

AMHERST PLANNING BOARD
Wednesday, December 20, 2006 – 7:00 PM
Town Room, Town Hall
MINUTES

PRESENT: Aaron Hayden, Chair; Carl Mailler, Rod Francis, Richard Howland, Susan Pynchon, Kathleen Anderson, Eduardo Suarez

ABSENT: Mary Scipioni

STAFF: Niels la Cour, Senior Planner; Sue Krzanowski, Management Assistant

Mr. Hayden opened the meeting at 7:10 PM.

I. MINUTES - Meetings of November 15 & December 6, 2006

Mr. Francis MOVED: to approve the Minutes of November 15, 2006 as submitted. Mr. Howland seconded, and the Motion passed 4-0-3 (Suarez, Mailler, Pynchon abstained).

Mr. Francis MOVED: to approve the Minutes of December 6, 2006 as submitted. Ms. Pynchon seconded, and the Motion passed 7-0.

Mr. Hayden noted that the next item was a public hearing involving Amherst College where he is employed. He turned the meeting over to Mr. Mailler and Mr. Hayden stepped down from the Board and left the room for the hearing.

II. PUBLIC HEARING – SITE PLAN REVIEW

SPR2007-00004, 212 Northampton Road – Amherst College

Mr. Mailler read the preamble and opened the hearing for this request to enhance and expand the athletic fields along Northampton Road (Route 9), Map 14C/Parcel 113; R-N zoning district.

Appearing on behalf of Amherst College was Mr. Jim Brassord, Director of Facilities Planning & Management at Amherst College, and Mr. Patrick McQuire and Ms. Meg Patterson of Geller Sport, Inc.

Mr. Brassord began the presentation and told the Board that there are two major elements to the project. The proposed construction would be on two sites – an existing practice field site and an existing undeveloped site which had been formerly leased out by Amherst College and used for agricultural purposes.

The existing natural grass athletic field will be replaced with an in filled synthetic turf field. The unfilled synthetic turf athletic field will displace the existing softball field and track and field throwing events. These events will be relocated to the existing agricultural area. Due to the elevation change between the southeast and northwest corners of the site, the site will be re-graded to provide adequate space for a college-regulation-sized softball field and a multi-purpose practice field. A new parking lot with 15 spaces, including one handicap

accessible space, will be located to the north of the softball field. Additional parking will be provided at the existing track and field facility as it is currently.

Mr. Brassord said that Amherst College has worked closely with the Planning Department and has notified and met with abutters on Hazel Avenue.

Ms. Meg Patterson, Geller Sport, Inc., continued the presentation. Members of the Board asked about the neighborhood, historic aspect of the neighborhood, lighting, and parking issues.

Ms. Patterson described the neighborhood as residential. It was the first African-American community in Amherst. Substantial plantings and a fence will be used as a buffer, she said. Ms. Patterson also described the lighting plan and addressed the parking requirements for the site.

Mr. Ted Jarowski, 39 Hazel Avenue, requested that the wrought iron fence be extended to the end of Hazel Avenue, and said that a substantial vegetative buffer as well could help to sustain the historic aspect of the neighborhood.

Mr. la Cour noted the Site Visit report.

Ms. Terri Hebb, Hazel Avenue, asked about lighting for intramural nighttime games. Mr. Brassord said there would not be any nighttime games. He said that the only lighting used on the field would be temporary for football practice for a couple of weeks before Daylight Savings Time.

Ms. Hebb asked if the chain link fence could be heavily screened so that it wouldn't show. Ms. Patterson said that substantial plantings would be used.

Mr. Jarowski said that he would like the wrought iron fence brought all the way up to his house and said that he doesn't want to have to look at a chain link fence. He also requested that arbor vitae be planted along the fence and that a Rose of Sharon be included in the planting plan as a tribute to the historic African-American neighborhood.

Mr. Brassord said that Amherst College would be agreeable to installing a wrought iron instead of chain link fence.

Mr. Patrick McQuire, president of Geller Sports, Inc., said that they would be happy to work with the Board and neighbors with respect to the plantings which will be used.

There was no additional public comment.

Mr. Francis MOVED: to close the public hearing. Mr. Howland seconded, and the Motion passed 5-0-1 (Suarez abstained).

The Board discussed the waiver requests. Mr. Howland commented that one handicap space was not adequate but would meet the requirements. The Board reviewed the Development Application Report and Mr. Mailler noted a copy of a letter from the Residents of Hazel Avenue (21 October 2006).

Mr. Francis MOVED: to approve SPR2007-00005, 212 Northampton Road, subject to the following waivers and conditions:

Waivers

- 1) Scale and sheet size submission requirements.
- 2) Location of drip lines for trees greater than 8" DBH
- 3) Traffic Impact Statement (Section 6, a, b, c and e)
- 4) Fence height and setback requirements
- 5) Parking Requirements

Conditions

- 1) A six-foot (6-foot) ornamental wrought-iron fence shall be extended along Hazel Avenue and installed in front of the chain-link fence needed for the softball field.
- 2) The landscape plan as submitted is approved but may be modified in consultation with neighbors. It should include the proposed Rose of Sharon as a tribute to the African-American community. A final landscape shall be submitted for the review and approval of the Board.
- 3) Grading and drainage plans shall be submitted to and approved by the Town Engineer.
- 4) The landscaping shall be installed and continuously maintained.
- 5) Four (4) copies of the final plans shall be submitted to the Planning Department.
- 6) This permit will expire in two (2) years if substantial construction has not begun.

