



Planning Board

Meeting Minutes of August 15, 2022

Board Members:

Present: Al Patenaude (Chair), David Ganong (Clerk), Joyce Morrow and Joan Ladik

Not Present: Casey Campetti and Tiffany James (Associate Member)

Staff: Jenny Gingras (Town Planner), Cheryl Lutcza (Planning Assistant)

Attendees: Pepperell Community Media, Jeff Owen (NMCOG), various members of the public and Town staff/officials.

1. Call To Order:

6:01P.M. The remote/hybrid public meeting (recorded for future broadcast by Pepperell Community Media) was called to order by Mr. Patenaude (Chair).

2. Consent Agenda:

a. Acceptance of Meeting Minutes from the following dates:

- July 18, 2022
- July 21, 2022
- July 27, 2022
- August 1, 2022

Mr. Patenaude asked for a motion to accept the items on the Consent Agenda: Acceptance of Meeting Minutes of July 18, 2022, July 21, 2022, July 27, 2022, and August 1, 2022. So moved by Ms. Morrow, seconded by Ms. Ladik. All in favor, none opposed.

3. 6:05 p.m. Public Hearing – Major Site Plan Review – 81 Main Street (Parcel ID 23-172-0):

Major Site Plan Review for the razing of an existing single-family dwelling, to be replaced with a 1,856 square foot building to be used as a pizza restaurant with more than 6 parking spaces. Applicant is Marcio and Marli Machado; owner is Pizza Pizzazz, Inc.

Mr. Patenaude opened the public hearing at 6:05p.m.

Mr. Ganong (Clerk) read the Notice of Public Hearing into the record.

Mr. Patenaude invited the applicant's engineer, Kyle Burchard of Goldsmith, Prest and Ringwall, Ayer, MA, to address the Board.

Mr. Burchard provided a screen share of various plans related to the site/proposed project and gave a detailed presentation on them. He read his letter to the Board, dated August 12, 2022, that addressed concerns raised in the comments submitted by the Fire Chief, DPW Director, Conservation Commission, Historical Commission and Board of Health.

Ms. Gingras provided an overview of her August 15, 2022 Staff Report/Memorandum to the Board.

Mr. Patenaude asked if the Board Members had any questions.

Ms. Ladik asked about where the new building was located on the site plan and if it was behind the existing house. Mr. Burchard said that it was. Discussion ensued on the location of the infiltration chambers. Ms. Ladik asked about the entrance and exit to the site and if there would be signage for entering and exiting. Mr. Burchard said they could paint arrows for "in and out". Discussion ensued.

Mr. Ganong said the site is pretty constrained.

Ms. Morrow asked if there would be outdoor seating. Mr. Burchard said there is no plan to have outdoor seating. Ms. Morrow asked if there was any room to put a vegetative barrier between the property and the abutter. Mr. Burchard said there was a little bit of room and they could talk with the abutter/neighbor about this. Discussion ensued. Ms. Morrow said that in looking at the existing home, the front area is grass. She asked if the start of the new building was going to be in the back of the existing home, and would it have more impervious area in the front. Mr. Burchard said yes. Discussion ensued. Mr. Burchard said they were proposing some shrubs up along the street frontage. He put the landscaping plan on screenshare and provided an overview of it. Discussion ensued. Mr. Patenaude said the site is very tight. Discussion ensued.

Mr. Patenaude asked about the proposed sign on the left-hand side of the building shown on the architectural plan. Mr. Patenaude recommended not having any lighting on that side. He said that the window on that same side, may push light out and illuminate the backyard of the neighbor. Mr. Burchard reviewed the plan to see what Mr. Patenaude was describing. He said that the concern over light intrusion into the neighbor's backyard was well noted and understood, and he will discuss this with the architect and is sure they can work that out. Mr. Patenaude asked about the downlighting that will illuminate the side of the building with the access door, handicap parking and trash removal. Mr. Patenaude said that he had a concern with the elevation of the lighting, and that we are seeing more of our parking lot lighting being at a 12-foot elevation so that it doesn't broadcast too far over.

Ms. Ladik said that having a sign on the side of the building (rear yard) is not appealing. Discussion ensued. Mr. Burchard said it is safe to say that sign will not be there.

Mr. Patenaude discussed snow storage and the depth of the turnout/turnaround space. He asked about the 24-foot entrance. Discussion ensued. Mr. Patenaude asked if it could be narrowed down to 20-feet to allow for pedestrian access/traffic, keeping it 24-foot lane, but painting the pedestrian access. He asked Ms. Gingras if we can reach out to the DPW regarding "no parking" signage.

Ms. Ladik asked why there are not separate entrances and exits to the site, which would make the flow better. Mr. Burchard said they looked at several options, however it would reduce the amount of parking that would be available for the site and the existing supermarket parking lot.

