

AMHERST PLANNING BOARD
Wednesday, October 1, 2014 – 7:00 PM
Town Room, Town Hall
MINUTES

PRESENT: David Webber, Chair, Stephen Schreiber, Rob Crowner, Bruce Carson, Kathleen Ford, Richard Roznoy, and Greg Stutsman

ABSENT: Sandra Anderson

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

Mr. Webber opened the meeting at 7:05 PM.

I. MINUTES

Minutes not available.

II. ZONING

A. Zoning Subcommittee Report

Mr. Crowner presented the ZSC report. The ZSC received a citizens' petition for a zoning amendment regarding Inclusionary Zoning, seeking to expand and clarify the applicability of Inclusionary Zoning. A detailed argument in favor of the proposed amendment has been presented by the petitioner.

The question is "Does the existing language of Article 15 of the Zoning Bylaw cover any Special Permit regardless of whether it for use or dimensional modifications?" If so, then the petition would encode this interpretation.

The ZSC seems inclined not to support the article as originally written. At the ZSC meeting, the members held a detailed discussion as to how the proposed amendment might be changed. The ZSC also discussed how the town can have Inclusionary Zoning without stifling development.

They will have a recommendation for the Planning Board on this proposed zoning amendment by the next Planning Board meeting.

The other zoning amendment (a Planning Board amendment) involves reorganization of the Special Districts section of the Bylaw. At the recent Warrant Review meeting additional necessary changes were pointed out and requested. The Warrant will be signed on Monday [October 6th].

B. Public Comment Period

Vince O'Connor of Summer Street asserted that the Zoning Bylaw is clear as written. What is lacking is the proper interpretation of what is in the Bylaw, he said. He disagreed with the staff report that had been circulated regarding the citizens' petition.

A. Zoning Subcommittee Report (*continued*)

The Planning Board discussed the timetable for Town Meeting. Board members reviewed the Town meeting schedule, including dates for mailings and bus tours. Town Meeting will begin on November 5th and there are 7 articles proposed for the Warrant.

Mr. Crowner noted that new language had been developed by staff and the ZSC for the zoning amendment on “Special Districts” reorganization. Board members reviewed changes to the proposed amendment, indicated in red, on a draft dated 9/29/2014. Mr. Roznoy asked about a deletion on page 9, deleting reference to a section of 333 CMR. Mr. Tucker explained that the section numbers have changed in 333CMR and that Town Counsel recommended deleting reference to a particular section of 333 CMR.

Mr. Crowner reported that the ZSC supports the proposed changes in the proposed zoning amendment.

Planning Board members agreed by consensus that the proposed language dated 9/29/2014 be placed on the Warrant for Fall Special Town Meeting.

It was not yet 7:30 p.m. so Board members turned to other untimed items.

IV. OLD BUSINESS

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

V. NEW BUSINESS

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

VI. FORM A (ANR) SUBDIVISION APPLICATIONS

Ms. Brestrup explained two ANR applications:

ANR2015-03 Jean K. Canon – Property adjacent to #348 Henry Street

ANR2015-04 May Lee Chen – 149 Pomeroy Lane

After discussion Board members agreed by consensus that these applications did not need Subdivision Approval. Board members authorized Mr. Webber to endorse the plans once Town Engineer, Jason Skeels, had reviewed and commented on them.

VII. UPCOMING ZBA APPLICATIONS

Board members declined to review the following ZBA applications:

ZBA FY2015-00008 - Michael Ben-Chaim – 28 Shays Street.

ZBA FY2015-00010 – Ryan Karb – 110 Logtown Road

ZBA FY2015-00011 - Killian O’Connell – 257 Pelham Road

ZBA FY2015-00012 – Knight Properties, LLC – 186 College Street

ZBA FY2015-00013 – Bruce Coldham – 61 Chestnut Street

VIII. UPCOMING SPP/SPR/SUB APPLICATIONS

Ms. Brestrup reported on the following upcoming SPR/SPP/SUB applications and reviews by the Planning Board:

- SPR2015-00006 & SPP2015-00002 – W.D. Cows Inc. – 134 Montague Road – Site Plan Review and Special Permit for New Building for Atkins Farms Country Market – North;
- Site Plan Review for new building proposed at 418 North Pleasant Street, designed by Sigrid Miller-Pollin with site design by The Berkshire Design Group;
- New breakfast restaurant for the Trolley Barn at 68 Cows Road – review of signs and hood.

