

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

October 24, 2012

WORCESTER CITY HALL – LEVI LINCOLN ROOM

Planning Board Members Present: Andrew Truman, Chair
Stephen Rolle, Vice Chair
Satya Mitra, Clerk
Robert Ochoa-Schutz

Planning Board Members Absent: None

Staff Present: Joel Fontane, Division of Planning & Regulatory Services
Abby McCabe, Division of Planning & Regulatory Services
Marlyn Feliciano, Division of Planning & Regulatory Services
Kathleen Donovan, Department of Inspectional Services
K. Russell Adams, Department of Public Works & Parks
Michael Traynor, Law Department

BOARD SITE VISITS

REGULAR MEETING (5:30 PM)

CALL TO ORDER

Chair Andrew Truman called the meeting to order at 5:36 P.M.

**REQUESTS FOR CONTINUANCES, EXTENSIONS OF TIME, POSTPONEMENTS,
WITHDRAWALS**

1. 0 Sarah Drive (aka Bittersweet Boulevard) – Definitive Site Plan Approval (PB-2012-043)

Hossein Haghanizadeh, HS&T Group, stated that he submitted a postponement for this item in order to have more time to produce the information requested by the Inspectional Services Commissioner, the Department of Public Works & Parks, and the Division of Planning and Regulatory Services staff. Upon a motion by Mr. Ochoa-Schutz and seconded by Mr. Mitra, the Board voted 4-0 to continue the item to November 14, 2012.

NEW BUSINESS

Public Hearing

2. 34 Grove Street (fka 21 Salisbury Street & 2 Grove Street) – Two Special Permits (PB-2012-050)

The Planning Board is the Special Permit Granting Authority for all properties designated by the City Council as Priority Development Sites in accordance with Article II, Section 7.

Special Permit: To allow more than 25% compact spaces per the Zoning Ordinance (Article IV, Section 7, Table 4.4 Note 3(b)). The applicant is proposing 43 of the 89 parking spaces be compact.

Special Permit: Seeking relief from the parking layout/aisle access, loading spaces, and landscape buffer requirements:

- To allow aisle widths less than 24 ft wide per the Zoning Ordinance Article IV, Section 7, Table 4.4 Note 2(b). The applicant is proposing 22 ft wide aisles.
- To modify the parking layout with respect to setbacks, buffers and landscaping (Article IV, Section 7, Table 4.4 Note 5). The applicant is proposing the parking and landscape area less than 5 ft from the boundary line.
- To modify the off-street parking and loading requirements with respect to the loading requirements. The applicant is seeking relief from the off-street loading requirement (Article IV, Section 7, A (6) & Table 4.5). No loading dock is proposed.

Attorney Steve Madaus, representing Voke Lofts Limited Partnership, introduced Elizabeth Fish from Voke Lofts, Project Architect Scott Nampa, Landscape Architect Andrew Leonard, VHB Site Engineers Sara Whiting and Craig Lizotte, and property owner Craig Blais.

Mr. Madaus stated that this is the former Vocational High School location and they were before the Planning Board for special permits and site plan approval because this was designated a Priority Site Development. The property is in a BG-6.0 and Mixed Use Overlay Zoning district. The proposal consists of converting the historic building into 84 units with 89 parking spaces. The applicant seeks relief through a special permit to allow more than 25% compact spaces per the Zoning Ordinance (43 of the 89 parking spaces proposed to be compact). Also, through a special permit to allow aisle widths less than 24 ft wide (22 ft wide aisles proposed); to modify the parking layout with respect to setbacks, buffers and landscaping (the parking and landscape area are less than 5 ft from the boundary line), and to modify the off loading requirements since no loading dock is proposed.

Scott Nampa, project architect, stated that they will be doing masonry rehabilitation on the buildings, replacing the windows, and installing new roofs. The exterior will remain within the same context and fabric because it is a historic building. Canopy structures will be added over the main entrance, by the breezeway, and over the Salisbury Street entrance.

