

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

January 20, 2021

Pursuant to Governor Baker’s March 12, 2020 Order Suspending Certain Provisions of the Open Meeting Law, G.L. c. 30A, §18, and the Governor’s March 23, 2020 Order, as amended, imposing strict limitation on the number of people that may gather in one place, this meeting was conducted through remote participation. The meeting was livestreamed from the City of Worcester website and via the local cable access channel and is available for streaming online. Public participation was facilitated through a call-in number, 415-655-0001 (Access Code: 1601714991), which was publicized on the posted meeting agenda and during the video broadcast.

Planning Board Members Participating: Albert LaValley, Chair
Paul DePalo, Vice-Chair
Eleanor Gilmore, Clerk
Toni Molinari
Edward Moynihan

Planning Board Members Not Participating: None

Staff present: Stephen Rolle, Division of Planning & Regulatory Services
Michelle Smith, Division of Planning & Regulatory Services
Stephen Cary, Division of Planning & Regulatory Services
Jody Kennedy Valade, Inspectional Services Division
Alexandra Kalkounis, Legal Department

Call to Order – Mr. LaValley called the meeting to order at 5:30pm.

Approval of Minutes-

Requests for Continuances, Extensions, Postponements, and Withdrawals

1. **11 & 22 (aka 24) Canterbury Street (PB-2020-058)**
 - a. Public Meeting – Definitive Site Plan

Postpone to 02/10/21, and extend the Constructive Grant Deadline to 03/04/21.
3. **11 (Lot A & Lot B) Sever Street (PB-2020-070)**
 - a. Public Hearing – Special Permit to allow a Density Bonus for Affordable Housing

Request to leave to withdraw without prejudice.
4. **47R Fourth Street (PB-2020-072) (PB-2020-072)**
 - a. Public Hearing – Special Permit to allow a Cluster Group of Single-Family Dwellings
 - b. Public Meeting Definitive Site Plan

Postpone to 02/10/21, and extend the Constructive Grant Deadline to 03/04/21.
- 9a. **857 Main Street & 19 Ripley Street (AN-2020-054)**
Postpone to 02/10/21, and extend the Constructive Grant Deadline to 03/04/21

Ms. Gilmore inquired about the reason for the requested postponement on 11 & 22 Canterbury Street. Ms. Smith stated that the applicant is still working on a drainage issue and is consulting with DPW. Mr.

LaValley stated that the Board they will not continue to grant postponements and will have to ask for leave to withdraw if the applicant is not ready by next meeting.

On a motion by Ms. Gilmore and seconded by Mr. DePalo, the Board voted 5-0 to approve the request for leave to withdraw without prejudice, and the requests for postponements for the above named applications.

New Business

1. 1451 Grafton Street (PB-2020-066)

- a. Public Hearing – Special Permit to allow an Adult Use Marijuana Establishment - Cultivator & Product Manufacturer uses

Ms. Smith gave an overview of the application. She stated that the applicant is looking to use a portion of the existing building, and has secured a lease for remainder of building. They may be back in front of the Board regarding the remainder of the building. The applicant is proposing to install a variety of additional utilities associated with cultivation. They are proposing to mitigate currently un-mitigated roof runoff to make up for additional impervious surface.

The applicant’s representative, James Tatro, spoke in regards to the project. He stated that there is no proposed change to footprint, mitigating additional footprint impervious with roof runoff mitigation.

The applicant’s representative, Mark Donahue, highlighted the suitability of the building for the use – that it is located in a manufacturing zone, that it had been noted by the City as having potential for marijuana use, and that it is the re-use of an existing building. The applicant stated that he understands that marijuana use is currently limited only to the portion of the building under consideration by the board this evening. A host-community agreement has been executed to include a “state of the art facility” for odor elimination, and “active and aggressive” security plan developed with a consultant.

Board Discussion

Mr. Moynihan asked if fire has signed off, and if there is an existing plan showing the interior of the building in regards to fire safety. He also asked if they are planning to expand the parking lot, and if they are considering EV charging stations for employees.

The applicant responded that there is a floor plan showing what the interior will look like once it is completed. He stated that the parking requirement is 19 spaces, and that there is currently room for approximately 38 spaces which need to be painted. He stated that there is no work proposed in the lot for EV structures, and hasn’t given it a whole lot of consideration. EV structured may later be proposed based on employee demand. He also mentioned that there will be no expansion of the existing impervious area.

