

PLANNING BOARD

TOWN OF GREENFIELD, MASSACHUSETTS
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GREENFIELD PLANNING BOARD Minutes of April 7, 2011 Planning/Veteran's Office, 114 Main Street

The meeting was called to order at 6:36 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; GCTV; Anita Phillips of the Greenfield Recorder; Jeff Terrell of WHAI; and members of the public.

Approval of Minutes

MOTION: Moved by Sibley, seconded by Newton and voted 5:0 to approve the meeting minutes from March 17, 2011.

Wedegartner announced that the meeting is being recorded and asked if anyone else was recording the meeting. GCTV responded yes.

ZBA Recommendations

- a. Application of William Gordon for property located at 559 Country Club Road, which is located in the Rural Residential (RC) Zoning District, for a special permit pursuant to Sections 200-4.2(C13) and 200-8.3 of the Zoning Ordinance for an animal kennel to allow up to ten (10) dogs.

The Board discussed the request, specifically the size and noise issues related to the request, and took the following action:

- MOTION:** Moved by Sibley, seconded by Smith, and voted 3-1-1 (Newton abstained, Allen voted no) to forward a positive recommendation to the ZBA on the application of William Gordon for property located at 559 Country Club Road, which is located in the Rural Residential (RC) Zoning District, for a special permit pursuant to Sections 200-4.2(C13) and 200-8.3 of the Zoning Ordinance for an animal kennel to allow up to ten (10) dogs with the condition that the letter of intent submitted by William Gordon be complied with.
- b. Application of Gas Development, LLC for property located at 488 Bernardston Road, which is located in the Limited Commercial (LC) Zoning District, for a special permit and site plan approval pursuant to Sections 200-6.1(C1), 200-8.3, and 200-8.4 of the Zoning Ordinance in order to allow the change, extension or alteration of a legal non-conforming use (gas station) within the Limited Commercial (LC) Zoning District.

The following projects proponents were present: Attorney David Singer representing the applicant; Bill O'Brien of Gas Development, LLC; Patrick Dunford and Conner Nigel of VHB. Attorney Singer reviewed the current status of the project including the recent approval by the Conservation Commission. Mr. Nigel reviewed the project with the Board. Wedegartner inquired whether the Conservation Commission's Order

of Conditions has any special concerns. Mr. Nigel responded that the Conservation Commission issued its standard boiler plate order of conditions for the project so he assumed no special concerns.

MOTION: Moved by Sibley, seconded by Newton, and voted 5-0 to forward a positive recommendation to the ZBA on the application of Gas Development, LLC for property located at 488 Bernardston Road, which is located in the Limited Commercial (LC) Zoning District, for a special permit and site plan approval pursuant to Sections 200-6.1(C1), 200-8.3, and 200-8.4 of the Zoning Ordinance in order to allow the change, extension or alteration of a legal non-conforming use (gas station) within the Limited Commercial (LC) Zoning District.

Action Items

- a. (Continued from March 17, 2011) – Board Deliberation on Application of 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)

The following project proponents were present: Tim Sullivan of Goulston & Storrs; Michael Dupree and Patrick Dunford of VHB and Donna MacNicol of MacNicol & Tombs. Wedegartner stated that the agenda on this item was revised to include the following: 1) MEPA Question, 2) Traffic/Traffic Mitigation, and 3) Emergency Access. Wedegartner stated that she contacted the MEPA Office on the grocery component question. The applicant has previously stated for the record that this project will not be a stand alone grocery store. The question asked by Wedegartner was whether the applicant would need to come back before MEPA if there is a reduction in size of the proposed project. The Assistant Director of the MEPA Office responded to her questions through a telephone call. Wedegartner read her confirmation e-mail sent to the Assistant Director of the MEPA Office to the Board and audience. The e-mail confirmed that the project proponent would not need to come back before their office because the size of the project has been reduced. Smith requested that any e-mail confirmation sent by the Assistant Director of the MEPA Office to Wedegartner be forwarded to the Board.