Andrew Leonard, landscape architect, stated that their goal is to construct a courtyard that creates a sense of arrival and reflects the architecture of the building. Inside the courtyard they are proposing a loop drive with drop off spaces and an open green area. He stated that the vehicular entrance will be off of Grove Street with the bulk of the parking in front of the building and additional parking along the former Prescott Street.

Sara Whiting, VHB site engineer, stated that VHB worked on the exterior site design, grading, and utility plan. She stated that the only entrance and exit is off of Grove Street but there will be an emergency entrance and exit off of the former Prescott Street that will be gated. Ms. Whiting stated that the proposed storm water system includes a series of catch basins, culverts, and a water quality unit to remove sediment.

Mr. Leonard addressed the questions in the DPRS staff memo regarding lighting and signage. He stated that the proposed light fixtures will be pointing downwards to control spillover. A photometrics plan was submitted based on the proposed night sky lighting fixtures. Mr. Leonard stated that they will use

monument signage at the entrance to Grove Street. They are also proposing some signage on the canopy over the main entrance, one in the courtyard, and two directional signs at separate locations. Lastly, they propose temporary signage on 10 of the light posts to depict pictures of the history of the vocational school.

Mr. Madaus stated that they are amenable to the changes/recommendations in the DPRS staff memo.

No comments from Mr. Adams from the Department of Public Works & Parks, or from Ms. Donovan from the Department of Inspectional Services.

Ms. McCabe stated that she respectfully recommends approval of the Definitive Site Plan and the requested Special Permits with the conditions that: the compact spaces be identified with signage, snow be removed off site, the parking lot's crosswalks and spaces be regularly painted, that the access point from Prescott Street to Lincoln Street be painted and identified as a fire lane and no parking area, 2 benches be installed in the courtyard, the proposed gate at the former Prescott St egress be approved by the Fire Dept. before installation, and that 6 copies of the final revised plans showing the requested annotations be submitted to the DPRS.

Jo Hart, Worcester resident, stated that she is supportive of the plan but she was concern about the lack of a loading area. Ms. Whiting stated that the courtyard was designed to have a turn radius to accommodate a moving truck without impeding traffic and Mr. Nampa stated that those trucks won't be on the sidewalk since there is no parking allowed along Salisbury Street.

Mr. Fontane stated that the City has sent the commitment letter of up to \$1.3 million in Home funds as a deferred payment loan conditioned upon a number of items: they apply for local historic tax credits, State Home funds, and other type of affordable housing grants. Mr. Fontane stated the City supports the project.

Mr. Mitra asked if the residential units will be condos or apartment. Mr. Nampa stated that they will be apartments; 42 will be market rate and 42 will be affordable. There will be a mix of 1 and 2 bedroom units plus a few 3 bedrooms. They are also providing a tenant lounge, fitness center, computer lab, laundry facilities, common areas, and an art gallery.

Mr. Rolle stated that this was an impressive project and that it was well thought out.

Upon a motion by Mr. Rolle and seconded by Mr. Mitra, the Board voted 4-0 to close the public hearing.

Upon a motion by Mr. Rolle and seconded by Mr. Ochoa-Schutz, the Board voted 4-0 to approve the special permits as detailed on the memo with the conditions outlined in the October 19th DPRS memo.

Upon a motion by Mr. Mitra and seconded by Mr. Rolle, the Board voted 4-0 to approve the Definite Site Plan with the conditions in the DPRS memo.

Upon a motion by Mr. Rolle and seconded by Mr. Ochoa-Schutz, the Board voted 4-0 to adopt the findings of fact as modified by staff.

List of Exhibits.

Exhibit A: Definitive Site Plan Application; received September 20, 2012; prepared by Attorney Stephen Madaus on behalf of Voke Lofts Limited Partnership.

