

# PLANNING BOARD

## Meeting Minutes

Thursday, February 11, 2021

6:00 P.M.

**PB Members Present:** Brandon Quesnell, Paul Graves, Jeffrey Mulliken, Monica Stubner, and Paul Kelly.

**Members Absent:** Marianne Clements (excused) and Steven Azar (excused).

**Staff:** David Gardner (Assistant Town Manager) and Thaddeus Soulé (Town Planner).

Mr. Soulé introduced the virtual hearing, explaining the reason the Public Hearing was being held virtually. He then called the roll.

Chair Brandon Quesnell called the Planning Board Public Hearing to order at 6:00 P.M. and turned the meeting back over to Mr. Soulé, who then explained how the Board, the applicants and the public could participate remotely, and reviewed the meeting protocol.

1. **Public Comment:** None.
2. **Consent Agenda:** Approval without objection required for the following item: None.
3. **Public Hearings:**

### **PLN 20-2030** *(continued from the meeting of January 14<sup>th</sup>)*

Application by **Jay Abbiuso** seeking a Site Plan Review by Special Permit pursuant to Article 4, Section 4015 a., 1), Site Plan Review by Special Permit, and Article 4, Section 4180, Inclusionary and Incentive Zoning By-Law, to develop vacant land by constructing a total of 12 dwellings, 2 of which will be community housing units, in 4 duplex units and 4 cottages on the property located at **286.5 Bradford Street**. Brandon Quesnell, Paul Graves, Jeffrey Mulliken, Monica Stubner, and Paul Kelly sat on the case. Mr. Mulliken attested to the fact that pursuant to the Mullin Rule, he had viewed a video of the previous hearing of the application and was qualified to sit on the case.

**Presentation:** Jay Abbiuso was present in the meeting to discuss the application. He highlighted the changes that he had made to the proposed project based upon the Board's feedback at its hearing last month. He reviewed a PowerPoint presentation of the entire project. He noted the existing conditions on the lot and the location of the FEMA and the wetland line. He said that 18 parking spaces would usually be required for 12 residential units, but he is proposing to install a reduced parking area that will contain only one parking space per residential unit, for a total of 12, plus one handicapped spot. He explained that this would allow 22,000 sq. ft. of buildable area to work with for the residential units. A slide was shown illustrating a comparison of his parking proposal to his Bradford Street neighbors' parking and driveway areas. He noted that his parking proposal presented a more perpendicular design and will not require vehicles to back out of their spaces onto Bradford Street, whereas his neighbors' parking areas were located parallel to Bradford Street. He argued that his design would allow vehicles to safely exit onto Bradford Street with ample site lines. He said he wanted to focus more on landscaping and residential unit concentration in the design of the

project. He explained that the reduction in parking spaces allowed more open space in order to spread out the residential units and create a better community development. He compared the latest revisions with the old layout proposal shown at the last hearing of the project. He said that the most recent design would produce more of a courtyard feel in the center of the development and has better defined the sole and exclusive use areas for residents, the latter of which was unclear in the initial proposal. A large tree in the center of the development was able to be preserved as a result of the new layout. The courtyard created at the center of the units will allow clear pathways to all of the units and is almost equal in area to that of the property in front of the property at 286 Bradford Street.