On a motion by Ms. Gilmore and seconded by Mr. DePalo, the Board voted 5-0 to close the public hearing.

On a motion by Ms. Gilmore and seconded by Mr. DePalo, the Board voted 5-0 to accept findings of fact and approve with conditions of approval.

5. 500 Salisbury Street (aka Assumption University) (PB-2021-001)

a. Public Meeting – Parking Plan

Ms Smith gave an overview of the application. Assumption is seeking to connect two parking lots, and has proposed adding 15 spaces depending on availability of university funds. Stormwater calculations include these 15 spaces. She noted that waivers noted in the staff memo have already been requested, and that there were no fire or DPW comments.

The applicant's representative Carl Hultgren stated that the goals of this work are to repave, straighten lines, and connect the parking lots as cost effectively as possible, as COVID has impacted the school's budget. They have accounted for additional impervious in stormwater considerations. The parking lot will have trees around the exterior of the lot instead of the interior, in the interest of plow maneuverability.

Board Discussion

Ms. Gilmore asked that there be maximum allowable trees around the exterior in lieu of interior shade trees.

Mr. LaValley asked how the project will fit into the larger campus regarding pedestrian circulation. He inquired whether there is there a lot of in-and-out use of parking lot, and stated if there is, the university needs to consider safety of students/staff and should considering making it safer while restriping is happening.

Mr. Hultgren responded that this is a temporary improvement and that there is a long-term plan to re-do the adjacent softball field which may involve reconfiguring the parking lot and pedestrian walkways in the area.

Mr. Hultgren asked to strike staff recommendation 1.i. (ADA requirement of truncated domes in question is not requirement at that location) from COA given the difficulty involved with snow/ice removal.

Mr. DePalo, Mr. Moynihan, and Ms. Gilmore commented that they would prefer to see it left in.

On a motion by Ms. Gilmore and seconded by Mr. DePalo, the Board voted 5-0 to approve the parking plan subject to staff conditions of approval and grant waiver.

6. 1 Topsfield Road (aka Clarence Street) (PB-2021-002)

a. Public Meeting – Definitive Site Plan

Ms. Smith stated that no applicant or engineer is in attendance and recommended postponing to 2/10.

On a motion by Ms. Gilmore and seconded by Mr. DePalo, the Board voted 5-0 to postpone the public meeting to 2/10/2021.

7. To keep Chickens/Poultry in RS-7 (ZA-2020-007)

a. Public Hearing – Zoning Ordinance Amendment

Mr. Rolle stated that the petition was brought by residents. The city has implemented urban agriculture in the ordinance previously, but did not consider the keeping of animals to be part of those regulations. Mr. Rolle then discussed regulations in other cities. Mr. Rolle recommended that the Board vote to recommend the denial of the *specific* petition, citing the lack of detail in the petition.

Brian Grinnan, Worcester resident and sponsor of petition, stated that the petition proposes the allowance of egg laying poultry at single family lots. He argued that the price of food is skyrocketing, particularly during the pandemic, and gardens and poultry are a ready supply of food in difficult times.

Board Discussion

Ms. Gilmore stated that she is generally in favor and would like to see the City expand the urban agriculture ordinance to include poultry, but she is aware of infrastructure/policy components to make it successful, including dimensional and odor/noise controls. She also noted that enforcement apparatus takes resources to ensure the welfare of animals/people, and stated that she would need more clarity in the language of how this will be folded into regulations. She supported staff recommendation of denial, but supports idea in the long-term.

Mr. Grinnan asked when a more appropriate time would be.

Ms. Gilmore deferred to Mr. Rolle. Mr. Rolle explained that various departments need to be involved and more considerations are required, but the petition is how it gets started.

Mr. Moynihan discussed local agricultural and produce products available to him in Worcester and Connecticut when he was a child, and that the most foul of all the animals were chickens; but stated that he is in favor of promoting this to the council to draft regulations. He noted that if Somerville can do it with their density, so can Worcester.

Mr. DePalo stated that he shares Mr. Moynihan's sentiments, and noted that Somerville can be used as a model for how to make it happen

Ms. Molinari stated that she agrees with the petitioner that pandemic has highlighted a need for local food, and that Worcester should also consider other poultry (ducks).

