

**SOUTH HADLEY PLANNING BOARD REGULAR MEETING
MINUTES OF FEBRUARY 24, 2020
As Approved**

Present: Mark Cavanaugh, Chair; Melissa O'Brien, Vice-Chair; Brad Hutchison, Member; Joanna Brown, Member; Richard Harris, Town Planner; Anne Capra, Conservation Administrator/ Planner; and Colleen Canning, Senior Clerk Planning and Conservation

Chair Cavanaugh called the meeting into order at 6:30 PM.

Agenda Item #1 --- SCHEDULED PUBLIC HEARING: Application for Special Permit for proposed mixed use redevelopment. Property Location: 36 Bridge Street - north side of Bridge Street (aka State Route 116) (Assessor's Map Number #5C as Parcel #21)

Chair Cavanaugh called the Public Hearing into order at 6:30 PM. (See Public Hearing minutes)

The regular meeting reconvened at 6:57 PM.

Agenda Item #2 --- CONSIDER DECISION: Application for Special Permit for proposed mixed use redevelopment. Property Location: 36 Bridge Street - north side of Bridge Street (aka State Route 116) (Assessor's Map Number #5C as Parcel #21)

As the Public Hearing closed, members of the Board reviewed the 12 mandatory Special Permit criteria per 255-129 as follows:

1. Standard #1: The proposed project was located within South Hadley Falls and was consistent with the Falls' Urban Renewal and Redevelopment Plan
2. Standard #2: The proposed project was reviewed by Town officials including the Conservation Commission which undertook an extensive review. The project would improve the existing aesthetic and environmental conditions
3. Standard #3: The proposed project was residential with business space along the street front
4. Standard #4: The project would improve existing conditions. The plan effectively provided enough parking for the residential portion of the project and the zero setback kept with the existing historical character of the Falls
5. Standard #5: The project did not require screening which retained the existing historical character of the Falls
6. Standard #6: The Fire Department reviewed and signed off on the project
7. Standard #7: The project received a full engineering design which included a peer-review of drainage per Conservation Commission requirements
8. Standard #8: The project included mirrors and signage to alert exiting vehicles to pedestrian activities.
9. Standard #9: The proposed project would improve the site's existing drainage.
10. Standard #10: The proposed building would enhance the area compared to the previous structure.
11. Standard #11: The proposed project complied with the Master Plan

12. Standard #12: To the extent that site plan review applied to the proposed project, the criteria were met.

Mr. Harris noted that the findings were developed with the presumption that the requested waivers would be granted. He added that the plans submitted by the applicant reflected the waivers being granted.

The Board reviewed the 7 optional Special Permit criteria per 255-129 as follows:

1. Standard #1: The standard did not apply
2. Standard #2: The projects impact was no greater than that allowed by right
3. Standard #3: The project's off-street parking did not meet the standard but the off-street parking satisfied the requirement for the residential dwellings
4. Standard #4: The signage and goose neck lighting were within the existing historical character of the Falls
5. Standard #5: The proposed building was out of the flood plain.
6. Standard #6: The proposed project did not have a negative impact. It would improve the site's environmental impact.
7. Standard #7: The standard did not apply.

Motion: Mr. Hutchison moved to endorse the aforementioned 12 mandatory findings per *section 255-129 Standards for special permits* relating to the Special Permit application for the mixed use redevelopment of 36 Bridge Street. Ms. Brown seconded the motion. Four (4) out of four (4) members present voted in favor of the motion.

Mr. Harris provided the Board with drafts of conditions for Special Permit approval. He reviewed the conditions which included a performance guarantee to ensure that landscaping, drainage and raingarden installation were adequate. The conditions included the requirement for installation of a convex mirror to allow exiting vehicles to see pedestrians. As was detailed in the Public Hearing, conditions were added for installation of a stop sign (painted signage on the exit drive was allowable) and the requirement to limit the parking lot to active vehicles only to be used by residents of the building (no storage of inactive vehicles/motorized equipment would be allowed).

Dan Luis inquired about procedures for minor changes to an approved Special Permit. Mr. Harris explained that minor changes could be discussed during the course of regular Planning Board Meetings. However, the Board could require a new public hearing for substantial changes.

As there was no further discussion, Chair Cavanaugh inquired if there was a motion.