He said that the landscaping plan did not specify plantings, as he wanted to gauge the Board's opinion on the proposal and then develop that aspect of the project. He noted that by reconfiguring his units, the neighbor's cottage abutting the property, instead of having windows looking into his units, would now be looking into the courtyard. Also, the neighbor's north outdoor space would have a nice view into the conservation area on the lot. He mentioned that the walkways had been better developed and there is direct access to these from the parking areas. The latest design leaves no question as to where the entrances to each unit are located, as this had been a concern of the Board at the last hearing of the project. He pointed out the location of the bicycle rack, which will create a buffer between the cottages and the abutting property to the south. The trash and recycling area has been relocated, closer to the residential units, moving from the road back to the southwest side of the property. He indicated that there will be a commercial pick up of the recycling and trash material and the enclosure will be screened with plantings. Mr. Abbiuso said he had submitted a revised site plan to the Fire Chief, showing a significantly reduced driveway, however the Fire Chief has not had the chance to review the updated site plan. The Fire Chief, when presented with the original site plan had seen a longer driveway, had requested a cul-de-sac be created in order to be able to turn fire trucks around. Mr. Abbiuso said he had proposed to the Fire Chief that in lieu of that he would sprinkle the duplexes along the rear property line if were so requested. In response to the Board's concern about proximity to adjacent buildings, he said that he had reconfigured his buildings to create a significant buffer between the project and those buildings. He pointed out the new distances shown between the buildings in the project. He addressed perimeter screening, stating that he would like to do that in conjunction with his neighbors and will have those conversations when the project got farther along in the development process. He explained that he had re-examined and changed the scale of the duplexes along the back of the property, based upon concerns of the Board. He has also offset those buildings to provide corner views out of all the units and the window wells are clearly shown on the plans. He said he had more clearly defined the outdoor space available for each unit. The garden units have entrances that are more fine-tuned. Plantings will be placed in between these units for screening purposes. The egress window wells for the lower units have been illustrated on the plans. He noted the 3-D renderings of the site on the screen. He pointed out the location of the tree that will be saved. Many trees at the back of the property will now be saved, as the residential units were being moved forward. He explained the various elevation renderings of the units. Previous pavers able to support the weight of a fire truck will be used in the parking areas. He pointed out a view of the site line from Bradford Street, east of the tennis courts. He showed a view from Bradford Street looking east. He added that two additional parking spaces will be reserved for emergency medical service vehicles. He said he would be making

accommodations for electric vehicle charging stations at inception. He said that dark sky compliant exterior lighting fixtures will be installed along the fence area to light up the driveway and subtle lighting will be installed in the parking area. He reviewed another sight line from Bradford Street and said that half or more of the parking area would be obscured from that vantage point. He next reviewed a general landscaping proposal and said that he would not be lining the property with arborvitaes, but wanted a more organic and natural feel in regard to the landscaping. He said that the parking area would be delineated with a pervious material. He reviewed photoshopped images of what the property would look like, with dark sky compliant lighting fixtures along the fencing from the entranceway, if one were standing on Bradford Street looking northward.

He said that his intent was to develop 10 market rate units and two affordable units. He said that project will meet all zoning requirements and not need any relief in that respect. Another intent, he concluded, was to not be disruptive to the environment, to respect the neighborhood, and to create affordable housing stock pursuant to the Local Comprehensive Plan. In addition, benefits of the project include an increase in the local tax base as a result of the addition of residential units and the fact that the project was of low impact and included 60% green space, where 30% is required. He was requesting a waiver from the parking requirements for the project and reiterated his request for waivers from Article 4, Sections 4035(e) and 4053.

**Public Comment:** There were 4 letters from abutters. Ted DeColo, an abutter, spoke of his concerns about the project.

**Board Discussion:** The Board questioned Mr. Abbiuso. Mr. Kelly had recommended that Mr. Abbiuso move Buildings One and Four up to 20' to the north, which is not within the FEMA zone, taking advantage of that area. He said that he found that the size of the balconies of Buildings Two & Three, which measure only 5' by 12', as being too small and clumsy for residents to enjoy. He asked if it was allowable to have decks, as on Building Two, in the FEMA zone. Mr. Abbiuso explained that it was allowable to have decks cantilevered over the FEMA zones. Utilities, such as sewage pump lines, were also allowed in that area. Mr. Kelly said he still thought the first-floor decks of the duplexes should be increased in size. He suggested that Mr. Abbiuso should take advantage of as much outdoor space as possible for residents. He also thought the 13 parking spaces were too few and the size of the individual parking spaces too small. Mr. Kelly asked Mr. Abbiuso to move Building One and Building Five over in order to add more parking spaces. He also questioned the size and location of the trash and recycling enclosure and suggested flipping its location with the bicycle rack. He also suggested adding a shed-like structure to the units, measuring 30" by 5' with two doors, for bicycle storage over the winter. Mr. Abbiuso said he would be amendable to those ideas. Mr. Kelly asked about an area of hedgerow on the east side of the property. Mr. Abbiuso said he could develop that area with screening, although he would like to consult with his neighbors about landscaping that area. Mr. Kelly requested that a landscaping plan of 1" = 10' and asked about installing a well and irrigation system. Mr. Abbiuso said a well and irrigation system would be installed. He asked about the delineation of individual parking space and Mr. Abbiuso said he could use landscaping ties that are partially buried for delineation purposes. Mr. Mulliken expressed his concern about the parking situation and the decrease in spaces being requested by Mr. Abbiuso and he is also concerned about the fire and EMT access, suggesting that the Board wait to hear the Fire Chief's opinion on the project. He agreed with the previous speaker about the bicycle storage issue. He said that the size of the parking area

and the vehicular entrance was concerning to him and agreed with Mr. Kelly about the advantage of moving of Buildings One and Four to the north to create more parking space. Mr. Mulliken suggested freeing up more land by switching the four-cottage to a two-duplex arrangement. Mr. Abbiuso responded to Mr. Mulliken's suggestions. He was amenable to moving Buildings One and Four and said he would prefer to sprinkle the duplexes and, if requested, to sprinkle the cottages as well. Moving Buildings One and Four would create more space for emergency vehicles as well. He said that the trash receptacles would be enclosed and said he would be open to flipping it with the bicycle racks. He again said he thought the bicycle shed idea was good and he would take a closer at it. Delivery vehicles could utilize the proposed EMS spaces. He said he had explored the duplex v. cottage switch, but said it would require zoning relief for scale.

Ms. Stubner suggested reconfiguring the trash enclosure, possibly breaking it up into two sections, and the location of the residential buildings in order to increase the size of the parking area. She asked about mail service to the units and about the location of a propane tank to which Mr. Abbiuso replied that a large central tank could be buried in the courtyard area and that he was looking into the mail issue.

Mr. Graves complimented Mr. Abbiuso on the design of the project, however he agreed that the size of the parking spaces should be enlarged, as vehicles being driven these days are larger. He commented on other aspects, such as wanting to see a more detailed landscaping plan.

Mr. Quesnell commented on the design of the project and said he thought the density was appropriate for that part of Town. He is in opposition to seeing a 90' cul-de-sac on the property and said that there were other options to address emergency fire situations, such as sprinklers. He asked about the accessibility of the affordable unit for handicapped individuals. He complimented Mr. Abbiuso regarding the installation of an electrical vehicle charging station. He asked which unit would be designated as affordable. Mr. Abbiuso said that all the units are similar and said that he would take direction from the Board. He said that he would request that one upper and one lower be chosen. The Board discussed the issue. The upper level of Building Five and the lower level of Building Three were chosen as the locations of the affordable units. Mr. Abbiuso requested to continue until the Public Hearing of March 25<sup>th</sup> to take the Board's concerns under consideration.

***There was as motion by Jeffrey Mulliken to grant the request to continue PLN 20-2030 until the Public Hearing of March 25, 2021 at 6:00 P.M. Paul Graves seconded. VOTE: 5-0-0 by roll call.***

#### **4. Work Session:**

a) Recommend support for the \$100,000 grant request for Motta Field renovation. Mr. Quesnell reviewed the grant request, which will pay for hiring designers to offer suggestions, from the Community Preservation Committee, The Board questioned Mr. Quesnell. He explained that the approval and support of the Board would help the request move along the path to Town Meeting. Mr. Gardner explained what the CPC was, how it was funded, and how its money was allocated. ***There was a motion by Jeffrey Mulliken to support the CPC grant request for the Motta Field renovation. Monica Stubner seconded. VOTE: 5-0-0- by roll call.***

b) Proposed Zoning By-Law Amendments for Annual Town Meeting: Mr. Soulé explained that he had separated out all of the proposed articles that would be on a consent agenda, which include all the proposed amendments up to and including the illumination standards by-law. He reviewed which of the proposed amendments would stand on their own as separate warrant items. Mr. Gardner requested the Growth Management proposed amendment be pulled from the list at this point and delayed until next year. He explained his reasoning for the request. He did say that the Board, however, will have to evaluate future amendments to that By-Law.