Smith inquired on the definition of “discount stand alone retailer” as opposed to a “discount superstore”. Mr. Sullivan responded that they used the land use code of “shopping center” for their traffic and access study. Mr. Sullivan stated that there has been some confusion resulting from the language in the MEPA report but wanted to make clear that this project will not be a stand alone grocery store. He also clarified that the retail store will likely sell frozen and pre-packaged foods which are groceries. Mayor Martin asked if the applicant would be okay with a condition on the special permit limiting the percentage of grocery sales. Mr. Sullivan responded that no they would not be okay with such a condition. Mayor Martin inquired on the parking ratio of their original proposal of 160,000 square feet versus their current proposal of 135,000 square feet. Mr. Sullivan responded that the current proposal has a ratio of 4.1 per 1,000 square feet of area. The Department of Planning and Development recommends a maximum ratio of 4 per 1,000 square feet of area which would be 540 parking spaces. Allen inquired on the difference between frozen versus pre-packaged foods. Wedegartner read the review comments from the Health Department highlighting permitting requirements. Mayor Martin again inquired on the parking ratio of their original proposal of 160,000 square feet versus their current proposal of 135,000 square feet. Mr. Sullivan responded that there have been many comments on the number of parking spaces so the ratios have changed so they can only really respond with the current proposal. Mayor Martin accepted that but also inquired on why the proposed snow storage areas are where they are given that the primary retail season is from October to December when there is likely to be some snow. Board continued to discuss the number of proposed parking spaces and their location. Sibley commented that he agrees with the Department of Planning and Development’s recommendation of a maximum parking ratio of 4 spaces per 1,000 square feet of area.

Wedegartner introduced Patrick Dunford of VHB, Kien Ho of BETA Group, and Larry Petrin, Town Engineer as the traffic professionals involved with this project. Sibley inquired whether the proposed traffic signal at the site access driveway is required by law. Mr. Sullivan responded that legally there is no

requirement to put a traffic signal at this location but that it helps the Level of Service requirements of the Zoning Ordinance and improves traffic flow further up on High Street. Mr. Ho responded that as the traffic consultant for the Town, BETA Group recommends the traffic signal for safety reasons. Smith inquired on the breakdown of costs for the traffic signal (\$880,000). Mr. Dunford reviewed the breakdown of costs to the Board (\$150,000 for above ground work and the rest for road work). Smith inquired on the proposed traffic mitigation contribution for Beacon/High Street intersection. Mr. Sullivan stated that the proposed amount is their fair-share contribution toward a traffic signal at this location and clarified that if a signal is not needed, that the Town can use these funds for other purposes. Smith expressed concerns about whether enough funds will be made available for proper mitigation.

Allen inquired about lighting at the site entrance and expressed safety concerns. Mr. Sullivan responded that sufficient lighting has been provided for this purpose. Mr. Dupree passed around the site plan to the Board to show the location of this lighting. Mr. Sullivan suggested that a foot-candles level be specified for this purpose as opposed to designating a specific location for the light pole. Wedegartner asked what the cost would be for such a light. Larry Petrin responded about \$300.00 plus a monthly fee. Smith asked Mr. Petrin to prepare a recommendation to the Board on this. Mr. Petrin responded that he would prepare a recommendation. Sibley asked that the new traffic signal at the site entrance match the new traffic signals recently installed throughout town in design and capability. Mr. Ho stated that there will be \$10,000 dedicated by the proponents for the review of the traffic signal plans. Wedegartner asked for clarification on the \$10,000. Mr. Sullivan responded that they will provide review money to the Town and will look into exact amounts. Allen inquired on the proposed mitigation for the Maple/High Street intersection. Mr. Dunford stated that the required warrants are not met at this location for a traffic signal which is why they proposed a flashing yellow/red light. Mr. Ho concurred with this recommendation. Wedegartner asked if the flashing yellow/red light will overhang the road or be on two separate poles. Mr. Ho responded that it is preferable for the light to overhang the road. Smith inquired about a 4-way stop sign at this location. Mr. Ho responded that there are also warrant requirements for a 4-way stop sign which are not met at this location. Sibley inquired on the size of the bulb for the flashing yellow/red and whether it will be an LED light as he is concerned about excessive lighting during late night/early morning hours. Mr. Ho responded about 12" and yes to LED lighting.

Smith inquired about the critical gap analysis and re-study. Mr. Ho responded that the original analysis submitted by VHB was lacking but that the proponents have since provided the requested data and analysis. Smith asked for clarification on when the MA Highway Capacity Manual (HCM) versus the critical gap analysis should be used. Mr. Ho responded that he has worked with both and that every project is unique. Mr. Ho stated that as a general rule of thumb, the HCM is used first and if additional data/analysis is needed, a critical gap analysis is done. Mayor Martin asked if the proposed traffic mitigation package is the perfect solution for this project. Mr. Ho responded that the proposed traffic mitigation package is adequate for this project. Mayor Martin inquired a reduction of size correlation to traffic impacts and whether a formula is used. Mr. Ho responded that there is not a direct correlation but more of a "best guess" without starting from scratch. Mayor Martin asked about the process for traffic calming on Wildwood Avenue and expressed concerns about whether \$30,000 is enough for this process. Mr. Sullivan stated that the proponents' original solution of restricted left-hand turns on Wildwood during certain hours of the day was not acceptable to the residents of Wildwood Avenue. The current proposal has been vetted with both BETA Group and the Town Engineer. Donna MacNicol stated that there are 3 issue/problems for Wildwood Avenue: 1) LOS (MDR), 2) cut-through traffic, and 3) speeding. Mayor Martin asked the proponents if they would object to doubling the proposed amount of traffic mitigation for Wildwood Avenue from \$30,000 to \$60,000. Mr. Sullivan responded that they absolutely object to that. Smith inquired on whether any traffic calming technique would actually work at this location. Mr. Ho responded that any traffic calming solution would be a neighborhood solution with 60-70% neighborhood agreement. If such consensus cannot be reached, then it remains open until such consensus can be reached. Board discussed whether a solution should be reached prior to or after construction. Parker asked Mr. Petrin if \$30,000 is enough money for the most expensive solution for Wildwood Avenue. Mr. Petrin responded yes.

