

**FITCHBURG PLANNING BOARD MEETING MINUTES  
TUESDAY, FEBRUARY 19, 2019**

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

**STAFF:**                      Mike O’Hara, Tom Skwierawski, Cindy Dalton, Liz Murphy, Mary Jo Bohart

*[NOTE: Meeting had been postponed from February 12<sup>th</sup> (2<sup>nd</sup> Tuesday) due to snowstorm.]*

**Call to Order**

Meeting called to order at 6:01 p.m. in the Community Room, Fitchburg Fire Headquarters, 33 North St.

**ANR PLANS**

Champa, Albee St. & Valley St.

A portion of two vacant parcels on Valley St. are proposed be spilt off & incorporated into the back yard of the adjoining parcel at 786 Albee St. The remaining lots on Valley St. are conforming RA-2 lots, but the developer will need to extend the road and utilities. This portion of street is within the 1950 City street layout, but the improved, travelled way stops short of these two lots. The Board endorsed the plan.

Godfrey, 550 Beech St.

A conforming 12,971 sq. ft. lot is proposed to be split off from the 500 Beech St. parcel. The remainder is also a conforming lot. The Board endorsed the plan. *[Note: This plan had been endorsed in August 2002 when it was in different ownership. The signed mylar of the plan was lost and had never been recorded.]*

McNamara, 106 Mt. Vernon St.

A conforming 18,874 sq. ft. lot to be split off from the 106 Mt. Vernon parcel. The remainder also conforms. The new lot line does not meet the side yard setback from an existing accessory structure, a fieldstone former ice house. The Board endorsed the plan.

**MINOR SITE PLAN REVIEW**

Moses, 960 South St., site plan modifications.

On behalf of the applicant, Jamie Rheault, Whitman & Bingham asked that the application be withdrawn. Motion made & seconded to allow application to be withdrawn w/o prejudice. Vote in favor. After conferring with his client, Jamie will be submitting a revised site plan. No other Minor Site Plans.

**PUBLIC HEARINGS**

Site Plan Review - Fitchburg City Hall Campus, 700-718 Main St.

Present: AJ Tourigny, Mayor’s office, Ned Collier & Mark McKevez, ICON Architects and Tony DiLuzio, Colliers, owner’s Project Manager.

Hearing opened. Ned presented plan. There have been some revisions since plan presented at last month’s meeting: Pedestrian access to #718 on the park side will be via a ramp 1:12 pitch with handrails. Sight distance & truck turning analysis was done for Boulder Drive service entrance - sight distance is 230 feet. Truck turning templates shown.

Q: What if Boulder Drive becomes two-way? Another sight distance & truck turning analysis will need to be done.

Three H/C accessible spaces will be provided on Main St. near the City Hall ramp. MART bus stop will be on opposite side of Main St.

As part of future project (perhaps funded by MassWorks), curb bump-outs are proposed in front of #718 & Fitchburg Theater. Board reviewed Exhibit D which showed a raised speed table & crosswalk on Main St. in front of City Hall. Q: Effect on Longsjo bike race?

Kiosk will be provided out in front for posting public meetings & events. Trees are to be added on south & west sides of site. Bike racks at 700 Main added\ to plan, also after-hours Drop Box for City Hall mail added.

Parking spaces delineated on from parking deck on Boulder Drive side. There will be temporary stairs up the rip-rap slope to the rear of 718 Main. Rear parking deck is intended to eventually become green space, but Planning Board could review the long-term nature of that area in the future. Some Board members expressed interest in keeping parking spaces there as a permanent feature for nearby uses:" Stratton Players, Library, etc. Approval could be subject to future Planning Board review of any future proposal to convert parking to green space.

Architectural renderings of the 718 & 700 bldgs. reviewed. Ned: Little of the 1879 rear addition will remain. Window treatment? Full-size insulated replacement windows in the same style will be installed, with black window grids.

700 Main will have meeting space for 100+. Third floor meeting room at #718 should hold 40 people w/o the tables. Board commented that meeting space at #718 is still inadequate; that has been one of the major concerns of the Board over the years - - to have multiple meeting spaces with adequate size, so that more than one meeting could take place at the same time. Due to other commitments, Planning Board members can only meet on Tuesdays.

A.J. will work w/ the Council President & board chairs to coordinate meeting schedules & re-work meeting nights.

Public comment: Eileen Berger, Centro Fitchburg, 1 Wood Place, suggested leave Wood place as is – one-way from Boulder to Main St.

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

Motion made (Mr. Fontaine) & seconded (Ms. O'Kane) to Approve Site Plan with conditions:

- Submittal & review of Downtown Parking Plan, when completed.
- Investigate proposed Speed Table in front of 718 Main & its effect on Longsjo Classic Criterium.
- Review & approval of final architectural elevations for 700 & 718 Main St.
- Review by Planning Board of future changes of the Boulder Drive parking deck to green space.
- Review & approval of the future Theatre Block parking facility

Vote 5-0 in favor.

