

**AMHERST PLANNING BOARD**  
**Wednesday, August 3, 2011 – 7:00 PM**  
**Town Room, Town Hall**  
**MINUTES**

**PRESENT:** Jonathan Shefftz (7:08 PM), Chair; Jonathan O’Keeffe, Rob Crowner, Bruce Carson, Sandra Anderson, Richard Roznoy, David Webber, Connie Kruger and Stephen Schreiber (7:09 PM)

**ABSENT:** none

**STAFF:** Christine Brestrup, Senior Planner; Nate Malloy, Associate Planner

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Mr. O’Keeffe opened the meeting at 7:01 PM. He announced that the meeting was being recorded by town staff and by Amherst Media and would be broadcast by Amherst Media. Mr. O’Keeffe welcomed Mr. Tellier from the Community Development Committee.

**I. MINUTES** June 29, 2011 and July 6, 2011

Mr. Carson MOVED to approve the Minutes of June 29, 2011. Mr. Webber seconded and the vote was 5-0-2 (Roznoy and Kruger abstained).

Ms. Anderson MOVED to approve the Minutes of July 6, 2011. Ms. Kruger seconded and the vote was 7-0.

**II. OLD BUSINESS**

**A. SPR2011-00009/M9271 – 138 Sunderland Road, Amherst Survival Center**

Review of revised Landscape Plan, Town Engineer letter and catalog information on proposed exterior lighting in accordance with Conditions #2, #4 and #6 of Site Plan approval (Map 5A/Parcel 25; COM Zoning District)

Liz Thompson, Landscape Architect, presented the information for the Amherst Survival Center. The applicant is still undecided about whether to choose LED or metal halide lighting.

Mr. Shefftz arrived (7:08 PM).

Ms. Thompson presented information and a photometric plan for both types of lighting and asked the Planning Board to approve both so that the applicant could make the decision as to which type of lighting to use once the costs were known. Ms. Thompson stated that both types of lights would have full cut-offs for the parking lot and that the lighting would not stray beyond the property boundaries.

Ms. Thompson presented information about the proposed fencing along the north property line. The adjacent property owner had expressed a need for separation from the Survival Center property and had requested a fence along the entire property line.

Mr. Schreiber arrived (7:09 PM).

The fence will be a 6 foot high chain link fence with black vinyl coating and will stretch along most of the northern property line. There will be a 6 foot high section of wooden “shadow-box” fencing at the dining space. The black vinyl-coated chain link fence will be reduced to 4 feet high from the front setback line to the front property line, to conform to the Zoning Bylaw dimensional requirements. Ms. Thompson noted that black chain link tends to visually disappear in a vegetated landscape.

Mr. Carson asked why the fence needed to be 6 feet high. Ms. Thompson stated that the adjacent property owner was concerned about trespassing from the Survival Center property onto her property to the north and had requested that there be a 6 foot high fence.

Ms. Thompson stated that the applicant is proposing to use different cultivars of the American Elm, in response to concerns expressed by the Tree Warden with respect to using all one type of tree. Two Liberty Elms and two Princeton Elms are proposed.

Ms. Anderson asked about the color of the proposed lighting. Ms. Thompson stated that both types of lights will cast a white light, with metal halide being a little warmer and LED being a little whiter.

Mr. Carson asked if the lights would be on timers or on all night. Ms. Thompson stated that she understood that the lights would be on timers and that they would not be on all night.

Sara Campbell, Civil Engineer, presented information about grading and drainage. She addressed the comments contained in a letter written by Jason Skeels, Town Engineer, dated July 1, 2011, and stated that she had replied in writing to Mr. Skeels' letter.

Ms. Campbell addressed issues related to stormwater management, erosion control, maintenance of the stormwater management system, Conservation Commission review, details related to utilities, placement and width of driveways, handicapped parking and signage, outlet pipes associated with the stormwater management system, roof drainage, and stabilization of pipe outlet areas. Ms. Campbell noted that Mr. Skeels comments were primarily related to construction details and that the information is now on the construction plans, as requested by Mr. Skeels.

Ms. Brestrup stated that the Building Commissioner would be looking for an acknowledgement from the Board that Conditions 2, 4 and 6 of the Site Plan Review Decision had been met.