- Exhibit B: Special Permit Application – Planning Board; received September 24, 2012; prepared by Attorney Stephen Madaus on behalf of Voke Lofts Limited Partnership.
- Exhibit C: Site Plans Voke Lofts 34 Grove Street; dated September 20, 2012; prepared by Vanasse Hangen Brustlin, Inc.
- Exhibit D: Memorandum from the City of Worcester Division of Planning & Regulatory Services to the Planning Board; re: 34 Grove Street (fka 2 Grove Street & 21 Salisbury Street); dated October 19, 2012.
- Exhibit E: Memorandum from the City of Worcester Department of Public Works & Parks to the Planning Board; re: 34 Grove Street Special Permit PB-2012-050 dated October 19, 2012.
- Exhibit F: Electronic Communication and Comment Form from Edward R. Thomas, District Chief Worcester Fire Department; re: 34 Grove Street – Redevelopment Proposal dated Friday, October 19, 2012.
- Exhibit G: Site Lighting Plan; prepared by Omnilite dated October 9, 2012.

Public Meeting

3. 34 Grove Street (fka 21 Salisbury Street & 2 Grove Street) Definitive Site Plan (PB-2012-050A)

Item was taken up contemporaneously with the Special Permit request. See above for details.

4. 13 Dartmouth Street – Definitive Site Plan Approval (PB-2012-044)

Hossein Haghanizadeh, HS&T Group, introduced Mr. Alley, president of Metrowest Development Builders. The site is a former school that had originally been designed to be converted into 17 condo units. The layout was altered to construct 21 units. Mr. Haghanizadeh stated that they will be providing 2 parking spaces per unit, with 2 extra ones for a total of 44, improving the drainage system, and adding more landscaping.

Mr. Haghanizadeh also stated that they recently held a neighborhood meeting on site to explain the project to the neighbors.

No comments by Mr. Adams or Ms. Donovan.

Ms McCabe stated that she recommends approval with the condition that: the dumpster shall be enclosed and screened, the turn around area for parking space #20 & 22 be labeled for no parking, the proposed parking lot light and all lighting be shielded and directed downward, the existing trees are retained, and 6 copies of the final revised plans be submitted to DPRS prior to the release of the decision (final revisions to include a note about the additional shrubbery in the buffer areas). Ms. McCabe also stated that relief for a loading dock is not required as stated in the DPRS memo because this is considered a low-rise building.

Mr. Haghanizadeh stated that he was amenable to all the conditions on the memo and already submitted final revised copies to DPRS.

Mr. Rolle expressed concerned about parking spaces 20 – 22. He considered the turnaround would be difficult. Mr. Truman asked the applicant to install a no parking sign at the turnaround space and Mr. Haghanizadeh agreed.

Upon a motion by Mr. Rolle and seconded by Mr. Mitra, the Board voted 4-0 to approve the Definitive Site Plan with the conditions listed in the DPRS staff memo and a no parking sign installed at the turnaround space.

List of Exhibits:

Exhibit A: Definitive Site Plan for 13 Dartmouth Street; prepared by HS&T Group, Inc; dated May 9, 2012 (received June 21, 2012) and sheets 1 – 4 submitted on September 12, 2012 lastly revised on October 12, 2012.

Exhibit B: Floor Plans; titled “School House Lofts, 13 Dartmouth Street”; prepared by Architects’ studio dated May 14, 2012 and revised plans received on September 12, 2012 sheets A-0.00 – A-3.12.

Exhibit C: Quitclaim Deed between the City of Worcester and LMM Realty LLC regarding 13 Dartmouth Street, Nook 42098, Page 223; recorded November 21, 2007.

Exhibit D: Memorandum from City of Worcester DPRS to the Planning Board; re: 13 Dartmouth Street, Definitive Site Plan PB-2012-044, dated October 19, 2012.

5. 755-759 West Boylston Street – Definitive Site Plan Approval (PB-2012-049)

Patrick Doherty, Mid-Point Engineering, was present to represent Galaxy Development. He stated that he had been before the Conservation Commission because of the work proposed within 100 feet of a catch basin. He has also been before the Zoning Board for a special permit for the retail use and he also went before the Department of Transit because the site is adjacent to the railroad.

Mr. Doherty stated that the site is approximately 1.6 acres; 90% of which is impervious. There is currently no landscape buffer between the parking lot and the street. The project proposes the removal of two portions of the Grossman’s building, renovating the rest, and creating a new façade. A new building ~68,000 SF is proposed to be built on the north portion of the lot. The parking lot would be reconstructed, modern site lighting would be installed, a new storm water management system is proposed, a landscape buffer would be created, and the parking lot would be divided.

The project will utilize public water and sewer and underground utilities. Mr. Doherty stated that he had received DPRS staff’s comments and was amenable to making the proposed annotation and changes.

Mr. Adams stated that the applicant should use 8 inch DR18 PVC pipe for all catch basin connections.

Ms. McCabe stated that staff recommends approval of the Definitive Site Plan with the Conditions that: five additional trees are installed along West Boylston (4 in the middle area & 1 on the southeasterly end of the lot), the dumpster is enclosed, and 8 copies of the final revised plans reflecting the revisions outlined in the memo be submitted to DPRS before the release of the decision (revisions include labeling dimensions, the landscaping, & noting the ZBA relief on the plan).

Mr. Rolle stated he believed that this project is an improvement to the site. He asked the applicant if the southern driveway will be used for deliveries. Mr. Doherty stated that the southern most driveway will be for loading purposes only.

Upon a motion by Mr. Ochoa-Schutz and seconded by Mr. Mitra, the Board voted 4-0 to approve the Definitive Site Plan with the conditions listed in the DPRS memo.

List of Exhibits.

- Exhibit A: Definitive Site Plan Application; received September 19, 2012; prepared by Midpoint Engineering + Consultants.
- Exhibit B: Site Plan; dated August 13, 2012, revised September 17, 2012; prepared by Midpoint Engineering + Consultants.
- Exhibit C: Memorandum from the City of Worcester Division of Planning & Regulatory Services to the Planning Board; re: 755-579 West Boylston Street; dated October 19, 2012, Updated October 22, 2012.
- Exhibit D: Memorandum from the City of Worcester Department of Public Works & Parks to the Planning Board; re: 755-579 West Boylston Street, Definitive Site Plan-PB-2012-049; dated October 19, 2012.

6. 405, 413 & 415 Grafton Street – Amendment to Definitive Site Plan Approval (PB-2012-051)

Jeff Holland, representing Rodney Perro, stated that this grading plan was approved in 2011 with retaining walls. When Mr. Perro started working on the site he realized there was extensive ground water coming from Plantation Street and that the soil is not providing adequate drainage. The purpose is to install sub-drains behind the retaining walls and combine them to the existing surface drainage on Grafton Street. Mr. Holland stated that Mr. Perro would like to finalize the back retaining wall before the winter to stabilize the site and then in the spring return before the Board with the plans for the other retaining walls.

Ms. McCabe stated that staff respectfully recommends that the applicant demonstrate authority for any proposed grading work off-site or access from abutting properties and that 6 copies of the final revised plans be submitted to DPRS prior to the release of the decisions. The applicant has responded to staff's comments today & has begun working on the revised plans: revisions include correcting the zoning district, provide an existing conditions plan, provide the zoning classification summary chart, naming the retaining wall.

Alexandra Turner, resident of 419 Grafton Street, stated she was concerned about the impact to her property. She had previously permitted Mr. Perro to drop the elevation from her property to further stabilize the site but there has been more erosion than was they agreed upon. She also stated that she agreed to work with Mr. Perro again to allow them to stabilize the site.

Mr. Adams asked if the site plan needs to show the grading that is taking place on the abutter's property. Mr. Traynor stated that since it is a private agreement between the parties and assuming it is a small amount of work proposed on Ms. Turner's property the site plan only needs to show the work proposed on the lot before the Board.

Mr. Adams stated that the erosion controls are still in place with the previous approval.

Upon a motion by Mr. Mitra and seconded by Mr. Rolle, the Board voted 4-0 to approve the Definitive Site Plan Amendment with the conditions stated in the DPRS staff memo.

List of Exhibits.

- Exhibit A: Definitive Site Plan Amendment Application; received September 20, 2012; prepared by JH Engineering Group for Rodney Perro.
- Exhibit B: Amended Definitive Site Plan; dated June 2, 2011, revised September 20, 2012; prepared by JH Engineering Group.

Exhibit C: Memorandum from the City of Worcester Division of Planning & Regulatory Services to the Planning Board; re: 405, 413 & 415 Grafton Street – Amendment to Definitive Site Plan; dated October 18, 2012.

Exhibit D: Memorandum from the City of Worcester Department of Public Works & Parks to the Planning Board; re: 405, 413 & 415 Grafton Street, Definitive Site Plan-PB-2012-051; dated October 19, 2012.

7. 1406, 1408 & 1438 Grafton Street – Amendment to Definitive Site Plan Approval (PB-2012-052)

John Shea, representing Webster Five Cents Saving Bank (WFCSB), introduced WFCSB Senior Vice President Joe Radovanic, and project engineer Rob Oliver. The applicant is proposing to open a branch bank office in the vacant 1,200 SF tenant space within the existing building. Presently on the premises is a ~ 4,176 dental office. The bank is proposed with two drive-through lanes containing an ATM and two teller stations in each lane and an escape lane on the northwest side of the site. The drive-through lanes are 100 ft and 105 ft, respectively.

Mr. Shea stated that on October 15, 2012, the applicant received Special Permit approval from the Zoning Board of Appeals to allow a bank with a drive-through in the BL-1.0 (Business, Limited) zoning district and to modify the parking layout with respect to the drive-through and escape lane lengths to be 100-ft and 105-ft with the condition that the curb cut from Grafton Street be entrance only. Mr. Shea also stated that there are two curb cuts on Bonair Road, the southerly curb cut is exit only and the one closest to Grafton Street is both an entrance and an exit.

Mr. Shea stated that a new paved parking area is also proposed in the rear of the site on the south side of the property that will provide 22 off-street parking spaces to meet the parking requirements for the proposed use. The dumpster's location is also proposed to be relocated from the existing location to the western corner of the site near the new parking area. Mr. Shea stated he was amenable to the conditions stated in the DPRS memo except for one, which referred to the southerly Bonair Road curb cut. Mr. Oliver stated that the site drainage depends on the naturally draining soils and left out the curb there intentionally to create a sheet flow into the basins.

Mr. Adams stated that he is agreeable to leaving the curb cut as is on Bonair Road to aid with drainage. Mr. Rolle asked the applicant what type of fence they were proposing. Mr. Radovanic stated that it would be a 6ft privacy fence.

Ms McCabe stated that she respectfully recommends approval with the conditions that: no snow storage be located in the landscape buffer, all lighting be shielded downward, a stockade fence or 6ft privacy fence be installed along the drive-through area abutting the residential property to the westerly property line, and that 8 copies of the final revised plans be submitted to DPRS prior to the release of the decisions.

Upon a motion by Mr. Rolle and seconded by Mr. Ochoa-Schutz, the Board voted 4-0 to approve the Amendment to the Definitive Site Plan subject to the following conditions: no snow storage be located in the landscape buffer, all lighting be shielded downward, a stockade fence or 6ft privacy fence be installed along the drive-through area abutting the residential property to the westerly property line, and that 8 copies of the final revised plans be submitted to DPRS that include the relief granted by the ZBA prior to the release of the decisions.

List of Exhibits.

- Exhibit A: Definitive Site Plan Amendment Application; received September 20, 2012; prepared by Webster Five Cents Savings Bank.
- Exhibit B: Stormwater Management Report; received September 20, 2012; prepared by David E. Ross Associates, Inc.
- Exhibit C: Site Plan of Land Prepared for Webster Five Cents Savings Bank 1406/1408/1438 Grafton Street sheets 1 - 4; dated September, 2012 and received on September 20, 2012; prepared by David E. Ross Associates, Inc.
- Exhibit D: Memorandum from the City of Worcester Division of Planning & Regulatory Services to the Planning Board; re: 1406, 1408, & 1438 Grafton Street – Amendment to Definitive Site Plan; dated October 22, 2012.
- Exhibit E: Memorandum from the City of Worcester Department of Public Works & Parks to the Planning Board; re: 1406, 2409 & 1438 Grafton Street; dated October 19, 2012.