Motion: Vice-Chair O'Brien moved to approve the Special Permit for mixed use redevelopment at 36 Bridge Street with conditions and to approve two waivers from Zoning Bylaw requirements for off-street parking and dimensional setbacks. Mr. Hutchison seconded the motion. Four (4) out of four (4) members present voted in favor of the motion.

Agenda Item #3 --- Discussion/Comments on Route 202/33 Corridor Study Update

The Route 202-33 Corridor Study consultants, Camilo Espitia and Jess Wilson of Herriman, were present at the meeting.

Camilo Espitia opened the discussion by presenting the previously transmitted slide show which was available to view on the Town's website. He explained that Herriman was also the Town's Master Plan Update consultant. Therefore, the Master Plan public outreach process was used to enrich the Route 202-33 corridor study. Abutting towns that share the corridor would be engaged with through the process. The components of the study could be implemented through zoning and public investment.

Vice-Chair O'Brien remarked that the existing MassDOT facility along the corridor should not prevent that area's consideration for redevelopment as the existing conditions could change in the future. Mr. Harris explained that the presentation was recognizing the limited development potential of the area but did not aim to exclude it entirely from redevelopment.

Camilo Espitia continued presenting the slideshow. He overviewed the corridor's strengths, weaknesses, opportunities and threats (SWOT). For example, the corridor's proximity to Westover Air Base could be perceived as both an opportunity and a weakness. The Air Base could bring visitors which could drive economic growth. However, it placed the corridor at a disadvantage for public funding as it was located within the accident prevention zone (APZ).

Mr. Harris noted that two emails were received from residents relating to the corridor study. An email from Linda Young, Westbrook Road, recommended that property owners along the corridor should be notified of the study. She also recommended considerations for development potential of the land near an existing nursing home along Route 202 with associated wetlands.

Chair Cavanaugh inquired if the consultant had met with anyone from South Hadley in their course of study. Camilo Espitia replied that Herriman was the Town's consultant for the ongoing Master Plan Update. Therefore, public input for the Master Plan Update informed the course of the corridor study. He added that communications with abutting Town's along the corridor, Granby and Chicopee, would be initiated as well.

Ms. Brown noted the need for a traffic study of the corridor. She observed that the corridor is a heavily traveled commuter route and traffic has gotten increasingly worse over the years.

Mr. Harris noted that the consultant's presentation was not the study, but an overview.

Mr. Hutchison asked the consultant if the study would include analysis of similar corridors in other communities. Camilo Espitia responded that it would.

Vice-Chair O'Brien noted that MassDOT was preparing to repave Route 202 and advised the consultant to coordinate their efforts with the project.

Mr. Harris noted that much of the corridor was ineligible for 40R as there was no bus service to the area.

Vice-Chair O'Brien noted the importance of greenspace along the corridor. She mentioned that the Fire District No. 1 owns much of the greenspace along the corridor and advised the consultant to communicate with the district.

Vice-Chair O'Brien noted that the corridor's use as a commuter pathway could be an advantage for development along the Route.

Chair Cavanaugh inquired what impact the Accident Prevention Zone (APZ) had on potential development. Camilo Espitia responded that the corridor was within APZ 2, which was better than APZ1 for development potential. He explained that development within APZ could hinder the potential for public funding. However, the agency that determined the APZ was not a regulatory agency. Mr. Harris noted that there was recent development along the corridor within APZ 2 which received public funding.

Linda Young, Westbrook Road, addressed the Board. She expressed concern for the expedited timeline as the final draft was due by June 30, 2020. Camilo Espitia responded that the deadline was a requirement of the grant funding.

Lucia Foley, Shadowbrook Estates, addressed the Board. She recommended that the residents of the neighborhood near the Big Y Supermarket should be corresponded with. These residents did not live directly along the corridor but often engaged with the corridor and could be consulted.

Anne Capra, Conservation Administrator/Planner, stated that she sent the consultant MassDOT's project work scope for Route 202 upgrades.

Ms. Brown inquired when the draft study would be available. Mr. Harris responded the draft would be received prior to the Public Meeting to consider the study, which was yet to be scheduled. The Board tentatively scheduled the Public Meeting for April 30, 2020. The details of the meeting would be confirmed at a future date.

Sandra Zieminski, Lyman Terrace, addressed the Board. She asked how property owners who lived along the corridor would be notified of the study. Mr. Harris responded that property owners would be mailed notice and a public meeting would be held to allow residents to offer comments and make recommendations.

Nate Therein, Jewett Lane, addressed the Board. He recommended meeting with some priority property owners along the corridor prior to the public meeting.

Ms. Brown noted that the inclusion of a website link on the mailing to property owners would be helpful.

Agenda Item #4 --- Consider a Policy providing for a Public Comment Period for Planning Board meetings

Mr. Harris explained that considerations for a public comment period during regular meetings had been ongoing. Revisions were made to the draft policy following the Board's previous discussion at the January 27, 2020 meeting. The updated draft was included within the agenda's

background materials. Mr. Harris explained that the Board needed to determine the comment period's placement on the agenda- either at the beginning or end.

Ms. Brown was in favor of holding the comment period at the beginning of the meeting.

Vice-Chair O'Brien was partial to holding the comment period at the end but was amenable to holding it at the beginning. She noted that Clerk Mulvaney, who was not present at tonight's meeting, was partial to holding the comment period at the end of the meeting.

Members of the Board were agreeable to deferring the vote until the next meeting to allow all members to vote on the policy.

Agenda Item #5 --- 2020 Census Update

Mr. Harris explained that the decennial Federal Census would be held soon. Accurate census numbers put the Town in the best position for grant funding, investments and accurate representation. He urged everyone to submit their census questionnaire upon receipt.

Ms. Brown observed that the 2020 Census slogan was "Stand Up! Be Counted!" which could be interpreted as insensitive to some, particularly in light of the recent appointment of a Commission on Disabilities in Town.

Agenda Item #6 --- Minutes

Draft minutes of the February 10, 2020 regular meeting and public hearings were previously sent to the Board for review.

Spelling and grammatical errors were noted within the draft regular meeting minutes of February 10, 2020.

Motion: Vice-Chair O'Brien moved to approve the draft regular meeting minutes of February 10, 2020. Mr. Hutchison seconded the motion. Four (4) out of four (4) members present voted in favor of the motion.

No errors were noted within the draft February 10, 2020 Public Hearing minutes to consider a Special Permit to redevelop 36 Bridge Street.

Motion: Vice-Chair O'Brien moved to approve the February 10, 2020 Public Hearing minutes to consider a Special Permit to redevelop 36 Bridge Street. Mr. Hutchison seconded the motion. Four (4) out of (4) members present voted in favor of the motion.

Spelling and grammatical errors were noted within the draft February 10, 2020 Public Hearing minutes to consider the Definitive Subdivision Plan of North Pole Estates.

Motion: Vice-Chair O'Brien moved to approve the February 10, 2020 Public Hearing minutes as amended to consider the Definitive Subdivision Plan of North Pole Estates. Mr. Hutchison seconded the motion. Four (4) out of four (4) members present voted in favor of the motion.

Agenda Item #7 --- Correspondence

Two additional pieces of correspondence were received relating to residents' comments/question of the Route 202-33 Corridor which was discussed previously under Agenda Item #3.

Agenda Item #8 --- Development Update and Planner's Report

a. Development Report

- North Pole Estates Definitive Subdivision Plan – Mr. Harris explained that the consultant has begun the Peer Review process.
- New SHELD Telecommunications Facilities on Old Lyman Road – Mr. Harris noted no change.
- Decision on Skinner Woods project – Mr. Harris noted no change. An appeal of the Board's decision has been filed in Superior Court. The Board will be notified if there is a need for Board members to provide input for the Town's response.
- Ethan Circle – Mr. Harris noted no change
- Mountain Brook Subdivision – Phase 2 – Mr. Harris noted no change. The Acting DPW Superintendent noted some items that need to be corrected and is going to provide a cost estimate. Once this information has been received, the Board can consider setting the Performance Guarantee amount and releasing the Covenant Agreement.
- 36 Bridge Street Mixed Use Development – This item was previously discussed under agenda items #1 and #2.
- Newton Street Smart Growth Zoning District – Mr. Harris noted no change
- Rivercrest Condominiums sign – Mr. Harris noted no change
- Former Library conversion to condominiums – Mr. Harris noted no change
- Canal Street condominiums – Mr. Harris noted no change
- ITW Cell Tower on Hadley Street – Mr. Harris noted no change

