

**FITCHBURG PLANNING BOARD MEETING MINUTES
TUESDAY, JUNE 11, 2019**

MEMBERS PRESENT: Paula Caron, Chair Peter Capodagli
Paul Fontaine, Jr. Mike Hurley
Laura O’Kane Andrew Van Hazinga
Amanda Koeck (Assoc. Member)

STAFF: Mike O’Hara, Tom Skwierawski

Call to Order

Meeting called to order at 6:02 p.m. in the Community Room, Fitchburg Fire Headquarters, 33 North St.

ANR PLANS

None

MINOR SITE PLAN REVIEW

Falcon Nests, 137 Green St., parking & landscaping for 2-family

Paul Bourbeau, PHB Architects presented plan. Question raised as to whether Site Plan Review needed since it’s just a two-family & doesn’t trigger the Site Plan Review threshold for # for parking spaces. Board agreed to review anyway. Applicant proposing to demolish vacant single-family dwelling and rebuild on same footprint. Parking for five vehicles to be provided on the adjacent lot (67-69 Myrtle) which is now in the same ownership. Both will be 3-BR units. ZBA issued Special Permit 5/14/19 to increase an existing nonconformity to a two-family, incorporating whatever conditions the Planning Board imposed. Motion made & seconded to approve this Minor Site Plan as presented. Vote 6-0 in favor.

Pappas, 15 Jackson Ave., change of use to Builtwell Fence

Jim Pappas and Kim Levesque, Builtwell Fence present. Builtwell Fence needs to relocate from their 49 John Fitch Hwy. location and is proposing to move to the former WS Beauty Supply site. Board reviewed updated plan dated 6/11/19 by New England Engineering. Discussion on placement on screening for their fence supplies & whether white vinyl or black chain link fence. They are also seeking ZBA approval for outside storage in a C&A district. Ms. Levesque: They do not have room to store all their materials in bldg. They need to have outside storage & need to protect their stock. Board members wanted white vinyl fence since that’s the Board’s standard.

Jim: Look at the nature of the Jackson Ave. neighborhood, it’s mostly commercial.

Board: Yes, but with residential abutters on either site. Board wants site to look good but is willing to compromise.

Paul Gauvin, current property owner: Property has been vacant for awhile, it’d be a shame if it couldn’t be converted to some productive use.

Motion made & seconded to approve this Minor Site Plan with conditions:

Applicant shall submit revised site plan prior to occupancy showing the following modifications:

- Installation of vinyl fencing on front sides of parcel.
- Installation of black chain link on rear property line and side (easterly) property line.
- Elimination of the 5 non-compliant parking spaces in the public way fronting on Jackson Ave. and replacing with landscaping.
- Move forward 2 of the parking spaces fronting on Jackson Ave. to the side of the building. Parking spaces must be off-street on private property and minimum of 3’ from property lines and structures.
- Add one handicap parking space near building entrance.

Vote 5-0 in favor.

PUBLIC HEARINGS

Special Permit & Site Plan Review - Rivarola, 37 Goodrich St., convert 2-family to 3-family

Hearing had been continued from 4/9/19. No one present for this item. Applicant had requested that this item be continued to the June meeting. He is having a survey prepared showing parking; it will be ready for review prior to the July meeting; he is now asking to continue hearing to July. He has also confirmed that he is aware of the requirement for residential sprinklers for the addition of the 3rd unit & that the property owner is willing to pay the additional cost.

Motion made & seconded to continue this hearing to the July meeting. Vote in favor.

Special Permit & Site Plan Review - Krikorian, 255 Main St., 112-unit Planned Unit Development

Present: Bill Krikorian, Charles Roberts, Kuhn-Riddle Architects, Chris Anderson, Hannigan Engineering. Hearing opened: Bill, Charles & Chris described proposal - a 112-unit multifamily structure at the NE corner of Main & Day Streets, proposed name: "Gateway Village". Two levels of parking, five stories of residential units above. All units will be market rate. Height: 85 feet, which is the maximum allowed per Bldg. Code for that type of construction. Unit types: 53 1-BR, 59 2-BRs. No vehicular access from Main Street, all access from Snow Street. There will be a rooftop garden with southern exposure on the two-level parking garage. Separation of building from Rollstone Congregational Church: approx. 11 feet at closest point.

Parking for 98 vehicles on first two levels of building.

Q: Will units come with reserved parking or rented by individual tenants?

Bill: Undetermined at this time. They plan to have EV charging stations. Will also be leasing 24 spaces in the MART garage across Main St. Bill submitted a letter stating as such from the MART's Deputy Administrator. Bill will be partnering with an unknown entity on this project.

First two stories will be clad in brick, upper stories will be a fiber cement material of different colors to blend in with the adjacent buildings.

Q: Will there be uplighting of bldg.? No, but street edge of building will be lighted. Board commented that the lighting of the interior of the garage will be important.

Dumpster location will be on pad near site entrance.

Public comment:

Paul Stansel, Moderator, Rollstone Congregational Church: A 7-story structure next door will have a negative impact on the church. Applicant should have reached out to the church prior to now. Church is 150 years old. They're concerned about effect of construction that nearby on the church's stained glass windows and on the church itself. Stained glass window on the western side will mostly be in shadow.

He thought that the idea of future renters using the MART garage wouldn't work; they've suggested that to their parishioners, but folks are wary about having to park on the opposite side of Main St. and having to cross Main St.

Laura Rohrback, 40 Snow St. - They should have a separate meeting with abutters.

Maryanne Smith, 94 Phillips St., member of Rollstone Church: Concerned with density. This building & four-story Hotel Raymond will block light. Also concerned about effects during construction & water getting into church basement. Q: Will these be subsidized units? No.

Comments from Depts. reviewed.

Board comments:

Suggestion that a MART bus stop be designated in front of building suggested.

A per unit contribution toward future traffic improvement was suggested, similar to Bridle Cross condos. Agreed that a peer review of the traffic study is warranted.

Motion made & seconded to continue this hearing to the July meeting. Vote in favor.

Special Permit & Site Plan Review - Falcon Nests, 14-16 Pearl St. - parking relief

Hearing opened. Paul Bourbeau, PHB Architects & applicant Chis DeRosa presented plan. Chris is rehabbing vacant 3-family structure. There is room on the lot for 7 off-street parking spaces, but they will not meet dimensional requirements & some of the spaces are stacked (tandem) spaces. Chris described several other properties in the college neighborhood that he has rehabbed and still owns. He will continue to manage all of the properties that he owns. He will be removing front porch, installing new siding, adding landscaping to front, post signs not to park in easement area
Comments from Depts. reviewed.

Board comments:

Q: How does the existing deeded passway affect the parking situation?

Public comments:

A neighbor using the same passway was concerned about tenants of this building parking & blocking the way.

Motion made & seconded to close hearing. Vote in favor.

Motion made & seconded to Approve Special Permit with conditions:

- Remove front porch, install new siding, add landscaping to front of property, | post "No Parking" signs in easement area.

Vote 7-0 in favor.

Site Plan Review - NBE Fitchburg Solar, 4.88 MW solar array, Northerly side of Ashburnham St. between McIntire & Stickney Roads

Present: Jared Alvord & Chad Koenig, Mad River Solar, LLC, Tom Rebula - Goddard Consulting (Wetlands Expert), Tim Coon, P.E. - JR Consulting (Civil Engineer)

Hearing opened. Proposed is a 4.8 MW Solar array on a 16 ac. portion of a vacant 48 ac. parcel on the northern side of Ashburnham St. They will upgrade power to site from Ashburnham St. No connection to the 3-phase power on Stickney Rd. Array will also have a battery storage unit for off-peak hours in a 20' x 26' stand alone bldg. This is req'd by the Mass SMART Program.

No disturbance on the easterly third of site. This unused portion of site w/ a perennial stream is proposed to be donated to No. County Land Trust.

Mad River Solar and property owner (John Deneufville) will continue to own the project through to completion and will run it after.

They plan to plant pollinator species between the racks of panels.

They are negotiating PILOT agreement with the City.

Construction timeline? Chad: two months to install posts, overall project will be finished in 5 months.

Plan on starting Spring 2020. There will be minimal grading of the site, mainly for improving the old cart road which will be the access to the site. They have to pay a \$1 million connection fee to Unutil.

This may become a community solar project.

Board comments:

Discussion on whether a Peer review of the submitted Stormwater Mgmt. Plan was needed.

Board agreed that it was. Post construction impacts should be no worse than pre-construction.

A site reclamation bond could be considered, as has been done with other solar projects.

Public comments:

Ms. Gammel, 753 Ashburnham St. - Buffer? There will be a 100-foot wide undisturbed buffer from neighbors' property lines. Chain link fencing at project limits

Resident at 757 Ashburnham St. expressed concerns about long-term viability of solar.

Karen Caponi, 696 Ashburnham St. - Lots wetlands on site. They're one of the closest neighbors.

Ken Labombard, 597 Ashburnham St. - There are six drains from property that cross over to other side underneath Rt. 12.

Ms. Sheehan, 227 Stickney Rd. pointed out that there is an old dump on the Stickney Rd. site of the site.

Applicant willing to meet with neighbors on site prior to the next meeting, date TBD.

Notification of that date will be forwarded to the Board members.

Motion made & seconded to continue hearing to July 9th meeting.
Vote 5-0 in favor.

Proposed Zoning Amendment - Replace existing Sec. 181.87, Smart Growth Overlay District (40R) with entirely new section (cont'd from 5/14/19)

Hearing re-opened. Tom informed the Board that DHCD had approved the City's application to amend the 40R district and had made some minor changes to the wording of the draft amendment. He went over the required changes.

Motion made & seconded to close the Public Hearing. Vote in favor.
Motion made & seconded to recommend in favor of the Amendment.
Vote 5-0 in favor.

OTHER BUSINESS

371 Lunenburg St. - plan revisions per Special Permit conditions

Minor revisions made to the parking spaces & landscaping at front entrance. Board agreed to defer action until revised plan reflecting all of the site plan approval conditions was submitted.

Mt. Elam Peak subdivision (Turkey Hill Rd., Goodfellow Dr.) - release of Covenant

A final release of this subdivision covenant had never been requested. It turned up recently as an issue during a title search.

Motion made & seconded to authorize the Chair to sign the Covenant release. Vote in favor.

MINUTES

Minutes of May 14th meeting approved w/ some corrections.

Motion made & seconded to adjourn. Vote in favor.
Meeting adjourned: 9:48 p.m.

Next meeting: July 9, 2019
Minutes approved: September 10, 2019