OTHER BUSINESS

8. Spaulding Street – Convert Private Street to Public (ST-2012-022)

Mr. Adams stated that DPW&P recommends a priority #1 for the private street conversion. Upon a motion by Mr. Rolle and seconded by Mr. Mitra, the Board voted 4-0 to recommend the conversion to City Council.

9. Approval Not Required Plans

a) 26 Apthorp Street (Public Street) (AN-2012-035)

Ms. McCabe stated that 26 Aprthrop St is currently an undeveloped vacant lot and the owner wishes to subdivide the lot to create 2 lots. The zoning district is RL-7 which requires 65 ft frontage for single family detached dwellings. As proposed, lot A = 135' frontage and lot B = 290 ft of frontage and staff respectfully recommends endorsement. Upon a motion by Mr. Ochoa-Schutz and seconded by Mr. Rolle, the Board voted 4-0 to endorse the plan.

b) 14-16 Birch Street (Public Street) (AN-2012-036)

Ms. McCabe stated that there are currently 2 three-family houses on the lot and they are proposing to subdivide the lot to create 2 parcels so that each house is on its own lot. The required frontage for three-family dwellings in the RG-5 zone is 60', as proposed Lot 1 = 30' & Lot 2 = 20'. The applicant is using the MGL Chapter 41, 81L exemptions and there is a note on the plan that states "these buildings were built prior to the June 26, 1939" but the applicant did not provide proof of when the structures were built. Ms. McCabe stated that the assessor's records indicate that they were built in 1905.

Ms. McCabe stated that the Board must act within 21 days of receiving the request and the next meeting is beyond that 21 day deadline. Mr. Traynor stated that it was the Board's discretion if they wanted to accept the assessing data as proof of the age of the buildings or if they wanted to require the applicant to continue the matter and provide the necessary proof as assessing records are not generally for tax assessment purposes.

Upon a motion by Mr. Mitra and seconded by Mr. Ochoa-Schutz, the Board voted 4-0 to deny the endorsement unless the applicant agrees to an extension of the constructive grant deadline and provide proof that these structures pre-date 1939.

c) 20-22 Deepdale Street (Private Street) (AN-2012-037)

Ms. McCabe stated that the applicant is proposing to subdivide the existing lot to create 2 lots for the existing 2 single-family semi-detached houses which requires 35' per dwelling unit in the RL-7 zone. As proposed Lot 2A & Lot 2B both have 40' frontage so staff recommends endorsement. Upon a motion by Mr. Rolle and seconded by Mr. Ocho-Schutz, the Board voted 4-0 to endorse the plan.

d) 440 West Boylston Street (Public Street) (AN-2012-038)

Ms. McCabe stated that the owner is proposing to divide the existing lot into 3 parcels. Parcel A – has no frontage and is labeled as not buildable and will be conveyed. As proposed, lot 1 fronting on Summerhill Ave has 60' of frontage and 440 West Boylston St has 140' frontage. The proposed use is to construct non-residential buildings which does not require frontage in the BL-1.0 zone. Staff recommends endorsement. Upon a motion by Mr. Mitra and seconded by Mr. Rolle, the Board voted 4-0 to endorse the plan.

e) 230 Park Avenue (Public Street) (AN-2012-039)

Ms. McCabe stated that the applicant did not submit the required plans and this will be before the Board at a later date.

DECISIONS FROM PRIOR MEETINGS:

The decisions for 10 Claremont Street, 1 Farm Street, 149-151 Lake Ave, Park Ave Alteration, Ferraro Street, and Beaver Brook Parkway were signed.

COMMUNICATION TO THE BOARD:

- o Main South Community Development Corporation Invitation to the grand opening of KGH Phase IV Housing Development on October 25, 2012

Mr. Fontane informed the Board of the received communication. The Board had no comments.

ADJOURNMENT:

Upon a motion by Mr. Rolle and seconded by Mr. Mitra, the Board voted 4-0 to adjourn the meeting at 6:53 P.M.