b. Bylaw Amendments and Regulatory Revisions

- Bylaw Amendments for 2020: Mr. Harris explained that the Board needed to discuss shortly what amendments – if any – it wishes to take to the Annual Town Meeting. Bringing the amendments which were withdrawn this past Fall has been previously discussed. However, due to the relationship of the General Bylaw regarding Earth Removal and the WSPD and Section 255-84, it seemed prudent to wait to see what action the Attorney General's Office took on the General Bylaw before proceeding. That approval was received February 20th. This new General Bylaw requires an Earth Removal Permit approved by the Planning Board. At the same time, Section 255-84 of the Zoning Bylaw also requires an Earth Removal Permit with plans approved by the Planning Board as well – in some cases a Special Permit from the Planning Board is required. Each of the Bylaws have different exempt activities and standards for approvals of the respective Earth Removal permits. Accordingly, it would seem to be helpful for the Board to have a discussion of the different bylaw provisions before determining what amendments to offer to Town Meeting. At a minimum, it would seem to lessen potential confusion by changing the reference in Section 255-84 from "Earth Removal, Excavation, and/or Fill" to "Site Disturbance Permit" as it encompasses removal and fill activities. But, there would also appear to be benefits in developing consistency as to the application requirements, standards and exemptions for the respective bylaws. The AG's office particularly noted the need to understand and apply the General Bylaw provision consistent with the exemption for Agricultural activities – this isn't an issue for the

Zoning Bylaw provision as it is subject to Chapter 40A, Section 3, MGL which provides a broad exemption to Agricultural uses. Given the agendas for March and the changes in the Planning Board membership coming in April, it may be better to plan for these amendments for the Fall Special Town Meeting. This would give the new member (and hopefully, Associate Member) opportunity to fully participate in the discussion of the proposed amendments.

Mr. Hutchison suggested that revisions to the Water Supply Protection District Bylaw be revisited. He explained that the bylaw was confusing and did not sit well with the existing regulation schedule.

Ms. Brown expressed concern for considering changes to the recently endorsed General Bylaw. Mr. Harris advised to change the Zoning Bylaw to better reconcile with the new General Bylaw as the Planning Board was appointed to administer the new General Bylaw.

Mr. Hutchison recommended that the next regular meeting on March 9, 2020 start at 6:00 PM as there was an expected lengthy public hearing continuance scheduled.

c. Other Projects

- Urban Renewal Plan and Redevelopment Authority - Mr. Harris noted no change.
- Complete Streets Program Participation: Mr. Harris noted no change. The contractor is waiting for delivery of signal related equipment – now scheduled for late April 2020. The delay is due to an equipment manufacturing delay which is apparently impacting all signal installation projects
- Valley Bike Share: Mr. Harris noted no change
- Open Space & Recreation Plan and Master Plan Updates: Mr. Harris explained that the Conservation Administrator/Assistant Planner, Anne Capra, has been working on incorporating the revisions requested by various parties into the OSRP update. The Master Plan Update Committee is scheduled to meet again on March 19, 2020. Anne Capra gave a very good overview of the OSRP and Master Plan Update process to the South Hadley employees at the Professional Development Day on January 31st. MPIC has met with many department heads and boards to apprise them of and get their input into the updates. There should be no department heads or Boards indicating they did not have knowledge of or input into the updates.
- PVPC DLTA Submittals: Mr. Harris noted no change

d. Workshops/Training Opportunities

Mr. Harris explained that the Conservation Administrator/Assistant Planner, Anne Capra, and he will attend the National Conference of the American Planning Association in late April.

Agenda Item #9 --- Other New Business

There was no new business discussed.

Agenda Item #10 --- Adjournment

As there was no further business to discuss, Chair Cavanaugh inquired if there was a motion to adjourn the meeting.

Motion: Mr. Hutchison moved to adjourn the meeting at 8:43 PM. Vice-Chair O'Brien seconded the motion. Four (4) out of four (4) members present voted in favor of the motion.

Respectfully Submitted,
As Approved
Colleen Canning, Senior Clerk Planning and Conservation

Appendix

Document	Document Location
Draft conditions for 36 Bridge Street mixed use redevelopment Special Permit	Planning Files
Route 202/33 Corridor Study Status Report Presentation	Planning Files
2/22/20 Email from Martha Terry, Brainerd Street, regarding the 202/33 Corridor Study	Planning Files
2/24/2020 Email from Linda Young, Westbrook Road, regarding the 202/33 Corridor Study	Planning Files
Draft Planning Board Public Comment Policy	Planning Files