III. PUBLIC HEARING – SITE PLAN REVIEW

SPR2015-00004 – First Baptist Church – 434 North Pleasant Street

Request Site Plan Review approval to install temporary units at the rear of the parking lot to be used by Craig's Place shelter to feed the homeless (6 p.m. to 10 p.m.) and for storage (Map 11A, Parcel 29, R-G zoning district)

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

Jerry Gates, a member and the property manager of the First Baptist Church, presented the application. Accompanying him were Kevin Noonan, Executive Director of Craig's Doors, and Rebecca Wilder, Director of the Shelter at the First Baptist Church.

Mr. Gates stated that the First Baptist Church would like to install the trailer for feeding clients of the Shelter before they can go into the Church building at night. The Church building does not open to the Shelter clients until 9:30 p.m. The Church building is the temporary home to the Shelter and the trailer will be considered temporary as well.

The trailer will be installed in the rear of the Church parking lot. It will have its wheels removed and will sit relatively low to the ground.

By installing the trailer, the Shelter will be able to open earlier for its clients, to serve dinner and for intake.

Mr. Gates described the location of the shelter, in the northwest corner of the existing parking lot. It will have its own lights mounted directly on the trailer.

There will be two new light poles installed in the parking lot along the southern property boundary. Mr. Gates submitted information about the proposed lights.

The trailer has two doors. It will need a handicapped ramp and stairs. He presented a drawing showing the proposed handicapped ramp and stairs which will be constructed of wood.

The trailer will be a "job trailer" like one on a construction site. The inside will need to be approved by the Health Department. The outside looks like a construction trailer. Mr. Gates and others from the Church and the Shelter plan to paint the trailer to "camouflage" it.

Mr. Gates noted that the Health Department had offered comments on the use of the trailer. The Health Department will need to approve the toilets.

The trailer was located on the site plan so as to be 100 feet from the nearby wetland edge. Mr. Gates spoke with Wetlands Administrator, Beth Willson, and was told that he did not need to file with the Conservation Commission.

Ms. Brestrup explained that new information had come to light and that the trailer would need to be positioned 20 feet from the northern property line because it is associated with a “religious use”, in accordance with Section 6.6 of the Zoning Bylaw. Mr. Gates agreed to position the trailer 20 feet from the northern property line and will check with Ms. Willson to confirm that the new location will conform to wetlands regulations.

Mr. Webber reported that the Board held a site visit on Tuesday afternoon, September 30th. They visited the parking lot behind the church. Adjacent to the Church parking lot are other parking lots owned by UMass. The site already contains storage containers. There is also a small open shelter behind the church where clients wait to be admitted into the church. This small open shelter will be removed.

Mr. Gates reported that the Church parking lot is used by different groups, including church members and staff and students and staff from UMass who rent spaces from the Church.

Mr. Webber reviewed the Development Application Report. He noted that there had been previous actions, including a Special Permit and a Variance. The lot is non-conforming as to lot coverage, but is not non-conforming as to building coverage. The trailer is being installed on top of the existing parking lot and therefore will not increase the lot coverage.

There was discussion about the primary use of the property and how the Shelter and trailer related to the primary use.

Mr. Webber reviewed the waivers that were requested, as follows:

- Landscape Plan
- Erosion Control Plan
- Traffic Impact Statement.

Board members expressed no concerns in granting the requested waivers.

Mr. Gates presented a drawing of the proposed handicapped ramp. Board members asked if it would be long enough, at 8%. Mr. Gates confirmed that the ramp would be long enough to meet the handicapped requirements.

Mr. Gates presented a drawing of the proposed stairs and a photograph of the proposed trailer. The wood ramp and stairs will be attached to the ground as will the trailer. The trailer will be set on blocks, and tied down with ties connected to 8 points of attachment which will be screwed into the ground.

Mr. Webber recommended imposing a condition that “the ramp comply with handicapped regulations with regard to grade, width and other requirements”.

Mr. Webber continued to review the Development Application Report.

The trailer will be aluminum and will have a plaque as required by the Building Commissioner. It will have a central system for heat and air conditioning.

Mr. Stutsman questioned the use category. He contended that if the use category were Section 3.330.1, Non-profit human service use, there would be no need for the 20 foot setback for religious uses.

After discussion the Board decided by consensus that the trailer and the shelter were accessory uses to the principle religious use of the property, under Sections 3.330.0 and 3.333. and therefore the 20 foot setback applied.

Mr. Webber noted that a certain number of parking spaces (4 or 6) would be lost as a result of locating the trailer in the parking lot. He asked if the remaining 180 spaces were adequate for

the needs of the Church. Mr. Gates agreed that 180 spaces were adequate for the needs of the Church and those who rent spaces from the Church. He noted that the Church rents 135 parking spaces to students and staff of UMass.

Mr. Gates presented information about the proposed site lighting. The Church currently rents lights from WMECO. The two new lights on the south side of the parking lot would match the two existing lights on the north side.

Mr. Webber noted that the Planning Board requires that all exterior lights be downcast and not shine onto adjacent properties. The proposed lights need to have full cut-offs and/or be dark sky compliant.

Mr. Webber noted that no landscaping is being proposed and that the applicants propose to remove a Pine tree as part of the installation. He noted that the light pole from the adjacent UMass parking lot casts light onto the Church parking lot, concluding that there will be sufficient light for the proposed use.

The sign plan consists of a proposed 3' x 8' sign similar to the existing sign on the existing trailers. The sign will be white corrugated plastic with blue letters and will be installed on the side of the trailer.

A Soil Erosion Plan is not applicable because there will be no significant excavation or filling as part of this project.

Mr. Webber reviewed the Management Plan, noting that there is a sketch of the proposed sign as part of the Management Plan. He read from the Management Plan:

- The trailer can seat up to 30 people
- There will be one menu
- There will be no outdoor seating
- There will be 6 employees
- The hours of operation will be from 6:00 p.m. to 10:00 p.m.
- No alcohol will be served
- There will be no delivery or take-out
- There will be no live or pre-recorded music
- There will be no noise from patrons, music, fans and HVAC equipment
- Staff will manage patrons gathering outdoors on the property
- A fan will provide odor mitigation
- There will be trash containers which will be emptied regularly
- Deliveries to or from the site will come to the Church building.

Mr. Webber read the Health Department comments, including:

- Trailers shall be used only for dinner and intake of clients;
- The primary use of the trailers will be to begin the meal and sheltering process earlier than the church building is available;
- The trailers shall not be in use after the opening of the shelter at 9:30 p.m.;
- The trailers shall not be used for sleeping or any other activity involving clients after the opening of the shelter each evening;
- Bathroom facilities shall be accessible during operating hours;
- Trailers shall not be used for cooking;

Mr. Gates agreed to these conditions and stated that there will be no kitchen in the trailer and meals will be brought over from the Church, where they will be prepared.

The Fire Department submitted an email dated September 5, 2014, stating that it agreed with the comments of the Health Department.

There was no public comment.

Mr. Crowner asked about the temporary nature of the trailer and how long it would stay on site.

Mr. Gates stated that the Shelter in the Church is now a temporary shelter, because the building is not fully sprinklered. The Church received a variance for a period of three years to allow the Shelter to remain on site. The variance is renewable. There is one year left in this variance period. The Church intends to apply for another three year variance. The Church also intends to undertake an expansion project which may include the Shelter as a permanent feature. The answer to the question is four years – this year plus three more.

Mr. Crowner recommended imposing a condition that this Site Plan Review be approved for a period of four years. Although the applicant agreed to come back to renew the Site Plan Review approval after four years, Mr. Tucker cautioned that a Site Plan Review cannot be subject to renewal in the same way as a Special Permit.

Mr. Roznoy asked if there were a way to modify the requirement for the 20 foot setback. He asked what was on the other side of the property line. There is a 10 foot grass strip and then a curb and a drive for the UMass parking lot.

