

AMHERST PLANNING BOARD
Wednesday, November 6, 2013 – 5:00 PM
Town Room, Town Hall
MINUTES

PRESENT: David Webber, Chair, Rob Crouner, Bruce Carson, Kathleen Ford, Connie Kruger, Stephen Schreiber, Sandra Anderson and Greg Stutsman

ABSENT: Richard Roznoy

STAFF: Jonathan Tucker, Planning Director
Christine Brestrup, Senior Planner

Mr. Webber opened the meeting at 5:05 PM.

I. MINUTES

Mr. Schreiber MOVED to approve the Minutes of September 11, 2013. Mr. Stutsman seconded and the vote was 8-0.

II. PUBLIC HEARING – SITE PLAN REVIEW

**SPR2014-00005 – Candice Demers of Ladies Landscaping – 62 Snell Street
(Humphries House, Amherst College)**

Request Site Plan Review approval to remove existing bluestone patio and brick walls and replace walls with new brick and pour concrete patio and add handicapped ramp along front of patio (Map 14C, Parcel 61, R-N zoning district)

Mr. Webber read the preamble and opened the public hearing.

Peter Root, Director of Operations for Amherst College, presented the application. He noted that the Board had conducted a site visit that morning. Mr. Root explained that the project had started as a maintenance project to rebuild the patio. Then the College decided to add the handicapped ramp which triggered a Building Permit and Site Plan Review.

Mr. Root answered questions that had arisen at the site visit. The front door is not intended to be made handicapped accessible at this time. The landing area at the bottom of the ramp will be code compliant. There will be a 6 to 6 ½ foot long “run out space” which will be 5 feet wide. There will be benches installed around the edge of the patio/terrace area to provide seating. These benches will keep people from falling off the edge of the patio. The bench(es) will be a teak and will be bolted in place.

Mr. Root presented a photograph of what the top of the patio/terrace wall would look like. The wall will be brick and the patio surface will have a lip that will create a wall cap. It will look like a clean white edge.

Ms. Kruger asked to see a picture of the whole project, including the bench. After discussion the Board decided by consensus to impose a condition requiring submission of a photograph of the proposed bench.

Mr. Root stated that the College typically provides a more thorough application and he apologized for not having included more information.

Mr. Webber commended the College for installing a handicapped ramp.

Mr. Crouner MOVED to close the public hearing. Ms. Kruger seconded and the vote was 8-0.

Mr. Webber noted that the applicant had asked for waivers.

The Board found under Section 11.24 of the Zoning Bylaw, Site Plan Review, as follows:

- 11.2400 – The project is in conformance with all appropriate provisions of the Zoning Bylaw;
- 11.2401 – Town amenities and abutting properties will be protected because detrimental or offensive actions are not planned for this site; in fact the proposal will be an improvement over current conditions;
- 11.2402 – Abutting properties will be protected from detrimental site characteristics resulting from the proposed use;
- 11.2403 – Adequate recreational facilities, open space and amenities will be provided; the proposal is an improvement over current conditions;
- 11.2410 – Unique or important natural, historic or scenic features will be protected; the existing historic building will be protected;
- 11.2411 – N/A;
- 11.2412 – N/A;
- 11.2413 – The ability of the proposed drainage system within and adjacent to the site to handle any increased runoff resulting from the development is considered to be adequate; the site is surrounded by grass and plants; the increase in paved area is not significant most of the project involves resurfacing an existing paved area;
- 11.2414 – N/A;
- 11.2415 – The requirement for submission of a Soil Erosion Plan will be waived;
- 11.2416 – Adjacent properties will be protected from the intrusion of various types of nuisances, including pollution and noise; no actions are planned that would cause or increase these types of intrusions;
- 11.2417 – N/A;
- 11.2418 – N/A;
- 11.2419 – N/A;
- 11.2420 – N/A;
- 11.2421 – The development is consistent with respect to setbacks, placement of parking, landscaping and entrances and exits with surrounding buildings and development;
- 11.2422 – N/A;
- 11.2423 – N/A;
- 11.2424 – N/A;
- 11.2430 – The site has been designed to provide for the convenience and safety of vehicular and pedestrian movement both within the site and in relation to adjoining ways and properties; the provision of a handicapped ramp improves convenience and safety;
- 11.2431 – N/A;
- 11.2432 – N/A;
- 11.2433 – N/A;
- 11.2434 – N/A;
- 11.2435 – N/A;
- 11.2436 – The requirement for a Traffic Impact Statement will be waived;
- 11.2437 – N/A

