Minutes of Meeting
August 8, 2019
Hearing Room 18, 210 Main St., Northampton, MA

Members Present:

R Tess Poe, Chair,
R Mark Sullivan, Vice Chair - recused for hearings
R Marissa Elkins
R Sam Taylor
R Euripides DeOliveira
R George Kohout
R Christa Grenat
Janna White, Associate Member
Alan Verson, Associate Member

Staff:

R Planning Director, Wayne Feiden
R Senior Planner, Carolyn Misch

FOR ZONING BOARD: David Bloomberg Sara Northrup Elizabeth Silver, Maureen Scanlon, Bob Riddle

6:30 PM Tess Poe opened the public comment. There was none.

6:30 PM Tess Poe opened the joint public hearing with the Zoning Board. She explained the process followed by David Bloomberg, who opened the joint public hearing for the Zoning Board on Special Permit with Site Plan by Benjamin Lewis for 15 residential units and site related development and Finding for a change of use on a lot with non-conforming frontage at 34 Dewey Ct, Northampton, Map Id 31D-217.

Mark Sullivan noted previous relationship with Berkshire and asked if there were any concerns with his participation in the matter.

David Bloomberg also noted previous work with Berkshire Design.

Jeff Squire, the applicant’s consultant from The Berkshire Design Group, opened with slides related to the lack of frontage.
Board discussed process and whether the ZBA should just hear comments related to frontage. They determined to proceed with hearing the overall project and then allow public comment.

Ben Lewis presented concept on screen indicating the plan for 12 (80%) of the units to be less than 1200 square feet and 3 units larger than that.

Jeff Squire described the technical requirements of the site and how the designs met the zoning.

Charles Roberts, Kuhn Riddle Architecture, described the design of the new building and its layout and siding materials.

Mark Sullivan asked if there are any trash bins located on the site?

Squire clarified that the plans incorporate a dumpster to be located next to the existing house.

Tess Poe asked about an elevator and whether the building is ADA accessible.

Charles confirmed that the building is accessible.

Sara Northrup asked if existing width and radius of the driveway will be maintained and whether emergency/fire vehicles could be accommodated.

Squire confirmed that there would be no widening of the existing driveway and that the Fire Chief had not raised any concerns upon reviewing the turning templates.

Sara Northrup asked which way the carports shed water?

David Bloomberg asked about bicycle storage
Squire demonstrated where the bike storage within the carports were planned.

David Bloomberg asked about impact onto South Street from development.

Jeff reviewed the information from the traffic study which showed that there would be 14 new peak-hour trips generated by the site onto South Street.

George Kohout asked about path connection through the site into the driveway and the maintenance responsibility/requirements.

Tess Poe provided guidance about public comment and identified the issues of concern the Board had received in written correspondence, noting that hearing comments by those who had submitted letters did not need to be repeat what was submitted in writing.

John Ferina 23 Dewey Court spoke against the project, arguing there would be more traffic based on the bedrooms proposed and he voiced concern about fire truck access and impacts during construction.
Elizabeth McDugal 3 Dewey Ct. read letters for 2 others, including resident of 97 South Street, Carolyn McDaniel. All letters were in opposition to the project siting privacy, traffic, pedestrian safety, and view concerns.

MCreary, owner of 14 Dewey Court had a statement read regarding opposition to the project. Lyn Crevier mechanical engineer owner spoke in opposition.

Nancy Denig, 25 Dewey Ct, reiterated concerns identified in her letter previously submitted and distributed illustrations of showing areas of concern on the plan including the wetland buffer zone work and the grade of the path at the rear of the site.

Bob Pyers, 25 Dewey Ct asked about the structural layout arguing that the proposal would be used a congregate housing and not individual apartments as presented.

Eric Washington, Barret Street, stated there was a need for new housing and the arguments against this project relating to traffic amounted to veiled attempts at prohibiting residents of color from entering the neighborhood.

Luka Madden, 22 Dewey Court spoke against the project, raising concerns about increased market rental prices & traffic.

Jim Nash, Ward 1 City Councilor, ask that the Board require a full traffic study.

Sam Taylor asked the purpose of a full traffic study? Staff noted that a full study would reveal the same outcome as the existing analysis in terms of new trips generated to the site.

Amy Ben Ezra 18 Dewey Ct challenged the veracity of the traffic generation figures.

Ann Marie Moggio & MarkMoggio, owners of 22 & 24 Dewey Ct, argued against the project and asked about legal frontage, noting more parking is required. They presented a photoshopped image of views of the proposed site, asked about tree protection and snow storage.

Lilly Lombard, 39 Munroe St., described the dangerous bike lane impacts on South Street with existing traffic.

Donna Morrison, Lyman Road voiced opposition to the project and raised concern about vibrations construction vehicles.

Barry Ruber, 128 Brookside Circle noted there are not a lot of options for living in Northampton and this project would increase opportunities for that.

Crystal Ellis, 22 Barret St spoke about the issues of rent and need for housing in Northampton, which is different than filling commercial units.

Andrew Smith 10 Myrtle St spoke in favor of rental units for City.
A resident from 9 Lyman Road raised a concern about wetlands and the impacts of tree removal.

Bob Walker, 13 Fort Street raised a concern about using 2006 traffic figures.

Sherry Brunelle, South Street, asked about restrictions on tenant car ownership and planting larger trees.

David Rynehart 10 Dewey Ct. voiced concerns about safety impacts that currently exist.

Luka Madden confirmed that the existing sidewalk is not safe for people with impairments.