Mr. Roznoy asked about Item #2 of Mr. Skeels letter, which stated that "A stormwater management plan should be required of the applicant to be registered with the approved plans at the Registry of Deeds." Ms. Campbell responded that the stormwater management plan that was submitted was a verbal plan and that this could be filed with the deed. There was discussion about whether the plan should be a drawing or a verbal plan. Ms. Brestrup noted that a verbal plan had been sent to her by Ms. Campbell via email that day and that she had forwarded it to the Planning Board members.

Mr. Roznoy asked about Item #4 of Mr. Skeels letter, regarding abandonment of the sewer and water services in the road. Ms. Campbell stated that there was a note on the Utilities Plan with requirements about abandoning the existing water and sewer services.

Mr. Roznoy asked about Item #6 of Mr. Skeels letter, requesting more detail on the proposed water and sewer lines. Ms. Campbell noted that these details are now on the Utilities Plan.

Ms. Campbell presented a reduced-scale Utilities Plan showing the required information on drainage, water, sewer and gas.

Mr. Roznoy expressed concern that the Board did not have proof that the comments in the Town Engineer's letter had been addressed.

Mr. Crouner stated that Condition # 4 of the SPR Decision indicates that the Town Engineer has to approve all of the items listed and that the applicant will not be able to obtain a Building Permit if his conditions are not met. He stated that the applicant appeared to have responded to all of the Town Engineer's comments, even though the Planning Board did not see the plans on which the issues were addressed.

Mr. Schreiber noted that many of Mr. Skeels comments were not in the purview of the Planning Board. Few of the issues are "deal breakers". The utilities issues involve the project using town standards. Overall planning issues include driveway width, grading, drainage to abutters' properties and the stormwater management plan. The rest involves details that can't be provided until the project is further along.

Mr. Crouner asked why the applicant had presented two lighting schemes, and whether they were asking for a recommendation about which scheme to choose or whether they were asking for approval. Ms. Thompson stated that the applicant was asking for approval of both lighting schemes so that the applicant could choose the one that was best when the time came.

Mr. Schreiber MOVED to approve the submittals and to acknowledge that Conditions #2, 4 and 6 of the Decision for the Site Plan Review approval had been met. Mr. Carson seconded and the vote was 7-1-1 (Roznoy voted "No" and O'Keefe abstained).

Mr. Roznoy explained his vote, stating that he was not sure that Mr. Skeels was satisfied with the applicant's responses to the comments contained in Mr. Skeels' letter. Mr. Skeels had not notified the Board as to whether he was satisfied with the responses.

Mr. O'Keefe explained his vote, reminding the Board that he had abstained from the original vote since he is a contributor to the capital fund for this project.

Mr. O'Keefe relinquished the chair to Mr. Shefftz.

**B. SPR2011-00010/M9393, 1150 West Street – Pauline Lannon c/o Atkins Farm Market**

Review of final layout and landscape plan (Map 258/Parcel 51; B-L Zoning District)

Steve Condon of Waterline Alternative Energies presented the revised final layout and landscape plan. The layout of the solar array had been revised to conform to the setback requirements of the Zoning Bylaw and the planting plan had been revised to include evergreen plants. He described the evergreen plants that were chosen.

Mr. Roznoy MOVED to approve the plan. Mr. Schreiber seconded and the vote was 9-0.

**C. SPR2011-00005/M6948 – 43-51 North Pleasant St. - Boltwood Place – Archipelago Investments, LLC**

Review of Landscape Plan in accordance with Condition #4 of Site Plan approval, including paving materials, proposed site furniture, bike racks, species, size, locations and number of proposed plantings. (Map 14A/Parcel 48; B-G zoning district)

Kyle Wilson and David Williams of Archipelago Investments presented the Landscape Plan. Because of the limited size of the site the landscape improvements are minimal. Street trees will be added and replaced where trees have been removed. There will be a concrete sidewalk around the building, with porous pavers along the parking lot edge. One tree will be a replacement and three trees will be new. The trees will all be Columnar Red Maples. Mr. Wilson has reviewed the tree plantings with Guilford

Mooring, Superintendent of Public Works, because of potential conflicts with underground utilities. Mr. Mooring has agreed with the proposed plan. The porous pavers along the parking lot edge will be gray, to blend with the concrete walk. They will be 9 3/8" x 9 3/8" squares. Mr. Wilson noted that the Design Review Board had reviewed the plan on August 2<sup>nd</sup> and recommended approval.