Ms. Morrow asked about the Fire Department's comments and how would they access the back of the building. Mr. Patenaude said the only comment was about the bollards.

Mr. Patenaude asked if the public had any questions. None

Mr. Patenaude said that Mr. Burchard has some good comments for adjustments to the plan, and we are in a good position to have you move forward with some guidance and guidelines. He asked Mr. Burchard to have their architect review our Design Guidelines and energy conservation/stretch code and the ability to design the building for future solar.

Ms. Morrow asked if the signage on the chimney side of the proposed building, that abuts the Quality Market parking lot, could be lowered and put on the side of the building instead of the chimney. Mr. Patenaude said that would be looked at.

Mr. Patenaude asked for a motion to continue the public hearing to Monday, September 19, 2022, at 6:05p.m. Ms. Ladik so moved. Seconded by Mr. Ganong. All in favor.

4. Presentation by Jeff Owen (NMCOG) regarding draft revisions to Planning Board Subdivision Rules and Regulations:

Mr. Owen addressed the Board and said that he is a Regional Planner with NMCOG. He gave an overview of the program for the new Board Members. He explained that the Subdivision Rules and Regulations haven't been updated in 17 years, and that the Board Members should have a copy of the latest version of the draft. Mr. Owen provided a presentation of the document, via screen share, and went over the larger changes/revisions and recommendations. He asked if the Board Members had any questions. Mr. Patenaude said he would have the Board Members hold their questions until they have had a chance to review the information presented. Mr. Owen explained that there will be some additional minor changes to some of the wording that will be happening based on comments provided by John Holbrook, and that he will discuss this with Ms. Gingras and get back to the Board. He said that additional comments from the Board regarding changes that need to occur would be welcomed, and after that is done we will work on updating the Site Plan Rules and Regulations. Mr. Patenaude said he would like Ms. Gingras to reach out to the Fire Department to review this as well. Mr. Patenaude thanked Mr. Owen for his time.

Mr. Patenaude asked for a motion to adjourn the meeting. So moved by Mr. Ganong, seconded by Ms. Ladik. All in favor. Meeting adjourned at 7:17p.m.

7:00 p.m. Joint Meeting with Affordable Housing Committee: Discussion of 40R/SGOD Proposal

Mr. Patenaude opened the joint meeting with the Affordable Housing Committee (AHC) at 7:17 p.m., and performed a roll call vote of the Planning Board Members that were present: Mr. Ganong, Ms. Ladik, Ms. Morrow and Mr. Patenaude. Not Present: Mx. Campetti and Ms. James.

Mr. Keating did a roll call vote of the AHC Members that were present: Brian Keating, Lora Woodward and Renee D'Argento. Not Present: Tereze Stokes and John Ladik.

Mr. Patenaude said he would like to get more information from the AHC on the Design Guidelines and the SGOD/40R. He said he would like to have the AHC take a look at the Design Regulations that we have in front of us and review them, not specifically for 40R, but for affordable housing in general, thinking about the cause and affect of the design regulations and guidelines and how they would impact the potential of the developing and redeveloping of properties. What are the pros and cons, i.e., are they restrictive enough or too restrictive to promote affordable housing in the areas that have dense population. He said he would like to have the AHC work with Ms. Gingras on taking a look at, even theoretically, how these design guidelines would work in the mixed-use overlay district (MUOD) being proposed and how it would affect some properties. The design regulations would be for the MUOD and the 40R. He said that residents do not want to lose the small-town feel of Pepperell and projects need to be designed appropriately so as not to change the view of Main Street. People want affordable housing and better access to some commercial, but we still want it to fit downtown, this is key to look at when you are moving forward with the review. He would really like the AHC to take a look at the Peter Fitz property, which is owned by the Town, and it has a solid potential for the AHC to work with the Town Administrator and Select Board to put together a Request for Proposal (RFP). He would like to see the AHC work with the Conservation Commission and the Climate Change Council to see what the real constraints are at the Peter Fitz site and what the property (aside from the existing building) could potentially be used for.

Mr. Keating said he has been thinking about the Peter Fitz site a lot and asked what if we structured an RFP for possible affordable housing with the Collaborative. He said it would be for people to be able to walk over to the Peter Fitz building to visit a commercial kitchen. He thanked Mr. Patenaude for presenting the AHC with this challenge.

Mr. Patenaude said the Peter Fitz is a large property that needs support. The Collaborative has been working hard to reintroduce that property for different uses. The overall property, building, and land out back, combined and developed properly, could be a big “win-win”, i.e. potential senior housing, etc. This is a great location and this would help support the Collaborative and assist with providing funds to maintain the property.

Mr. Patenaude said he would like to open this up to both the Planning Board Members and the Affordable Housing Committee Members.