Mr. Howland seconded, and the Motion passed 6-0.

Mr. Hayden returned to the meeting and resumed the Chair.

III. PUBLIC HEARING – SITE PLAN REVIEW/SPECIAL PERMIT

SPR2007-00005/SPP2007-00001 – 25 East Pleasant Street – The Bank of Western Massachusetts

Mr. Hayden read the preamble and opened the combined hearing for these requests to expand the lobby and offices for improved ATM use and customer service and exceed maximum coverage. (Map 11C/Parcel 308; B-G zoning district)

Mr. Howland disclosed that he is a co-trustee of the Central Amherst Realty Trust but would have no financial gain from this proposal.

Mr. Suarez disclosed that he has a professional relationship with Ms. Erica Gees (project architect) but would have no financial gain from this proposal.

Mr. John Kuhn, architect with Kuhn-Riddle described the project to add a 10.5' addition to the front of the building that will abut the sidewalk along East Pleasant Street. This addition will exceed the minimum lot coverage of 95%; proposed coverage is 100%, thus requiring a Special Permit. Mr. Kuhn said that the bank hopes to start construction in the spring.

The Board asked questions about the panels to be used on the building, landscaping, parking, coverage and the proximity of Tan Brook to the site. Mr. Howland suggested that the applicant discuss the proposal with the Conservation Commission.

Mr. Francis said that the Board should deny the Special Permit and encourage the bank to put in more than 5% landscaping. Mr. Kuhn said that the bank wants to maintain what parking they have. After further discussion, it was agreed that the hearings should be continued.

Mr. Howland MOVED: to continue the hearings to February 7, 2007 at 7:30 PM. Mr. Mailler seconded, and the Motion passed 7-0.

IV. NEW BUSINESS

A. Representative to Agricultural Commission, Atkins Corner Working Group

Mr. Mailler MOVED: to appoint Ms. Pynchon as the Board's representative to the Agricultural Commission. Ms. Anderson seconded, and the Motion passed 7-0.

Mr. Suarez volunteered to served on the Atkins Working **Corner** Group for a three-month trial period.

Mr. Howland MOVED: to appoint Mr. Suarez to the Atkins Working **Corner** Group. Mr. Mailler seconded, and the Motion passed 7-0.

Mr. la Cour gave a brief summary of activity around Atkins Corner.

B. Master Plan Approval – Discussion of Process

Mr. Hayden said that concern has been expressed about the Planning Board's statutory role in adopting the Master Plan and there are citizens who have expressed an intent to obstruct the master plan approval process if the Planning Board is the only final approving body for the plan. Mr. la Cour said that the Comprehensive Planning Committee has from the beginning intended that the approval process would solicit input from Town Meeting, the Select Board, and members of the public before the final plan came to the Planning Board for approval. The CPC has formed a subcommittee to develop a specific process for the approval of the master plan process, he said. He suggested that the Planning Board invite this subcommittee and/or a representative of it to attend a Planning Board meeting in February to address the issues and citizen concerns that have been raised about the master plan approval process and to discuss ideas.

Mr. Hayden encouraged the Board members to attend the master plan working group sessions and said all would be welcome. Participants are particularly needed for the housing and transportation working groups, he said.

Mr. la Cour noted that the first working group workshops are scheduled for Tuesday, January 23, 2007, at 7:00 PM, in the Town Room, Town Hall. There will be many more meetings after that, he said, giving people many opportunities to participate in the process.

Mr. Suarez asked for additional information which Mr. la Cour said he would provide.

C. Other - Mr. la Cour said that another representative to the Flood Prone Conservancy Task Force is needed to replace Mr. Rivera, who had resigned from the Board. Currently, Mr. Mailler is the only appointed representative. Mr. Francis said that he is interested in serving as the Board's representative.

Mr. Francis noted that four members of the Select Board had attended the public hearing for the Haskins View subdivision. He asked for clarification about quorum issues when a quorum of the Select Board attends a Planning Board meeting and whether it is considered a joint meeting or not. Mr. la Cour said that he would inquire.

V. OLD BUSINESS – None.

VI. FORM A (ANR) SUBDIVISION APPLICATIONS

The Chair endorsed the following:

ANR2007-00016, Red Gate Lane – Warren C. Elliott

Noting that the newly created lot was subject to the Phased Growth Bylaw, Mr. Francis MOVED: to establish January 2007 as the date that the lot would be eligible for a building permit. Mr. Howland seconded, and the motion passed 7-0.

XIII. ADJOURNMENT

Mr. Howland MOVED: to adjourn this meeting at 9:15 PM. Mr. Francis seconded, and the Motion passed 7-0.

Respectfully submitted:

Sue Krzanowski, Management Assistant

Approved:

Aaron A. Hayden, Chair

DATE: _____