Mr. Wilson presented information about the proposed location of the electrical transformer, to be located close to the stairway for the parking garage so that it will not be obtrusive.

Mr. Shefftz noted that the Board had received a memorandum from the Design Review Board stating that the DRB recommended approval of the Landscape Plan.

Mr. Crouner asked about the location of bike racks. Mr. Wilson acknowledged lack of bike racks and noted that the site was too small to accommodate bike racks. The 10 foot wide access way along the building is mandated by code for egress from the back of Judie's and can't be obstructed. In front of the building, the concrete sidewalk will be replaced on town property and there is no space for a bike rack there.

Mr. Crouner asked about storage facilities for residents of the building. Mr. Wilson stated that there would be a storage area of about 900 to 1,000 square feet for private storage by residents. Ms. Brestrup noted that there are public bike racks available in front of the Bangs Center and along the alley that goes out to Starbucks.

Mr. O'Keeffe MOVED that the Board approve the Landscape Plan submitted in accordance with Condition #4 of the Site Plan approval. Mr. Roznoy seconded and the vote was 9-0.

**D. SPR2005-00001 – Amherst Shopping Center, 175 University Drive**

Review of sign for V.I.P. Nails, in accordance with Condition # 2 of Site Plan approval (Map 13D/Parcel 59, B-L/R&D zoning district)

Mr. Shefftz stated that the proposed sign seemed to fit within the character of the shopping mall in that it was similar to the existing signs.

David Coppolo of New England Signs Inc. presented the proposed signs for V.I.P. Nails. He stated that in addition to the sign over the entryway, he was also proposing a sign on the directory. He would be splitting one of the spaces remaining on the directory with the landlord (for another space that is for lease) and installing a small sign for V.I.P Nails on the directory. The other half of the directory sign space will go to other new tenant, once the new tenant moves in.

Mr. Schreiber MOVED to approve the signs. Mr. Webber seconded and the vote was 9-0.

**E. Signing of Decision**

SPR2011-00010/M9393 – 1150 West Street – Pauline Lannon c/o Atkins Farm Market  
The Board signed the decision.

**F. Other Old Business – none**

**III. JOINT PUBLIC HEARING**

**JOINT PUBLIC HEARING WITH COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT COMMITTEE**

In accordance with Massachusetts Dept. of Housing and Community Development regulations, the Community Development Committee is holding a joint Public Hearing with

the Amherst Planning Board to receive comments and suggestions from local residents regarding the 2012 Community Development Strategy. The strategy is part of the Town's CDBG application for funding, and summarizes the community's Master Plan. The strategy helps to determine:

- Priority projects and activities to be undertaken by the Town; and
- Priority target areas and neighborhoods where projects take place.

Before opening the joint public hearing, Mr. Shefftz read the obituary of his father, Melvin Charles Shefftz, a professional historian, who had passed away on Bastille Day, 2011.

Mr. Shefftz read the preamble, opened the joint public hearing and recognized Claude Tellier, Co-chair of the Community Development Committee, for an introductory statement.

Mr. Tellier introduced the other members of the CDC, including Mary Jane Laus, Co-chair, and Nancy Gregg and Jana McClure, members of the CDC.

Mr. Tellier described the process that the CDC uses to develop a Community Development Strategy and then to choose projects to recommend for funding. He reminded the audience that this public hearing was to be focused on developing a Strategy and that there would be another meeting in the future at which time the Committee would hear presentations on proposed projects. The Committee will then make recommendations to the Town Manager who makes the final decision on which projects will be funded.

Marta Guevara, a resident of Amherst and an employee of the Amherst public school system, spoke on behalf of the health and welfare of children and families in Amherst. Amherst is eligible for money for services and activities to benefit low and moderate income citizens, she said. She gave statistics on numbers of students served by the Amherst school system (3,000 students from Pre-K through 12<sup>th</sup> grade), numbers of students in the elementary schools (1,300 students) and percentage of elementary school students who qualify for free or reduced lunch (almost 40%). She noted that there has been an increase in the number of single parent households, unemployed parents, hunger, homelessness and working-poor families. She stated that Amherst needs to allocate funds for services to eliminate these inequities. Ms. Guevara noted that the school system has established partnerships with organizations and institutions that have expertise in helping children. She highlighted some of these groups and emphasized the need for quality afterschool care. She noted that the school system hopes to expand its collaboration with the LSSE afterschool programs.

