

**MINUTES OF THE PROCEEDINGS OF THE
PLANNING BOARD OF THE CITY OF WORCESTER**

Wednesday September 29, 2021

Worcester City Hall - Levi Lincoln Chamber, with remote participation options available via Webex online at <https://cow.webex.com/meet/planningboardwebex> and call-in number 415-655-0001 (Access Code: 1601714991).

Planning Board Members Participating: Albert LaValley, Chair
Edward Moynihan, Vice Chair
Kevin Aguirre, Clerk
Conor McCormack

Planning Board Members Participating Remotely: None

Planning Board Members Absent: None

Staff present: Marisa Lau, Division of Planning & Regulatory Services
Steve Rolle, Division of Planning & Regulatory Services

Staff Participating Remotely: Jody Kennedy Valade
Nick Lyford
Michelle Smith

Call to Order – Board Chair LaValley called the meeting to order at approximately 5:30 pm

Requests for Continuances, Extensions, Postponements, and Withdrawals

- Item 1: 573 Grafton Street (PB-2021-020) – Definitive Site Plan**
Request to Continue the Public Meeting to December 1, 2021
Extend the Constructive Grant Deadline to December 23, 2021
- Item 2: Arboretum Village Phase IV Subdivision – Bittersweet Boulevard, Snowberry Circle, & Indigo Circle Right-of-Ways and 0 (aka Lots 87 & 88) Bittersweet Boulevard, 0 (aka Lots 89L&R-96L&R) Snowberry Circle, 0 (aka Lots 106L&R & 107L&R) Indigo Circle (PB-2020-052) – Amendment to Definitive Subdivision Plan, Definitive Site Plan, and Surety Modifications**
Request to Postpone the Public Hearing & Meeting to October 20, 2021
Extend the Constructive Grant Deadline to November 11, 2021
- Item 3: 47R Fourth Street (PB-2020-072) –Special Permit to allow a Cluster Group of Single-Family Dwellings and Definitive Site Plan**
Request to Postpone the Public Hearing & Meeting to November 10, 2021
Extend the Constructive Grant Deadline to December 2, 2021
- Item 4: 1103 Millbury Street (PB-2020-076) – Definitive Site Plan**
Request to Postpone the Public Hearing & Meeting to November 10, 2021

Extend the Constructive Grant Deadline to December 2, 2021

- Item 5: The former Kendig Street ROW (between Attleboro Street and Clay Street); part of 11 Attleboro Street; Attleboro Street (from Glade Street +/- 700ft to Coonan Street); Coonan Street (from Attleboro Street west 75ft and east 75ft); Glade Street (from Attleboro Street west 50ft); Kendig Street (from Attleboro Street west 50ft); and Clay Street (at the intersection with the former Kendig Street ROW) (PB-2021-012) 81-G Street Opening & G.R.O. Chapter 12 Section 12 Private Street Improvements, and Definitive Site Plan**

Request to Postpone the Public Hearing & Meeting to November 10, 2021

Extend the Constructive Grant Deadline to December 2, 2021

- Item 6: Lagrange Street & 47 Oread Street (PB-2021-061) – Special Permit (CCOD) to modify dimensional requirements for parking facilities**

Request Leave to Withdraw without Prejudice

On a motion made Mr. Moynihan; seconded by Mr. Aguirre; the Board voted 4-0 to grant the postponements and withdrawal.

At the request of the applicants, the Board conducted Other Business first while waiting for project representatives to arrive.

Other Business

Item 10: Approval Not Required (ANRs)

- a. 603 Grafton Street (Public) (AN-2021-056)
- b. 599 Salisbury Street (Public) (AN-2021-057)
- c. 21 Sigel Street & 39 Endicott Street (Public) (AN-2021-059)
- d. 65 Carter Road (Private) & 0 Brewer Street (Private) (AN-2021-060)

On a motion by Mr. Moynihan; seconded by Mr. McCormack, the Board voted 4-0 to endorse the ANRs.

The Board took a 5-minute recess.

The meeting returned to order at approximately 5:53 pm.