Ms. Ford MOVED to approve the application with the standard conditions and a condition requiring submission of a drawing or photograph of the proposed bench and granting of the requested waivers. Ms. Kruger seconded and the vote was 8-0.

Waivers

- Landscape Plan
- Erosion Control Plan
- Lighting Plan
- Sign Plan

- Traffic Impact Statement

Conditions

1. The applicant shall submit a photograph or drawing of the proposed bench or benches to the Board for review and approval.
2. One (1) hard copy of the final revised plans shall be submitted to the Planning Department.

IV. NEW BUSINESS

A. Hampshire College – Small “recycled” barn building in ED zoning district

Carl Weber, Associate Director of Facilities, presented the barn project. The project is sponsored and run by students. The student group is known as the “Re-Hamping” Group. The project will take the barn from the president’s property on Middle Street and reuse it. Mr. Weber presented student renderings showing how the barn would look once it has been relocated and reconstructed. He noted that three architectural classes in the Five College System had worked on the project.

The new structure will be bigger and super-insulated with triple-glazed windows. It will be located near the community garden on campus.

The existing barn on President Lash’s property will be deconstructed and parts of it will be used in the new structure. The new building will be 1,500 square feet in area.

Jonathan Wright is the contractor.

Mr. Carl Weber presented elevations of the new building. The inside of the building will be open and the trusses will be visible in some locations. The trusses will be reused from the existing barn.

Mr. David Webber praised the project. Mr. Tucker noted that the current location of the existing barn obscures the view of the Holyoke Range.

Mr. Carl Weber stated that the college had already applied for a demolition permit.

Board members asked about the name of the new building. The name is the Roos-Rohde House. Mr. Carl Weber explained that the building is dedicated to an alumna who was chair of the board and his wife.

Mr. David Webber thanked Mr. Weber for the presentation.

III. TOWN MEETING ZONING ISSUES

A. Zoning Amendments for Fall Special Town Meeting

Article 13 – Mr. Tucker reported that there was a revised motion for Article 13, Medical Marijuana, due to a typographical error. He also noted that there was discussion about Article 15, R-F Dimensions, related to the development of Olympia Place.

Article 15 – Mr. Tucker reported that new maps were available showing the two R-F zoning districts. Only one property in the Olympia Drive R-F zoning district will be affected by the proposed dimensional changes. Ms. Kruger noted that some people had expressed concern about the compatibility between the affordable rental housing at Olympia Oaks and the student housing at Olympia Place. She reported that she had spoken to the developers of Olympia Oaks [affordable rental housing development] and that they do not have concerns about the development of Olympia Place [apartment style dormitories for students] being constructed nearby.

Mr. Schreiber noted that if UMass develops its properties on Olympia Drive they are likely to be 4 and 5 story buildings. There was further discussion about the compatibility between Olympia Place and Olympia Oaks.

There was discussion about non-owner occupied Affordable Duplexes.

Mr. Crowner presented a revised Motion on Article 18, eliminating the word “principal” from the first paragraph and reorganizing the paragraph.

There was discussion about the proposed language.

Ms. Kruger MOVED to substitute the proposed language “A mixed-use building shall be a building containing dwelling unit(s) in combination with permitted retail, business, institutional, government, public service, consumer service, office, or similar principal use(s) and lawful accessory use(s)” for what is now in the Warrant. Ms. Ford seconded and the vote was 8-0.