Mr. Soulé explained how the existing Inclusionary and Incentive Zoning By-Law would apply to the project at 30 Shank Painter Road and how it would be changed by the proposed amendment to the By-Law in order to illustrate a real world application to the Board. He then reviewed Mr. Azar's comments and recommendations for amending the By-Law, sent to the Board because Mr. Azar was not able to attend the meeting. It included recommendations to incentivize developers to create affordable housing units, including revising number 5. A (3) to limit the text from "shall have the authority to modify or waive" to just "shall", or other similar language, in order to clarify the incentive and provide certainty for a developer. Mr. Azar said it wasn't fair for developers to spend money in pre-development costs unless they have certainty about getting incentives. He added that the community needed to support developers who seek to add to the affordable housing stock and not resort to making NIMBY comments. He said that another way to incentivize affordable housing would be to lessen parking requirements. (although it was mentioned that the PB currently does have the ability to waive parking requirements). He wanted to know if the Board had given any thought to allowing third stories. He recommended that in 5. B, the 5' building height incentive be changed to 10'. and suggested cleaning up language in 5. (2) bullet 3 to read that "units are limited by the supported bedroom count for non-variance septic system contained on the same parcel" and asked what happened if the project was located on the Town sewer system.

The Board questioned Mr. Gardener and discussed Mr. Azar's height recommendation. After a brief discussion, Mr. Soulé suggested that modify the language to read that if you provide the minimum of 1/6 or more of affordable dwelling units, the housing units may be higher than what would otherwise be allowed under the Inclusionary By-Law to allow for the creation of a full third story while maintaining the character of a two and a half story structure. The Board discussed Mr. Azar's first recommendation regarding the language of number 5. A (3). Mr. Soulé will contact Mr. Azar to clarify his request. Mr. Gardner commented about the request. He said that the next step is to schedule a Public Hearing on Thursday, April 8, 2021.

c) Pending Decisions: None.

d) Minutes of January 14 and 28, 2021:

***January 14, 2021: There was a motion by Jeffrey Mulliken to approve the minutes of January 14, 2021 as written. Paul Graves seconded. VOTE: 5-0-0 by roll call.***

January 28, 2021: Tabled.

e) **Any other business that may properly come before the Board:** Stellwagen Bank Visitor Center letter: Mr. Soulé reviewed the project, which will be located in the Municipal Parking Lot at the end of MacMillan Pier. He said two designs that will be presented to the Select Board on March 8, 2021. The SB is looking for recommendations from Town Boards. Mr. Quesnell voiced his support for the project. Ms. Stubner agreed with his comments. Mr. Kelly also agreed. Mr. Mulliken added his positive comments on the siting. Mr. Soulé will draft a letter of approval from the Board for its review.

Mr. Kelly asked if the project at 227R Commercial Street could be heard at a joint meeting of the ZBA and the PB to discuss the changes.

Ms. Stubner asked if an overly bright spotlight behind Old Anne Page Way could be dimmed and who would she could contact about it. Mr. Soulé will investigate it.

***There was a motion by Brandon Quesnell to adjourn the meeting at 8:26 P.M. Monica Stubner seconded. VOTE: unanimous by roll call.***

Respectfully submitted,

Ellen C. Battaglini

Approved by \_\_\_\_\_ on \_\_\_\_\_, 2021  
Thaddeus Soulé, Town Planner,  
on behalf of the Planning Board