New Business

Item 8: 22, 24 & 28 Mulberry Street (PB-2021-066)

- a. Public Meeting – Amendment to Definitive Site Plan

Attorney Joshua Lee Smith presented in-person on behalf of the applicant. He stated the plan had been approved recently by the Board and described the project; the proposed modifications are primarily for the addition of a new 26-space surface lot adjoining the previously approved 21-space lot. The new spaces are meant to serve nearby businesses on Shrewsbury Street. There are also minor modifications with respect to the site design. Mr. Smith described new amenities included in the project, such as a roof deck, which is relatively rare for multifamily projects in the City. Other changes include the landscape layout and bike

storage in the garage. Next, Justin Dufresne (VHB, civil engineer) summarized changes to the site layout as minor and reflective of progression of the design (including sidewalk locations, access to pocket park to promote ADA access). He described access to the new proposed lot via Leo Turo Way and noted a dumpster enclosure and catch basin to treat stormwater prior to discharge were added. Next, the project architect went through proposed changes to the building. One unit was removed on the top floor in order to add more common space. He showed comparison views in the slides to illustrate how façade color, pattern, window locations and other small details were modified in response to the new roof deck, which will have raised railings for safety and aesthetic purposes. He also described access to/from the roof deck. Lastly he described the reasons behind shifting the location of bike storage in the garage to the center.

Ms. Lau and Mr. Rolle highlighted comments in the staff memo related to sidewalks and interior walkways along the surface lot on the site. It was suggested that the applicant consider widening the sidewalks to improve the pedestrian experience, given the size and scale of the proposed building and surrounding streets. Staff stated on East Central Street in particular the width can be increased by 1-2' which would make a significant difference to users. Mr. Rolle went over possible options for maintenance of the sidewalk area, if constructed, located on the applicant's property including petitioning the City to grant an easement making it part of the public right of way. The condition was made in the memo in such a way to allow the applicant additional time to consider this design option. He added that staff also noted the number and area for transformers had increased quite a bit and asked the applicant to respond.

Mr. Smith stated they were amenable to the walkway and conditions in general. However, he noted that National Grid would have to approve any proposed screening for transformers. Regarding the sidewalks, he stated the project team's goal was aligned with CCOD regulations to make the sidewalk on East Central Street welcoming and inviting. He stated the project team would discuss it, examine timing issues raised by the modification, and make a good faith effort to look into it along with the ownership ramifications for such a change. He also noted that the number of EV spaces would be clarified on the final plans in response to conditions in the staff memo.

Due to technical issues in the Chamber, the Board took a 5-minute recess.

The meeting returned to order at approximately 6:25 pm.

Staff Comment

Ms. Valade reiterated that creating a pedestrian connection to Leo Turo Way was very important for the project. There were no additional comments from City staff.

Public Comment

Anthony Barker, Jr. described his connection to the demolished church formerly located on the project site and opposed building housing there. He asked for the meeting to be postponed so that other people could attend a future meeting for this project.

Chair LaValley described the scope of the Board's review for this application and reiterated that a series of meetings were held prior to approval of the project. He expressed sympathy for the speaker and other members of the community who were affected by the loss of this historic landmark. He stated the project was currently before the Board for modifications to the approved plan only.

Board Discussion

Board Member Aguirre asked for more details on how the new lot would be used and if it would be public parking or have signage for certain businesses. Attorney Smith confirmed the primary focus is to provide parking for local businesses; the applicant preferred some flexibility for how that would occur and submitted a plan reflecting that.

Mr. Rolle noted that the proposed spaces are allowed under the Ordinance whether for residential use or as non-accessory parking for businesses located off-site. Either use would conform with zoning regulations. He described other types of parking arrangements in the area that may be applicable models, such as businesses that lease spaces for their customers.

Board Member Moynihan called the changes minor. He asked if the stoop design would be altered by these modifications and about the pocket park changes; the project architect described park access from various levels to the park and confirmed no change to the entrances from East Central Street. Lastly, he stated he appreciated the attention to EV infrastructure and that the sight impaired and those with mobility issues would benefit from widening the sidewalks as suggested. Mr. Smith also confirmed that they are seeking the waiver to label soil types.