Mr. LaValley stated that additional development of standards is necessary, and asked if the staff recommendation could be rephrased to be more positive?

Mr. Moynihan stated that the Board wants to make clear that they support the concept *with* consideration.

Mr. Rolle stated that staff could come back with draft language for the decision at next meeting.

On a motion by Ms. Gilmore and seconded by Mr. DePalo, the Board voted 5-0 to close the public hearing.

On a motion by Ms. Gilmore and seconded by Mr. DePalo, the Board voted 5-0 to continue the item to 02/10/2021.

8. 85, 89, 99, & 103 Green Street, 2 (aka 12) Plymouth Street, 5, 7, & 8 Gold Street, and 62 Washington Street (ZA-2020-013)

a. Public Hearing – Zoning Map Amendment

Mr. Rolle gave an overview of the proposal. The proposed zoning map amendment is in the Canal District, and would affect one block of property and 1.5 acres of land, and would expand the BG-6.0. Mr. Rolle discussed the history of the area and the zoning in the area. He noted that it is a walkable neighborhood with a good sidewalk network and smaller roads, and has a well-developed network of on-street bike lanes. He discussed the differences in the permitted dimensions between districts and stated that there is no parking minimum requirement in BG-6.0.

The applicant's representative, Thomas Keane of Boston, Massachusetts stated that they are planning a mixed-use development to include housing and retail and the "activating" of all four streets, and plans to be back in front of Board for Site Plan approval.

Board Discussion

Ms. Gilmore stated that she is in favor of the petition, and prefers BG-6.0 due to the lack of parking minimums. She noted that she would like to see the City work towards the implementation of no parking minimum requirements throughout the city. She reminded the developers that you don't need as much parking as you think you do.

Mr. Moynihan asked for clarification of whether a bank would be an allowed use, and agreed that lack of parking minimum is a good thing. Mr. Rolle stated that almost all business uses that would be allowable in one zoning district would be allowed in the others.

Mr. DePalo stated that he is in favor of the proposal, and stated that he thinks Article 7 should include special permitting to grant dimensional relief based on offering affordable housing.

Ms. Gilmore echoed Mr. DePalo, stating that this is something that the Board should take up in the long-range.

On a motion by Ms. Gilmore and seconded by Mr. DePalo, the Board voted 5-0 to close the public hearing.

On a motion by Ms. Gilmore and seconded by Mr. DePalo, the Board voted 5-0 to favorably recommend the zoning map amendment.

Other Business

9. Approval Not Required (ANR) Plan(s)

- a. 857 Main Street & 19 Ripley Street (Public) (AN-2020-054)
- b. 28 & 30 (fka Lot E) Moreland Green Drive (Public) (AN-2021-001)
- c. 32, 34, & 36 (fka Lot F) Moreland Green Drive (Public) (AN-2021-002)
- d. 9 Arcadia Street (Public) & Freeman Street (Private) (AN-2021-003)
- e. 24 Forest Street (Public) (AN-2021-004)

- f. 117 Delmont Avenue (Public) (AN-2021-005)
- g. 45 Garrison Avenue & Welcome Street (Public) (AN-2021-006)
- h. 4 Farrar Avenue (Public) (AN-2021-007)
- i. 423, 443, & 445 Cambridge Street (Public) (AN-2021-008)

Upon a motion by Ms. Gilmore and seconded by Mr. DePalo, the Board voted 5-0 to endorse all ANRs.

10. Communication(s)

- a. GeoMicroDistrict Pilot Flyer; from Eversource.
- b. Email regarding the Greendale Mall; from Diane Mohieldin.
- c. Email regarding the Greendale Mall; from David Slatkin

Mr. Moynihan expressed his appreciation of Mr. LaValley's chairing of prior contentious meetings.

11. Discussion of Board Policies and Procedures

- a. Amendment to the Site Plans Rules & Regulations to enable third party review

On a motion by Ms. Gilmore and seconded by Mr. DePalo, the Board voted 5-0 to advertise the amendment.

Adjournment

Upon a motion by Ms. Gilmore and seconded by Mr. DePalo, the Board voted 5-0 to adjourn the meeting.