8:50- Both Boards recessed
Sara Northrup left. Voting members Bob, Elizabeth Silver, David Bloomberg

9:00 Reconvened
Bob Pyers, Dewey Court, noted that application should include extension of the frontage.

Upon motion by Elizabeth Silver and second by Bob Riddle, the Board voted unanimously to close the hearing.

The Board discussed the parameters of their decision.

Upon motion by Elizabeth Silver and second by Bob Riddle, the Board placed discussion of approval of the Finding on the table.

David Bloomberg noted that the issues raised in the hearing relating to traffic safety, pedestrian safety, landscaping, design, site layout etc. are those that are within the Planning Board jurisdiction to address.

The Board voted unanimously to grant the Finding. --ZBA adjourned 9:05

Euripedes DeOliveira asked about snow storage behind carports.

The Board discussed community space for residents, construction equipment, buffer zone, grade changes on the pedestrian path, circulation and use of the existing driveway turn around, pedestrian access to and from sidewalk.

Discussion of landscaping plan.

George Kohout asked for clarification about the cutting required for the carports.

Mark Sullivan suggested the Board should continue the hearing so the applicant can further analyze sidewalk improvements and tree planting among other areas discussed.

George Kohout suggested that the applicant evaluate the trade-offs that would occur to save the Tulip versus reduction in parking.
Luka Madden, Dewey Ct, noted that the Fruit street path does not connect to a sidewalk.

Marissa Elkins noted that path through the site should be clarified.

Mark Sullivan asked for clarification on the layout of the community house, vehicle management, pedestrian improvements, street tree vs. sidewalk on Dewey, options for saving the Tulip, tree planting at the back of the carport.

Upon motion by Christa Grenat and second by Mark Sullivan, the Board voted unanimously to continue the hearing to 9/12 at 7 PM.

10:05 PM Tess Poe opened the continuation (from June 27) of a hearing on a Site Plan Amendment by the Coca Cola Company to expand trailer storage at 45 Industrial Dr, Northampton, Map ID 25A-185.

Brian Durand, Plant Manager, described the benefits the trailer storage area would provide.

Mike Schaffer, project engineer, noted all the issues that Coke will undertake to address the on-street issues with signage and GPS. He further described current changes that have rescheduled deliveries from 4 per hour to 2 per hour during the morning and afternoon peak periods.

Mark Sullivan asked about trucks coming from the neighborhood and whether it was a daily occurrence?

Durand noted that they see 2-3 per day coming through the neighborhood.

Marissa Elkins noted that it would not be appropriate to encourage Coke to pay for police enforcement against the truck drivers.

Joanne Mackiewicz, 80 Crosby Street described truck noise during backing and whether the pad would eliminate that.

Jim Nash, Ward Councilor, distributed his findings upon some research he conducted.

The board discussed possible conditions related to the efforts Coke described to address traffic through the neighborhood.

Upon motion by Sam Taylor and second by Euripedes DeOliveira, the Board voted unanimously to close the hearing.

Upon motion by Euripedes DeOliveira and second by Mark Sullivan, the Board approved the permit with the condition that Coke provide a report at the end of the first 12 months related to the number of trucks traveling through the neighborhood.
11:00 PM  Tess Poe opened the hearing on the Site Plan Amendment 1924 LLC (former Clarke School) to remove steps, add accessory pickle ball court, 40-54 Round Hill Rd, Northampton, Map Id 31B-4. Staff described the need to continue the hearing.

Upon motion by Sam Taylor and second by Marissa Elkins, the Board voted unanimously to continue to 9/12 at 8 PM.

11:00 PM  Tess Poe opened the hearing on the Site Plan application by Sherry Wingfield, for a detached residential structure, 41 Riverside Dr, Florence, Map Id 23D-56.

Sherry Wingfield described her application and asked for clarification on the timing for tree replacement.

Staff explained the process.

George Kohout asked what was changing on the site.

Upon motion by Sam Taylor and second by Marissa Elkins, the Board moved to close the hearing.

Upon motion by Mark Sullivan and second Sam Taylor, the Board moved to approve the plan with a condition related to tree replacement.

11:10 PM  Staff presented the proposed zoning map amendments

A. Portion of 5-28 (120 River Rd)
B. 10B-21 (1 River Rd)
C. 10B-22 (1 River Rd)
D. 10B-59 (6 Water St)
E. 10B-61 (12 Water St)
F. Modify the City Zoning Map to rezone Map 5-32 parcel from General Industrial/FP to Special Conservancy

Mark Bernstein, property owner of the Water Street parcel, asked for clarification about allowed uses.

Staff explained.

Upon motion by George Kohout and second Marisa Elkins the Board voted unanimously to close the hearing and recommend City Council adopt the changes.

Other
The Board discussed the request by the owner of 227 South Street to modify the location of the electrical connection to the building.
Sam Taylor asked how many other changes were proposed? Staff described previous minor modifications that did not trigger Board review. The Board discussed changes and the concern about nature of the letter and determined that any other changes will trigger the need for formal amendment.

Upon motion by Mark Sullivan and second by Marissa allow the Board voted 6-1 (George Kohout voted against) to approve the change from underground service to overhead service.

Staff presented the request by Pecoy to swap the lot sale covenants. Upon motion by Sam Taylor and second by Marissa Elkins, the Board voted unanimously to swap the lots.

Upon motion by Sam Taylor and second by Euripedes DeOliveira, the board voted unanimously to approve the minutes of 6/27 & 7/11

11:30 adjourn