A.J.: Downtown Parking Study to be completed in Spring 2019. City Hall campus projected to be completed in Fall 2010.

Special Permit & Site Plan Review - Horizon Christian Fellowship, common driveway, 119 Alpine Rd.

Alton Stone, P.E. and Steve Duprey for Horizon Fellowship present.

Hearing re-opened. Main issues: Retain neighbor's (#101 Alpine) access to her property, show easement for the common driveway, terms of access & maintenance easement, whether Fire Prevention is satisfied with the access.

Alton: Driveway has slope of 5% for first 20 feet from edge of road, then climbs to 8%, then 10%.

Ms. Caron suggested installing a small detention basin near the bottom to catch runoff from driveway.

Public comment:

Russ Coakley, 87 Alpine Rd. - Has the Church agreed to continue to allow access for Mrs. Orsini?

Mr. Duprey: Yes, their atty. will draft an agreement.

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

Motion made (Mr. Fontaine) & seconded (Mr. Hurley) to Approve Special Permit with conditions:

- Comply with Fitchburg Fire comments.
- Install street address sign(s) at edge of road for the two building lots & radio towers. Address sign(s) to be permanently maintained.
- Review & approval of final maintenance agreement proper to conveyance of lots
- Add to Note #4 on plan concerning access agreement for 101 Alpine Rd.
- Address any drainage issues from proposed driveway.

Vote 6-0 in favor.

Site Plan Review - The Hub Culture, LLC, 25 Newport St., cultivation & processing of Adult-Use Marijuana

Present: Howard Tanyu, The Hub Culture, Hunter Slay & Brian Arandez, Vosht Capital, Stephen Chaisson & Rebecca Adams, AC3, LLC and Scott Cornett, Northpoint Construction Mgmt. Hearing opened. Howard introduced those present & explained proposal to convert entire former Parks-Cramer bldg. @ 25 Newport St. into a Recreational Cannabis cultivation & processing facility. Phase I is a 26,000 sq. ft. fit-out. They have done a walk-thru w/ Fitchburg Fire Prevention & have discussed their security arrangement w/ FPD. Eventually, they plan to expand to the entire 55,000 sq. ft. building. They have reviewed the file on the prior Special Permit for this site. They are OK with complying with the conditions of that Special Permit.

Q: Window treatment? Scott, Northpoint: The window glass will be replaced with a spandrel glass which reflects out. The windows will have black aluminum muntins. Scott showed the Board examples of the materials to be used on the windows. Both the 1<sup>st</sup> & 2<sup>nd</sup> floor windows will be replaced. The old garage at the easterly side of the building will be demolished. A dumpster enclosure (white vinyl) will be installed.

At full build-out the entire Grow Canopy will be 30-40,000 sq. ft.

Employees: Phase I - 15-30. At full buildout - 50-60.

Lighting: Currently High Pressure Sodium, but they will be transitioning to all LEDs.

Some smaller HVAC equipment will be on rooftop, large HVAC will be ground-mounted.

ROI Industries (existing business in bldg.) will need to relocate by 2010.

The grow facility will operate 24/7.

They are requesting waivers of submitting a Development Impact Statement, stormwater management study & traffic study.

Public Comment:

Chris McKenzie, resident supports their proposal.

David Gagne, 18 Newport St. (nearest neighbor): THC has listened to their concerns. Community Impact Meeting was held last week and neighbors' concerns have been addressed. THC will be installing vinyl fence on his side property line.

Sheavoyne (*sic*) Wilson, 24 Bourque Terr. voiced concerns. She's nervous about the increasing number of grow facilities in Fitchburg

Mike Bursch, Depot St. - The will be a detriment to the community. These applicant are just drug dealers, a business from California that will suck \$\$ out of the community & then leave town.

Dept. comments:

Capt. Lemay: FPD is satisfied with the security measures that applicant has taken.

Mary Jo Bohart: Aside from the benefits of the current proposal, the applicant will upgrade an old mill building to current building & fire safety codes, regardless of whether this particular business stays or moves out in a few years.

Atty. Tree, Asst. City Solicitor: THC has negotiated a Host Community Agreement with the City, but it has not yet rec'd final approval from City Council

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

Motion made (Mr. Fontaine) & seconded (Ms. O'Kane) to Approve Special Permit with conditions:

- Conditions of the prior Special Permit issued for a Marijuana Establishment at this location.
- Planning Board review & approval of Landscaping plan.
- Planning Board review & approval of final design for replacement windows.
- Submit Moral Character certifications & release for background check to FPD.

Vote 6-0 in favor.

Proposed Zoning Amendment - Amending the Table of Principal Uses concerning Medical Offices and to further define different medical and medical office uses

Due to the hour, hearing postponed to next month.