Ms. D’Argento said that she was wondering why we are not considering doing that type of investigative study of the Shattuck School, as that building, and site would be appropriate. For the Design Guidelines she is very interested in making sure that we have units, single or multi-family, that have universal design elements incorporated to help residents age in place. Mr. Patenaude said he agreed and that is one of the reasons he would like the AHC’s involvement in this. He said that h a Design Guideline that thinks forward to aging in place might be something good we should include. As for the Shattuck Building, he would like to have the Planning Board and Affordable Housing Committee work together on any of the Town-owned buildings that will be proposed. The next site he would like the Affordable Housing Committee, Planning Board, Town Administrator, and Select Board review would be the Senior Center property. The site is very beneficial with the Senior Center being right there, and the ability for people to be able to walk from where they live to the Senior Center which supports them with many aspects.

Mr. Ganong said that his big picture vision would be to move the Senior Center from its existing location to the Peter Fitz parcel and reintegrating senior life into the downtown area, not pushing them out to the periphery where they are now, and also looking at the things that go on at the Fitz Collaborative to interact with the seniors. He said that he thinks this is something that should be looked at and studied for the long term. He would like to incorporate the Well Building Standard into our Design Guidelines. It has been around for 8-9 years and applies to senior housing type ideas. He spoke on some of the benefits of the Well Building Standard. He said he will share some web links with the Planning Board and Affordable Housing Committee Members.

Ms. Morrow said that the discussions are spot on and she believes that at some point we should include some conversations with the Mill Site owners, as it is smack in the middle of our downtown, and given the location of that particular property that needs focus and should be on the list at some point. Mr. Patenaude said he agreed and that he is hoping that after the Planning Board and the Affordable Housing Committee look through the Design Regulations for the MUOD we can start identifying some of the complexities of sites like that. It is a key site to be developed at some point. Ms. Morrow said that Mass Development has funding available, especially for municipally-owned sites and we should consider that in research that is being done. Discussion ensued.

Mr. Keating said that this would be a great time for the Affordable Housing Trust get moving and activated. It might be a good idea to have a Planning Board Member, Finance Committee Member, and maybe a representative from each Board. Discussion ensued. Mr. Patenaude agreed and spoke on the Affordable Housing Trust and identifying the benefits to the Town. He would like to bring different groups together to work on this.

Ms. Ladik said that the Community Preservation Act (CPA) funding is coming out of our taxes and we have older buildings that need renovation, such as Peter Fitz and the Shattuck Building. Discussion ensued. Mr. Patenaude spoke on the Shattuck Building.

Mr. Patenaude asked if members of the public had any questions. None.

Ms. Gingras said all of the items that have been discussed are great and she is looking forward to seeing a more collaborative effort.

Mr. Patenaude said that the proposed 40R bylaw can still be modified/adjusted and if the AHC has a chance to review and discuss it, we would appreciate those comments.

Ms. Gingras said that she will be going to the Senior Center on the morning of September 13, 2022, to give them a presentation on the proposed 40R zoning bylaw. She said that this will be a breakfast meeting. She also said that she will be putting together an educational event about the article and is going to try to be at the Fall Festival to provide printed information on the zoning article.

Mr. Ganong spoke on the extra affordability in the 40R. Discussion ensued.

Mr. Patenaude thanked the Affordable Housing Committee for meeting with the Planning Board tonight and hopes that we can do this more often, maybe every couple of months. He would appreciate feedback and the AHC could provide it to Ms. Gingras. He looks forward to the AHC being the affordable housing experts to the Planning Board.

Mr. Keating said he appreciates the opportunity for the AHC to play a more integral part in this process and to be able to work with the Planning Board on this. He said that he will plan to join Ms. Gingras at the Senior Center the morning of September 13th, as well as the Fall Festival.

Mr. Patenaude said he would like to have Mr. Ganong be a go between working with the Design Guidelines regarding accessibility. Mr. Keating agreed. Discussion ensued. Mr. Ganong agreed to this.

Mr. Patenaude asked if Mr. Keating could reach out to the Conservation Commission and Climate Change Council so that the AHC can work with them.

5. Reports/Correspondence/Discussion:

(Matters may arise that the Chair did not reasonably anticipate)

- a. Planning Updates – Taken out of order at the beginning of meeting - Ms. Gingras will be submitting the Preliminary Eligibility to DHCD.
- b. Town Meeting – Ms. Gingras said that the Town Meeting is scheduled for November 14, 2022

6. Future Meetings:

- a. September 19, 2022

7. Adjournment:

Mr. Patenaude asked for a motion to adjourn the joint meeting between the Planning Board and the Affordable Housing Committee. So moved by Ms. Ladik, seconded by Mr. Ganong. All in favor. Meeting adjourned at 8:04 p.m.

The Affordable Housing Committee also adjourned their meeting.

Planning Board Meeting Minutes of August 15, 2022, respectfully submitted by Cheryl Lutcza