Smith inquired about trip distribution numbers. Mr. Ho stated that BETA Group had some issues with VHB's original numbers but that VHB has since revised their numbers to the satisfaction of BETA Group. Mr. Dunford reviewed the trip distribution analysis that they prepared with the Board. Smith inquired whether BETA Group could review traffic numbers prepared by RSG on behalf of the abutters. Wedegartner stated that at a previous meeting, BETA Group was informed not to review this report. Mayor Martin moved to discuss a 120,000 square foot store. Smith seconded the motion. The motion was not accepted by the Chair. Mayor Martin moved to discuss a 121,000 square foot store, Smith seconded, the Chair accepted the motion so the Board discussed size of the proposed store. Wedegartner supports a reduction to 125,000 square feet. Newton expressed concerns about making the store too small. She stated that she supports a size between the original proposal of 160,000 and the abutter's initial request for a 100,000 square foot store (130,000 square feet). Sibley stated that he is comfortable with the current proposals of 135,000 square feet and that he is comfortable with the projected traffic numbers. Mr. Sullivan stated that 110,000 to 120,000 square feet is not feasible in Greenfield due to tenant needs, construction costs, and development costs. Mr. Sullivan stated that tenant needs vary from 132,000 to 139,000 square feet which is why they picked 135,000 square feet. Board continued to discuss size of the proposed store. Wedegartner asked for a friendly amendment to the motion to increase the size to 125,000 square feet. Smith seconded the friendly amendment; Board voted 2-3 (2 for, 3 against) on the friendly amendment for 125,000 square foot store. The motion failed. Board voted on original motion for a 121,000 square foot store 0-5 so motion failed. Sibley moved for a 135,000 square foot store, seconded by Newton. Newton reiterated that she supports 130,000 square foot store but that it wouldn't make sense to reduce the size of the store for 5,000 square feet so she supports a 135,000 square foot store. Wedegartner stated that she is comfortable with a 135,000 square foot store and that she suggested 125,000 square feet to address the concerns of residents. Allen stated that he supports a 135,000 square foot store. Smith stated that she would like to see more traffic downtown as well for downtown businesses but that she doesn't agree with the location for such a store in the Corridor Overlay District because of the projected traffic on High Street and its residential areas. Board discussed alternate locations and traffic patterns. Board voted 4-1 on the consensus vote for a 135,000 square foot store (Smith opposed).

Board continued to discuss the proposed traffic mitigation package. Mr. Petrin handed out two alternatives to building a sidewalk along French King Highway in front of the property (handouts are hereby made a part of these meeting minutes). Alternative 1 is the current proposal within the Traffic Mitigation Package. Alternative 2 utilizes the abandoned portion of Gill Road which is currently under the ownership of Mark Leonard. Mayor Martin stated that the landowner is willing to give the Town of Greenfield an easement over his property for pedestrian access to the retail development with no cost to the Town. The Board discussed the two alternatives. Mr. Sullivan stated that if the cost for Alternative 2 was comparable to Alternative 1, they have no issue doing Alternative 2. The Board discussed bicycle access from the store to French King Highway and liability issues associated with that. Smith requested that Twarog provide the Board a copy of the list of recommended conditions put forth to date. Wedegartner requested that Twarog provide the Board with a copy of a draft decision prior to the April 21, 2011 Planning Board meeting. Twarog responded that he would do that.

Wedegartner announced that the next Planning Board meeting will be held on April 21, 2011 at 7:00 p.m. at the Department of Planning and Development at 114 Main Street.

Adjournment

MOTION: Moved by Allen, seconded by Newton, and voted 5:0 to adjourn the meeting at 10:00 p.m.

Respectfully Submitted,

Eric Twarog, AICP

Director of Planning and Development