsch Road. He stated that he would like a meeting with the project proponents to discuss issues.

#### Al Norman - 21 Grinnell Street, Representing the Abutters

Mr. Norman stated that in terms of the traffic special permit criteria, that the most recent version of the Highway Capacity Manual shall be used. He stated that the Gap Analysis methodology used by the project proponents violates the Zoning Ordinance. **Mr. Norman also stated that BETA Group had called the left turn critical gap reduction “alarming”.**

#### Amy Clark – Madison Circle, Greenfield

Questioned the traffic numbers and stated that the best mitigation measure would be to reduce the size of the store.

Mayor Martin asked if the size of the store were reduced to 60,000 sq. ft., would traffic be reduced by 50%. **Both Mr. Dunford and Mr. Ho responded that the reduction would be about 50%.** Mr. Dunford also responded that it is not a one to one ratio and that the issue of critical mass needs to be factored in.

#### Phil Tucker – High Street, Greenfield

Stated that he has been a professional driver for over 38 years. Stated that a “shopping center” consists of more than one store and pointed out that only one access drive to and from the site may be a potential

emergency nightmare. Pointed out that there will be much more truck traffic as a result of this project and that he disagrees with the proposed location of the store.

Susan Mulgrew – Wildwood Avenue, Greenfield

Expressed concern that the proposed mitigation for Wildwood Avenue may not be feasible as a police officer would have to be posted on-site to enforce such restrictions.

Steve Jakub – Wildwood Avenue, Greenfield

Stated that FRTA buses utilize Wildwood Avenue travelling at high speeds up to 40 mph and that the 25 mph limit is not posted with no police presence. Stated that the increased traffic will increase greenhouse gas emissions so as a Green Community how can we allow this. Stated that he has a trust issue with the developer due to traffic issues omitted in their report.

Joann Lucas – 69 Wildwood Avenue, Greenfield

Expressed concerns about traffic and the proposed left-turn restrictions on Wildwood Avenue. Stated that it is inexcusable that the project proponents were not prepared for this meeting.

Planning Board Alternate Joshua Parker left the meeting at 10:48 PM.

Larry Clark – 40 Peabody Lane, Greenfield

Expressed concerns about lack of information and preparation for this meeting.

Donovan Eastman – 7 Oak Street, Greenfield

Expressed concerns over the methodology used for the traffic study. Concerned about additional development that may be spurred from this project and the total impacts of that development.

Daria Fisk, 11 Park Street, Greenfield

Expressed concerns about the traffic impacts and how the total impacts will be addressed. Concerned about the intersection of Beacon Street and High Street.

Melanie Skawski – 7 Wunsch Road, Greenfield

Expressed concerns about Wunsch Road and inquired whether any mitigation measures have been proposed for Wunsch Road.

Milan Dragicerich, 210 High Street, Greenfield

Stated that High Street was not designed to handle even the existing traffic today so how can we allow further traffic to be put on the road.

Colby Lunt, 38 Sunrise Avenue, Greenfield

Inquired how the residents of the Stone Hill Road/Sunrise Avenue area will be dealt with in terms of traffic mitigation.

Madeline Cantwell – 136 Lovers Lane, Greenfield

Stated that no mention was made of the proposed biomass project at the Route2/Adams Road intersection area. Expressed concern about Beacon Street/High Street intersection as well as the Police Station being on High Street. Quoted a study on location of large retail stores near major arterials causing increases in percentage of accidents.

David Scarfe – 53 Wildwood Avenue, Greenfield

Stated that he attended the meeting on Monday between the residents of Wildwood Avenue and the project proponents. Stated that he asked questions at that meeting that still have not been addressed. Stated that some of the numbers used for the traffic study are 2006 numbers so he is concerned about the traffic numbers used and the data omitted from the study.

Bob Sunderland – 11 Linden Avenue, Greenfield

Stated that this proposed project is a county project, not just a Greenfield project. Stated that people are generally good and that the left-turn restrictions on Main Street, such as the Davis Street/Main Street restriction, have been in place for a long time. Stated that he has only seen people not follow this restriction a few times.

Wedegartner asked if the project proponents wanted to address any of the issues/concerns brought up this evening. Mr. Sullivan stated that the requested data is forthcoming. Smith asked if the Board members will be receiving the raw data. Mr. Sullivan responded yes.

**\* Copy can be viewed at the Department of Planning and Development located at 114 Main Street, Greenfield, MA.**

**MOTION: Moved by Newton, seconded by Sibley, and voted 5:0 to continue the public hearing on the application of Greenfield Investor's Property Development, LLC to December 2, 2010 at 7:00 p.m. at the Greenfield High School Cafeteria.**

Adjournment

**MOTION: Moved by Sibley, seconded by Newton, and voted 5:0 to adjourn the meeting at 11:51 p.m.**

Respectfully Submitted,

Eric Twarog, AICP  
Director of Planning and Development