

Maynard Planning Board Meeting
October 12, 2021 – 7:00 p.m.
(Held in person at Town Hall with remote participation available via Zoom)

Board Members Present: Chris Arsenault – *Chair*; Jim Coleman – Vice Chair; Bill Cranshaw; Natalie Robert; Bob Brown; Annette Garabedian (*Alternate*)

Others Present: Bill Nemser – *Planning Director*; Tim Hess – *In Situ Architects, Inc.*

Called to Order at 7:04 p.m. by Chris Arsenault

Minutes Approval

Jim Coleman made a motion to accept the Minutes of 09.28.21, which was seconded by Natalie Robert.

The Board voted unanimously in favor of the motion.

31 Main Street – Update on Lighting

Bill Nemser stated that the third light that was to be installed at 31 Main Street has been ordered but has not yet arrived. The HOA President, Kara Walsh, asked that the status update be continued until after the light has been installed. Bill Nemser suggested that the topic be moved to the beginning of November to ensure the light can be installed.

Jim Coleman made a motion to continue the lighting update discussion for 31 Main Street until October 26, 2021, which was seconded by Chris Arsenault.

The Board voted unanimously in favor of the motion.

Mass Wellspring – Six Month Traffic Report

Bill Nemser explained that the special permit approval required a six-month follow-up to check in. There have been no issues related to traffic, parking, or circulation at the subject property, and neither the Police Chief nor DPW has brought up any concerns or issues. Olof Ingare of Mass Wellspring was in attendance. He reviewed the most recent traffic report, which was the third one to be done for the property and was completed in early October.

Jim Coleman asked what the busiest days are for the business. Olof Ingare stated that, up until a couple of weeks ago, there was a consistent number of patrons throughout the week. About two weeks ago, he noticed that things seemed to shift back to pre-COVID times when business was slower on Mondays and Tuesdays and then would ramp up for the weekend. Now the busiest days are Thursday, Friday, and Saturday.

Jim Coleman asked what the typical customer count would be on a busy day. Olof Ingare stated that he did not have that data in front of him but that there are rarely more than 3-5 people in the store at any given moment.

Bill Cranshaw pointed out that the applicant did not adhere to the special permit conditions because they conducted a parking count, not a traffic study, and that the Town Engineer was not consulted prior to doing so. Natalie Robert noted that a traffic count might be acceptable for certain projects and that the conditions should be written accordingly in the future. Chris Arsenault said that he would prefer to see a third party conduct the studies to ensure objectivity. Olof Ingare noted that a third party reviewed the process that was conducted for the first two studies and that Mass Wellspring merely repeated that process. Chris Arsenault asked that the applicant coordinate with the Town prior to future studies being conducted. Wayne Amico had sent an email with feedback prior to the meeting. He did not express any concerns related to the subject property. No further action is needed at this time.

Project Introduction – 2 Waltham Street

Bill Nemser explained that the purpose of the current meeting is to have a general conversation about the pending project prior to a pre-application between Town staff and the applicant. He noted that it is not a special hearing and that the Board should avoid having any discussions about the specifics of the project.

Tim Hess presented a general overview of the proposed project. The site is an undersized lot for the district in which it is located (4684 vs. minimum of 7000 sf). It is located on the river, with one corner of the lot very close to the Waltham Street Bridge and the guard rail. The intent of the project would be a mixed-use property, with six to eight residential units on the upper levels and retail space at ground level. The applicant is reviewing the prospect of offering an affordable unit as part of the density bonus. Tim Hess also reviewed the draft landscape design that would likely be proposed.

Bill Nemser noted that a density bonus would require a Development Agreement between the Planning Board, the Select Board, and the applicant, which would be a separate process as part of the project. Bill Cranshaw stated that he doesn't believe the current zoning would allow more than five units at the site. He also noted for the pre-application meeting that the site is very small and that it seems that vehicle circulation could potentially cause traffic issues at what is already a congested intersection, particularly for service trucks and deliveries. Jim Coleman asked how many units are proposed per floor. Tim Hess noted that the configuration is still being discussed and there are several possibilities.

Bill Cranshaw asked Bill Nemser whether the applicant would need to go before the Planning Board or the ZBA first in the event of a variance requirement. Bill Nemser said that, although the planning Board could grant a special permit with the condition of a variance approval from the ZBA, it would make more sense for the ZBA to review the variance first. He also pointed out that an approval from one Board does not obligate the other Board to grant an approval.

Chris Arsenault stated that it would be helpful to understand the overall vision of the Powder Mill Corridor prior to considering any project that might be proposed for the site.

The applicant, Adam Stack, stated that he understands the importance of the project fitting into the overall vision of the Powder Mill Corridor and that he is very open to any suggestions or ideas to ensure he's presenting a project that will work for the town.

Discussion of the PB Goals for FY22

Prior to the meeting, Bill Nemser had provided folders to each of the PB Members with information denoting the PB's responsibilities with regard to the Master Plan implementation as well as guidelines for the Planning Board's involvement in Special Projects, as discussed in the previous meeting. Bill Cranshaw asked who is in charge of the Master Plan report card. Bill Nemser stated that it is the Master Plan Implementation Committee, which is headed by Jason Kriel. The Board also discussed the draft white papers that were included in the folder from Bill Nemser, which are related to technical assistance grants he intends to pursue.

Bill Nemser recommended that the Board begin considering who would be involved in the Development Agreement negotiations for 2 Waltham Street so that the DA discussions can begin as soon as the application comes in.

Bob Brown explained how a technical assistant could help create objective criteria for the Planning Board to consider for all the riverfront projects that come up. He noted that the public would be invited to participate in the planning discussions so that the community members have buy-in to future plans.

Bill Nemser stated that Powder Mill Place was sold and the new developer will want to make some changes. Bill Nemser will be meeting with Acton next week to discuss. There were 240 units planned to be built.

For the next meeting, Bill Nemser asked for feedback on the bike and pedestrian white paper. He is currently working on a white paper that explains the intent of the Powder Mill Corridor Overlay District. He will ask for input from the Board on that. He will also be providing articles to the Board related to the Home Occupation definitions they will be working on in conjunction with the ZBA. Natalie Robert stated that she and Bill Cranshaw have been researching and discussing the topic and they can draft a proposed revision to the definitions. Chris Arsenault stated that he can run the joint meeting. Bill Nemser will set up a conversation between Chris Arsenault and Paul Scheiner. The meeting will be held virtually.

Town Planner Update

The Town is working on hiring a full-time Health Agent. Bill Nemser is working on hiring a new Assistant Town Planner/Conservation Agent.

Jim Coleman made a motion to close the meeting, which was seconded by Natalie Robert.

The Board voted unanimously in favor of the motion.

Adjourned at 9:02 p.m.