Board Member McCormack stated he generally liked the modifications.

Chair LaValley stated he was familiar with the parking in the area. He asked the applicant to comment on the size of the dog park, even though the reduction was the direct result of the proposed parking area and other amenities were added like the roof deck. Mr. Smith noted the dog park was very large initially but the team did consider this size reasonable and proportional for the residential use, compared to other developments.

Board Member McCormack asked whether the dog park would conflict with the abutting restaurant use, given the building proximity. Jim Lambert, developer, recounted discussions with the building owner where it was indicated the park wouldn't be an issue. Mr. Rolle also recalled that the abutting section of the building wasn't as intensely utilized as the restaurant portion.

Mr. Rolle and Mr. Smith suggested revisions to conditions 1a and 1b for clarification based on the earlier discussion and to correct a typo in the staff memo.

On a motion by Mr. Moynihan; seconded by Mr. McCormack, the Board voted 4-0 to approve the Amendment to Definitive Site Plan, subject to staff-recommended conditions of approval and grant waivers revised as follows:

- 1a. Provide screening for utilities (transformers) adjacent to dog park to the degree acceptable to National Grid.*
- 1b. Label the minimum width of the required parking buffer adjacent to the rear lot line.*

Item 7: 135 & 139 Gold Star Boulevard (PB-2021-063)

Public Meeting – Parking Plan

Patrick Healy, Thompson Liston Associates, presented the application in-person on behalf of the applicant. He gave an overview of the proposal for a new 5,000 SF credit union with parking in one corner of a larger development. The project received special permits from the Zoning Board of Appeals for the drive-through use and length of the drive-through lane. Minor modifications to lot access are proposed. Site improvements will include parking lot landscaping, lighting, drainage improvements, and restriping. He stated no

improvements are proposed on the rest of the site, occupied by a 50,000 SF office building and additional parking that had recently been resurfaced and restriped. He requested waivers listed in the staff memo and stated the applicant agreed to the conditions listed therein.

Mr. Rolle stated that many of staff's comments about parking and circulation on the site had been addressed during the Zoning Board hearing. He described the changes to the plan as a result of that approval process. Interior landscaping was introduced in a way that would also improve circulation and separation of parked vehicles from aisles, which required shifting curb cuts slightly north. The escape lane had been reduced so that a separate lane was only provided directly next to the teller window, allowing more green space. A pedestrian walkway had also been added from the proposed building to West Boylston Terrace. He added there are no sidewalks on that section of Gold Star Boulevard.

There were no comments from City staff or the public.

Board Discussion

Board Member McCormack asked if this project would preclude access to the existing credit union to the north. Mr. Healy noted that the neighboring parcel had its own curb cut which led to a garage behind; there had been a parking easement on the subject property, but it expired. Mr. Rolle clarified how pedestrians will access the building.

Board Member Moynihan asked for clarification about the location (he recalled it was formerly the Crown Bakery) and employee parking. Mr. Healy confirmed 2 EV spaces were proposed. The number could be expanded in the future if demand evolves. Mr. Moynihan noted credit union employees could likely use more electric vehicle parking on site.

Chair LaValley stated the project would add greenery and pedestrian connections in an area lacking both. He had no additional comments.

On a motion by Mr. Moynihan; seconded by Mr. McCormack, the Board voted 4-0 to approve the Parking Plan subject to staff-recommended conditions of approval and grant waivers.

Item 9: 189 and part of 191 May Street (PB-2021-067)

Public Meeting – Definitive Site Plan

Patrick Healy, Thompson Liston Associates, presented the application in-person on behalf of the applicant, Encompass Healthcare and Fairlawn Rehabilitation Hospital. He gave an overview of the proposal for a building addition to modernize the facility, which will require redesigning patient drop-off and ADA parking areas. He described health services to be provided in the new addition; described vehicle circulation in the modified parking lot layout; described lighting, landscaping and outdoor plaza space to be added; described stormwater and drainage improvements. He stated that the expansion of the building will require widening the fire lane and associated grading work on the adjacent property within an easement. He ended by describing the building rendering and noted architects were in attendance.

Mr. Rolle highlighted comments in the staff memo related to site circulation. He described staff concerns with the proposed lateral ADA route to the main entrance located behind parking spaces, and with the emergency vehicle drop-off contra flow exit lane. He showed a preliminary layout by DPRS of a two-way lane eliminating the contra flow exiting.

Mr. Healy responded that the project team will agree to the amended condition regarding the exit lane, but believes the layout proposed by staff will add travel time to emergency vehicles possibly transporting patients to other hospitals and also may complicate fire truck turning. The team will need to evaluate design options further. Regarding the lateral ADA route, he proposed eliminating it and directing visitors to a more centrally located crosswalk that will be widened and relocated closer to the entrance. Chair LaValley asked the applicant to confirm those parked in the ADA spaces would still have a direct accessible route to the entrance. Mr. Healy confirmed, noting that standing vehicles may block the route at times.

Staff Comments

Mr. Lyford stated DPW was comfortable with the plan as shown. He retracted a comment made earlier about trench drains after having conferred with the applicant. There were no additional comments from City staff.

Public Comment

Charlene Donahue, #20 Fairlawn Drive, described drainage problems with the existing parking lot located behind her house that need to be corrected. Drainage overflows from the lot onto Fairlawn Drive. She stated the standing water then freezes and has caused dangerous conditions; noted existing drainage infrastructure (detention basin) doesn't function well and is also a danger because of the poor conditions.

Majlinda Gramo, #18 Fairlawn Drive, stated she has observed the same problems and experienced flooding in her house. She asked for the issue to be addressed and help for the residents of Fairlawn Drive to protect their property.

Mr. Healy responded that he was now aware of drainage problems and suspected the existing swale and basin are in need of maintenance; he will verify that and make recommendations to his client. He described what is being proposed; how the project would reduce peak rate flows of water leaving the site post-development; and stormwater mitigation strategies in general. He stated he does not have an immediate fix but will look into it and be able to discuss stormwater management on the site at the Conservation Commission's meeting next week.

Chair LaValley noted that the applicant is only responsible for drainage for the project area, not the existing development on the site. He asked for clarification on what Mr. Healy thinks would be needed for maintenance. Mr. Healy noted that system is not functioning correctly if mud is present; collected sediments may need to be removed; he would need to look at it and review maintenance plans to make specific comments.

Ms. Donahue commented on the basin design. She provided more details on the problem and reiterated the responsible party needs to address the drainage issues on her street.

Board Discussion

Board Member Moynihan complimented the building design and asked about the proposed uses for the addition. Mr. Healy replied the addition would renovate, modernize, and expand the hospital; there will be patient rooms on three upper floors. He requested the waivers in the staff memo and also noted 6 EV spaces were proposed.

Board Member Aguirre stated he hoped that the representative and his client would do what they could to address the serious concern brought up by neighbors; he encouraged those in attendance tonight to go to the next meeting on Monday about this project.

Chair LaValley agreed with Mr. Aguirre and noted the Board is a venue to receive public input. He supported staff comments in the memo.

Board Member Moynihan asked for clarification on amended conditions; Mr. Rolle clarified.

On a motion by Mr. Moynihan; seconded by Mr. McCormack, the Board voted 4-0 to approve the Definitive Site Plan application, subject to staff-recommended conditions of approval and grant waivers revised as follows:

- 1g. *Eliminate the transverse connection between ADA parking spaces.*
- 1h. *Eliminate the contra-flow lane exiting from the ambulance drop off.*

Other Business

Item 11: Communications

Chair LaValley stated the Board received notices for community outreach meetings regarding a proposed Adult Use Marijuana Product Manufacturer at 234 Southwest Cutoff from High Thirst; and a proposed Medical Marijuana Treatment Center at 142 Southbridge Street from Life Essence, Inc. d/b/a Trulieve.

Item 13: Minutes

On a motion by Mr. Moynihan; seconded by Mr. McCormack, the Board voted 4-0 to approve the 9/8/2021 minutes.

Adjournment

The Board unanimously voted to adjourn at 7:42 p.m.