Mr. Shefftz noted that the CDC and Planning Board have already held two meetings to work on the Strategy. Mr. Tellier stated that the reason that the CDC has been working with the Planning Board is that the Planning Board is responsible for the Master Plan and that the CDC Strategy is tied in with the Master Plan. Mr. Tellier observed that after developing the Strategy with the Planning Board's assistance, the CDC will be responsible for selecting the projects to be funded.

Hwei-Ling Greeney, Chair of the Committee on Homelessness (COH), introduced the other members of her committee who were in attendance (Reikka Simula, Kevin Eddings and Eleanor Manire-Gotti) and stated that the COH had sent a memorandum to the CDC containing the COH's comments on the draft Strategy. She asked that extremely low-income households (those with 0 – 30% of area median income) and chronically-homeless individuals be added wherever there is reference to low-income people, in the Strategy. These people are often excluded from affordable-housing programs because of issues related to CORI (Criminal Offender Record Information), bad credit and bad landlord recommendations.

Ms. Greeney recommended that Amherst consider funding projects for ESRO (Enhanced Single-Room Occupancy) housing, with kitchen and bathroom included. She recommended building a number of supported ESRO units each year for the next four years and including these units in future affordable housing projects. She asserted that Amherst should be producing 48 units of affordable housing per year to keep up with current state requirements and that 25% (or 12) of these units should be set aside for extremely low-income households and chronically-homeless individuals. She asked that the needs of the extremely low-income households and chronically homeless individuals be put on top of the priority list, in the Strategy.

There was discussion about how these ESRO units would be categorized under the Zoning Bylaw and whether these units might be included under the category of a non-profit charitable institution.

Ms. Greeney estimates that there are between 16 and 20 chronically homeless individuals in Amherst. There was discussion about where these homeless individuals are based and whether they are actually based in Northampton because of the services offered there.

Ms. Greeney noted that the COH is required to have two members who are currently or previously homeless.

Linda Chalfant, Director of LSSE, introduced individuals who are involved in the LSSE programs, Stacey le Cuivre, a staff member, and Anastasia Morton, a resident of Amherst who benefits from LSSE services. Ms. Chalfant spoke in support of funding afterschool programs. She distributed a document that describes the LSSE afterschool program. Ms. Morton noted that she attends Mount Holyoke College and that her child uses the afterschool program offered by the Town of Amherst.

Ms. Greeney had a “point of order”. She stated that the purpose of the public hearing was to receive input on the Strategy and not on specific programs. There will be another meeting to hear about specific programs, she said.

Mr. Roznoy asked if the LSSE program is completely supported by Block Grant funds. Ms. Chalfant noted that the CDBG does not completely support the program. Some families pay a fee and the program also receives support from the Town of Amherst.

Mr. Tellier described the schedule for the CDC’s work as follows:

- August – public hearing on the Strategy;
- September – call for projects, RFP’s due on September 14<sup>th</sup>, public hearing on projects on September 20<sup>th</sup>;
- October – another public hearing to receive last comments
- December – finish selecting projects and submit application.

Mr. Tellier noted that the CDBG funds (about \$1,000,000) are designated as follows:

- \$200,000 for social services;
- \$600,000 for capital projects;
- Balance for administration.

Ms. McClure stated that the priorities for social service allocation include afterschool programs. Ms. Laus noted that the choices for projects are presented to the Town Manager and then receive comments and approval from the Select Board.

Fred Myers, an Amherst resident, spoke in support of adult basic education and stated that he works with the Literacy Project which is funded by the Department of Education.

It is a 501 (c) 3 non-profit corporation. He described the program which currently serves 58 adults between the ages of 16 and 60, 80% of whom live within a 12 mile radius of Amherst. The program helps people to get jobs, licenses, and to enroll in community college. He asked for funding for a transitions counselor and requested that this request be added to the Strategy.

Ms. McClure emphasized that the purpose of tonight's meeting was not to hear about specific projects. There will be time for that later in the season.

Rene Moss, a resident of Amherst and head of Big Brothers/Big Sisters, spoke in support of that program. She urged the CDC to consider youth as a priority in Amherst.

Tom Maguire of Ridgecrest Road, a case manager for Big Brothers/Big Sisters, read a statement from Joan Zukas, a person who has long been involved in education in Amherst, in support of making youth a priority.