B. Public Comment Period – none

IV. NEW BUSINESS

B. SPR2013-00001 – 4 Boltwood Avenue, Town of Amherst – Review of parking meter shelter and light in accordance with Condition #6 of Site Plan Review decision

Ms. Ford reported that the Design Review Board had reviewed the parking meter shelters which are proposed to be installed throughout the Downtown area. They are pre-fabricated. Ideally the DRB would like to see something more attractive, but the structures appear to be adequate for their intended purpose which is to provide shelter from rain and snow and to provide light at night. The structure is solid and will be a dark bronze in color. The DRB deemed them to be appropriate.

Ms. Anderson noted that they are tall structures at 7 feet height and that the lights are large, at 11” square.

After discussion the Board acknowledged that some people are tall enough to need the tall structures and that many of the structures would not be very visible due to their locations. Ms. Ford noted that the height of the structures and the light inside will make it easier to find the parking meters.

The Board expressed concern for other conditions of the Site Plan Review for the Town Hall parking lot that had not been met. Board members reserved judgment on the parking meter shelter in the Town Hall parking lot until it was installed and they could see it in place.

Ms. Brestrup agreed to send an email to Mr. Bohonowicz asking about the other conditions of the SPR approval.

C. Topics not reasonably anticipated 48 hours prior to the meeting

Mr. Carson presented a book that he recommended to Planning Board members about “Walkability”. He offered to lend it to other Planning Board members.

Board members acknowledged receipt of the memorandum from CPAC Chair, Peter Jessop, regarding a Call for Proposals Qualifying for CPA Funding for FY 2015.

Mr. Tucker noted that capital budgets were being developed and that one of the items to be considered is the hiring of a consultant to develop a plan for the Gateway and Downtown areas of town.

V. OLD BUSINESS

- A. Signing of Decisions – The Board signed the following decisions:
SPR2014-00004 and SPP2014-00004 – Archipelago Investments LLC – 57 East Pleasant Street (Kendrick Place)
SPR2014-00002 – Ron Bohonowicz, Director of Facilities, Town of Amherst – Amherst Regional Middle School, 170 Chestnut Street

- B. Topics not reasonably anticipated 48 hours prior to the meeting – none

VI. FORM A (ANR) SUBDIVISION APPLICATIONS – The Board endorsed the following ANR Plan:

ANR2014-00009 – David Ziomek for Town of Amherst – Potwine Lane (Brunelle Property)

Ms. Brestrup also noted that the Planning Board had received an ANR Plan for property at the corner of Chestnut, East Pleasant and Eames Avenue. This ANR is a little more complicated and will be brought to the Planning Board on November 20th.

VII. UPCOMING ZBA APPLICATIONS – Board members declined to review the following ZBA application: ZBA FY2014-00009 – Alpha Chi Omega – 38 Nutting Avenue

VIII. UPCOMING SPP/SPR/SUB APPLICATIONS

Ms. Brestrup reported that the Planning Board had received an application for a Preliminary Subdivision Plan for a 136 lot subdivision for The Retreat in North Amherst. The Board will be holding a public hearing on this application on Wednesday, December 4th.

IX. PLANNING BOARD COMMITTEE & LIAISON REPORTS – no reports

Pioneer Valley Planning Commission – Bruce Carson
Community Preservation Act Committee – Sandra Anderson
Agricultural Commission – vacant
Transportation Plan Task Force – Richard Roznoy and Rob Crowner
Amherst Redevelopment Authority – Constance Kruger
Design Review Board – Kathleen Ford
Housing and Sheltering Committee – Greg Stutsman
Town Gown Study Steering Committee – David Webber and Greg Stutsman
Master Plan Implementation Committee – vacant

X. REPORT OF THE CHAIR

XI. REPORT OF STAFF

XII. ADJOURNMENT

The meeting was adjourned at 6:30 PM.

Respectfully submitted:

Approved:

Christine M. Brestrup
Senior Planner

David Webber, Chair

DATE: _____