## **OTHER BUSINESS**

Informal - 8-unit condo project - Old Princeton Road (Special Permit #2004-6)

Jamie Rheault, Whitman & Bingham presented informal proposal similar to one approved by the Board in 2006, this time for three separate townhouse-style duplexes on the easterly (pond) side of Old Princeton Road. Bob Donell is the owner. No sprinklers will be required for duplexes. A new Special Permit application will be submitted.

Informal - re-application of St. Joseph's School conversion, 35 Columbus St. (Special Permit #2011-1)

Jamie Rheault in to discuss another future application to convert the vacant St. Joseph's School into 27 one-BR units. The same project had been approved before but the special permit has lapsed. A new Special Permit application will be submitted. It is a local applicant. Relief from parking requirements will be needed.

Informal - retail sales of Adult Use Cannabis, 226 Westminster St.

Mr. Patel & others presented proposal & asked Board whether this would be a suitable location.

Board & Capt. Lemay comments: A high visibility site, however would need Waivers of the 300-foot Buffer from residential neighbors to the rear (Temple St., Vernon Court, Vernon St., etc.)

Applicants may pursue in the future but were advised that there is a limited number of Retail locations that can be approved.

*[Ms. O'Kane left the meeting for the following item due to a potential conflict of interest.]*

Planning Board CDBG recommendations

Board reviewed staff recommendations.

Q: Why fund Centro? Benefits just one building.

Why fund Murals? Tom: the murals are a small but worthwhile investment in the Arts. Who approved the mural designs?

Pawlak Playground at Coolidge Park – Worthwhile project, would draw in visitors from other towns, no others in area. Is there some way to fund partially?

Tom: They are still doing fundraising, a PARC grant application is a possibility. Staff doesn't recommend funding application, but Community Development can provide them w/ tech assistance.

Motion made (Mr. Fontaine) & seconded (Mr. Hurley) to forward to Mayor CDBG recommendations as outlined in C.D. Dept.'s staff recommendation. Vote in favor.

*[Ms. O'Kane returned to meeting.]*

NexAmp, 239 Fisher Rd. Solar Array - Battery Storage unit

Representatives of NexAmp present to propose a minor change in the approved plans for a Solar Array currently under construction by adding a battery storage unit in the middle of the array near the inverters.

The unit would be in a trailer 53' long x 9' wide x 16' high. It would fit within a row of panels.

Board decided they would like to see an elevation of the proposed unit & the view from abutting residential neighbors. Item continued to next month.

Fitchburg Arts Community, NewVue

Marc Dohan on to update Board on NewVue's plans. Board reviewed site plan revised 2/14/19. Project is now proposed as 62 units: 1 studio, 28 1-BR, 26 2-BR, 7 3-BRs. The Annex alone will have 10 2-BRs & 2 3-BRs. The Stables will have townhouse style units.

Per the current 40R parking requirements, 93 spaces would be needed. The Board feels that the parking shown is minimally adequate for the project, but even more spaces would be better for the area.

After some discussion, the Board agreed to send the following recommendation to the Parks Board regarding the required parking for the project:

*At its February 19th meeting the Planning Board was able to review the proposed parking plan for Lowe playground and the proposed arts community project that would rehabilitate the B.F. Brown property and improve the neighborhood. While the proposed plan may offer a suitable minimum amount of parking spaces for the playground and the project, the Planning Board would appreciate any flexibility the Parks Board could offer in creating as much additional parking as feasibly possible. In order for this project, Lowe Playground and the Fitchburg Art Museum to thrive cohesively, we believe it necessary for there to be ample parking areas. Having enough parking will also help to not further exacerbate parking issues in an already congested neighborhood. Any additional spaces that could possibly be offered by the Parks Board for consideration would be appreciated.*

Tom: The C.D. Dept. will be finishing the language of a proposed 40R district amendment to include the B.F. Brown project & will review with the Board next month.

Pope Solar, 885 Fisher Road

Board agreed to approve a requested transfer of the Site Plan Approval issued in August 2018 from TJA Pope Solar, LLC to NESG Solar Holding Company 1, LLC.

93 Pleasant St. Iacavone - extension

Vito Iacavone present to request an extension of his Special Permit #2017-2 (effective date April 12, 2017) to restore a three-family dwelling. No work has taken place on the project as yet, but he has building plans, sprinkler plans & a contractor. Special Permit conditions: start work on project within two years, complete within three years.

Motion made (Mr. Fontaine) & seconded (Mr. Hurley) to grant a one-year extension of time to start project to 4/12/2020, and an extension to finish project by 4/12/21. Vote 6-0 in favor.

Meeting Minutes

Minutes of January 8th meeting approved w/ some corrections.

Motion made & seconded to adjourn. Vote in favor.

Meeting adjourned: 10:30 p.m. zzz...

Next meeting: March 12, 2019

Minutes approved: