



Town of Southwick Planning Board

MINUTES



Tuesday, January 9, 2024

7:00 PM (recorded)

Town Hall Land Use Hearing Room

Written Minutes

(Not verbatim - comments can be heard on recordings available at www.southwickma.org)

MEMBERS IN ATTENDANCE: Michael Doherty, Chair
David Spina, Vice Chair
Jessica Thornton

ABSENT: Richard Utzinger
David Sutton
Meghan Lightcap, Secretary

TOWN STAFF: Jon Goddard, Town Planner

Also attending the meeting were approximately 4 members of the public and several people via Zoom.

The “hybrid” meeting of the Planning Board was scheduled for participation in person and via Zoom at the Town Hall Land Use Hearing Room and was called to order at 7:00 p.m. by Mr. Doherty. He stated that the meeting was being recorded and asked if anyone else was recording the meeting.

TOWN PLANNER’S REPORT: 7:00 p.m.

1. Mr. Goddard shared that a small parcel of land at the easterly town boundary with Agawam and had recently come up for a tax taking. At the request of the Fire Chief and Chief Administrative Officer, he examined the viability of this property for the prospective installation of a wireless communications tower. Mr. Goddard’s inclination was that the site was too small and a nearby residence was too close to satisfy minimum setback distances but would follow up with his final review notes.

2. Mr. Goddard recapped the Board's inclination from the last meeting to redirect efforts by the Pioneer Valley Planning Commission to perform a "Zoning Diagnostic" rather than an update and alignment effort to the Board's Subdivision Regulations and the Flexible Residential Development District bylaw. Mr. Goddard will be coordinating the request with Ken Comia of PVPC and will update the Board with the forthcoming response.
3. Mr. Goddard noted that the Board members were copied on correspondence from the Building Inspector to the Chief Administrative Officer regarding ongoing complaints and concerns about the pace and quality of infrastructure work being completed by the developer at Noble Steed Crossing, and an apparent open space violation. Mr. Goddard will be updating the Board on any progress made toward compliance.
4. Mr. Goddard also shared enforcement letters with Board members as issued by the Building Inspector regarding the drive-through at Mrs. Murphy's Donuts on College Highway and surface water discharge at 150 Vining Hill Road.

PUBLIC COMMENTS: 7:05 p.m.

No public comments were submitted.

APPOINTMENTS:

7:10 p.m.	662 A College Highway (Map 65, Parcel 26 - Industrial Restricted Zone) – Proposed Self-Storage Facility: Special Permit, Site Plan Approval, and Stormwater Management Permit	<i>Continued Public Hearing</i>
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The applicant, Jim Boyle, attended the meeting as well as Doug Serrill and Chris Chamberland from the Berkshire Design Group and William VonFricken from Frank G. Relf Architect, P.C. Mr. Boyle introduced himself and his wife Ellen Boyle and said that he had changes made to the plans to address concerns from the Fire Department and DPW. He said they received approval for the project from the Conservation Commission last night.

Mr. Goddard shared the new plan via Zoom and Mr. Serrill described the changes. Mr. Serrill said they redesigned the site due to conservation feedback about the wetland delineation. He explained that the site starts off with a curb cut off of College Highway and a new sidewalk that will meet MassDOT standards, as their next phase will include submitting for a MassDOT access permit. They will construct a 26-foot-wide driveway that crosses the wetland with a 3-sided open bottom concrete culvert, utilizing precast concrete block retaining walls on either side of the crossing that maintains a minimum 26-foot-wide width around the building. A change was made to provide one-way counterclockwise traffic flow and loops around the storage building. The septic system is adjacent to the office building and is currently being redesigned for submittal to the Board of Health. There are 4 different loading spaces that are 10 x 20 in size and are positioned next to each of the 2 doors on the south side and 2 doors on the north side. There is also a larger 10 x 125-foot loading area located at the rear of the building, providing temporary

parking for patrons unloading or loading their storage facility. Mr. Serrill described the stormwater management system and plantings proposed for the site.

Mr. Doherty asked if they would be creating a problem with adding a replication buffer zone to the side of the property that is next to O'Reilly Auto Parts. Chris Chamberland said the reason they chose that location is because O'Reilly had to do their own replication on the opposite side of their property, so this is an extension of a wetland system that has already been expanded.

Mrs. Thornton asked for the total impervious surface area; the figure was not readily available. She asked if the loading zones would be the same places for people to also park and Mr. Serrill said yes, it was. Mrs. Thornton said her concern is that you can't see behind the building, the exterior doors are in the front and rear of the building and people will pull right up against those doors and drive around them where you would risk unsafe maneuvering for drivers and pedestrians, especially those with disabilities. Mr. Serrill said there is a loading zone and plenty of space for vehicles to drive around. Mr. Boyle said he met with the Fire Chief to work on a plan he felt comfortable with. The Board members discussed the parking spots and loading zones and felt safety was a concern for people to walk and drive safely within the small space allowed. The applicant and representatives said they felt it was adequate based on data they pulled from other facilities.

Mr. Doherty read comments into record from the Fire Chief and DPW members.

Andrew Reardon of 23 Woodside Circle said that he had sent Mr. Goddard photos of people who were in the process of loading or unloading their storage units, depicting the usage of space beyond a parked vehicle as it might affect vehicular circulation at this large building.

Mr. Spina asked if previous questions about the size of the interior and firefighter accessibility had been addressed and Fire Chief Rich Stefanowicz said he spoke with them about these concerns and some changes had been made to the plans.

Mr. Doherty said he would like to see examples of off-street parking at other existing interior self-storage facilities. The applicant's consultant will also be providing the site illumination plan.

A MOTION was made by Mr. Spina and **SECONDED** by Mrs. Thornton to continue the public hearing for 662 A College Highway to January 23, 2024 at 7:10 pm.

The motion passed unanimously.

7:15 p.m. 250 College Highway (Map 133, Parcel 14 – Residential 40 Zone) Proposed
Renovation/Reconstruction of a Preexisting Nonconforming Multifamily
Dwelling: Special Permit & Site Plan Approval Application

Public Hearing

Mr. Doherty said he received a request for a continuance request letter from the applicant's representative.

A MOTION was made by Mr. Spina and SECONDED by Mrs. Thornton to continue the public hearing for 250 College Highway to January 23, 2024 at 7:45 pm.

The motion passed unanimously.

7:30 p.m. Planning Board Review & Discussion of the Southwick 2040 Master Plan Final Draft; Consideration of its Adoption *Continued Public Hearing*

Mr. Doherty said he would postpone this item to the next meeting to allow for participation by absent members.

A MOTION was made by Mr. Spina and SECONDED by Mrs. Thornton to continue the public hearing for Planning Board Review & Discussion of the Southwick 2040 Master Plan Final Draft to January 23, 2024 at 8:00 pm.

The motion passed unanimously.

Discussions

- *Potential Future Expansion of the Sodom Mountain Campground, 233 South Loomis Street & Legal Opinion Letter* – Mr. Doherty said the applicant requested that the discussion be held off until the next meeting.
- *Housing Production Plan, Planning Board Vote to Approve Plan as Reviewed by EOHL*C – Mr. Goddard said that PVPC has asked the Planning Board to review the plan so that they can submit it to the state. Mr. Doherty said he would like to defer voting on it so that he can look at it more closely.
- *Suggested Composition of Master Plan Advisory Committee & Related Matters* – Mr. Doherty deferred the discussion until all members were present.
- *Revisions to Stormwater Management Permit Forms* – Mr. Goddard shared changes to the stormwater management permit form and waiver request; Board members agreed to utilize the revised forms.

Routine Business

- Planning Board Member Comments – None.
- Minutes Approval: November 28, 2023 & December 12, 2023

A MOTION was made by Mr. Spina and SECONDED by Mrs. Thornton to approve the meeting minutes of November 28, 2023 with minor edits.

The motion passed unanimously.

A **MOTION** was made by Mr. Spina and **SECONDED** by Mrs. Thornton to approve the meeting minutes of December 12, 2023 with minor edits.

The motion passed unanimously.

Being no further business to be brought before the board, a **MOTION** was made by Mr. Spina and **SECONDED** by Mrs. Thornton to close the meeting at 8:34 p.m.

The motion passed unanimously.

The Next Scheduled Meeting is January 23, 2024.

Electronic signatures have been affixed in accordance with M.G.L. c.110G and pursuant to the Board's electronic signature authorization vote of January 4, 2022, as recorded at the Hampden County Registry of Deeds in Book 24401, Page 596.

Michael Doherty, Chair	<u>/s/ Michael Doherty</u>
David Spina, Vice Chair	<u>/s/ David Spina</u>
Richard Utzinger	<u>/s/ Richard Utzinger</u>
David Sutton	<u>/s/ David Sutton</u>
Jessica Thornton	<u>/s/ Jessica Thornton</u>