Joanne Campbell, Director of Valley Community Development Corporation (Valley CDC), stated that her organization owns 53 SRO units in Northampton, most of which are ESRO units. She noted that these are considered apartments by the state. They can have services coming into the facility for the residents, or residents can go out to receive services. Her organization was involved in the development of the Main Street housing project as well as Olympia Oaks. She said that the state supports construction of affordable housing in and within walking distance of village center. She objected to the term "work-force" housing, which usually refers to households with 80 to 120% of area median income. This phrase implies that those below 80% AMI are not working.

Ms. Campbell noted that CDBG funds have been used to cover small business counseling, but CDBG no longer funds these services. Valley CDC will be receiving a small grant to counsel small businesses and Amherst is included in the service area, and so will benefit from the grant. Ms. Campbell noted that reference to foreclosure counseling should be included the housing section and not in the community services section of the Strategy, and that foreclosure counseling is an important service that is worth funding. She noted that, under the transportation section, bike paths and pedestrian walkways to village centers are important and contribute to sustainability. She recommended including counseling for first-time homebuyers on issues of budgeting, debt reduction and financial literacy.

Reikka Simula of the COH stated that the term "extremely low income" households is taken from President Obama's "Opening Doors" document which talks about homelessness and that the term ESRO is a new current term and that neither term was coined by the COH.

Nate Malloy, Associate Planner and staff liaison to the CDC, stated that he had received an email expressing support for fixing up parks and playgrounds and public infrastructure that is used by families and children, areas which have been long neglected. The email made specific reference to War Memorial Pool and Community Field.

Mr. Crowner asked if the administrative funds associated with CDBG can be used to do surveys to find out which areas in town are eligible for CDBG funding.

Mr. Malloy stated that the state uses the most current census data to determine income-eligible areas. If a project falls within a block where 50% or more of the residents are low or moderate income households, then projects in that area can be funded. Currently 2000 census data is being used. Mr. Malloy noted that, of the 19 block groups in Amherst, 11 of them have populations that are 50% or more low income. If there is a project that the town puts forth and the state questions whether it would benefit low income people, the state would ask for a door to door survey, and a 100% response rate is needed. This is difficult to

accomplish. Mr. Malloy noted that landlords in Amherst are often not willing to accept the restrictions that come along with Block Grant funding for housing rehabilitation projects, projects which are popular in other communities.

Ms. Kruger MOVED to close the Joint Public Hearing. Mr. Roznoy seconded and the vote was 13-0.

**IV. NEW BUSINESS – none**

**V. FORM A (ANR) SUBDIVISION APPLICATIONS** – The Board endorsed the plan for ANR 2012-00001, Jonathan Klate and Carlotta Willis, 47 and 63 Red Gate Lane, (Map 11D, Parcels 165 & 166).

**VI. UPCOMING ZBA APPLICATIONS** – none

**VII. UPCOMING SPP/SPR/SUB APPLICATIONS** – none

**VIII. PLANNING BOARD SUBCOMMITTEE REPORTS**

Zoning – Mr. O’Keeffe reported that the ZSC had met that evening. The main topic was a review of the status of the Village Center rezoning projects and a review of a related memorandum from The Cecil Group. The ZSC began to discuss details of how the Form-Based Code would fit into the existing Zoning Bylaw, along with how the issues of uses versus forms would be handled. The next meeting is scheduled for August 17<sup>th</sup>. The ZSC’s other active project is an effort to convert the existing town Zoning Map from paper to a web-based GIS format.

**IX. PLANNING BOARD COMMITTEE & LIAISON REPORTS**

Pioneer Valley Planning Commission – none

Community Preservation Act Committee – none

Agricultural Commission – none

Public Transportation and Bicycle Committee – Mr. Roznoy reported that he believed that the PTBC had chosen two representatives to sit on the Transportation Task Force and that there were questions about how the task force would be organized. The last scheduled meeting of the PTBC did not have a quorum.

Amherst Redevelopment Authority – none

**X. REPORT OF THE CHAIR** – none

**XI. REPORT OF STAFF** – none

**XII. ADJOURNMENT**

The meeting was adjourned at 9:00 p.m.

Respectfully submitted:

Approved:

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Christine M. Brestrup,  
Senior Planner

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Jonathan Shefftz, Chair

DATE: \_\_\_\_\_