There was further discussion about the setback issue and Board members determined that there was no way to modify the requirement for the 20 foot setback.

Mr. Webber recommended a condition requiring the submission of a revised site plan showing the correct location of the trailer.

The Board members discussed conditions.

Mr. Webber noted that the proposed use is a fairly limited use, so that a lot of the criteria in Section 11.24 are not applicable.

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 through minimizing detrimental or offensive actions;
- 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; this use provides a valuable service to the community; the applicant is to be commended for its public service in terms of feeding and housing the homeless in its own location and at its own expense;
- 11.2410 – N/A;
- 11.2411 – Methods of refuse disposal will be adequate; this has been addressed in the Management Plan;
- 11.2412 – The ability of the proposed sewage disposal and water supply systems within and adjacent to the site to serve the proposed use will be adequate;
- 11.2413 – The drainage system within and adjacent to the site will be adequate to handle the runoff from the proposed use; there will be no increase in runoff;
- 11.2414 – Adequate landscaping has been provided; the existing site is heavily vegetated; the applicant requested a waiver from the requirement for a Landscape Plan and this waiver will be granted;

- 11.2415 – The requirement for submission of an Erosion Control Plan will be waived; there is very little excavation or filling proposed;
- 11.2416 – N/A;
- 11.2417 – Adjacent properties will be protected by minimizing the intrusion of lighting; a condition will require that the exterior lighting be downcast and/or shielded and be dark sky compliant;
- 11.2418 – N/A;
- 11.2419 – Wetlands will be protected because the applicant will consult with the Wetlands Administrator with regard to wetlands regulations;
- 11.2420 – N/A;
- 11.2421 – The development is reasonably consistent with respect to setbacks, placement of parking, landscaping and entrances and exits with surrounding buildings and development; this is a temporary trailer location set in the middle of a parking lot and surrounded by other parking lots; there are no other buildings very close to this location;
- 11.2422 – The project avoids, to the extent feasible, impact on steep slopes, floodplains, scenic views, grade changes and wetlands;
- 11.2423 – There will be more than one building on the site (the church building and the trailer), and the buildings will relate to each other in architectural style, site location and building exits and entrances; this project complies with this requirement;
- 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;
- 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 close the public hearing and to approve the application with waivers and conditions as discussed. Mr. Carson seconded and the vote was 7-0-0.

Waivers

- Landscape Plan
- Erosion Control Plan
- Traffic Impact Statement.

Conditions

1. The applicant shall submit a revised site plan to the Planning Board for review and approval.
2. The applicant shall submit new catalog cuts for site lighting. All exterior lights shall be downcast and/or shielded and shall be dark sky compliant.
3. Conditions recommended by the Health Department shall apply as follows:
 - Trailers shall be used only for dinner and intake of clients
 - The primary use of the trailers will be to begin the meal and sheltering process earlier than the church building is available;
 - The trailers shall not be in use after the opening of the shelter at 9:30 p.m.;

- The trailers shall not be used for sleeping or any other activity involving clients after the opening of the shelter each evening;
 - Bathroom facilities will be accessible during operating hours;
 - Trailers shall not be used for cooking;
4. The applicant shall return to the Board by October 1, 2018, if the trailer is still in place, and demonstrate whether the Management Plan has changed. If the Management Plan has changed the applicant shall submit a revised Management Plan for review and approval by the Planning Board.
 5. The handicapped ramp shall comply with ADA and AAB regulations with regard to grade, width and any other relevant requirements.

SPR2015-00005 – Amherst College – 100 Military Road

Request Site Plan Review approval to replace boiler for the Bunker, including construction of a one-story building (12' x 24') to house wood pellet boiler, and construction of a 30-ton silo, 26' tall to feed boiler (Map 28A, Parcel 1, R-LD zoning district)

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

Tom Hartman of Coldham & Hartman Architects presented the application. The property is the site of an underground bunker which is used by Amherst College to store books and materials. The proposal includes demolition of an old guard shack and the construction of a new one-story building to house the boiler, with a 26' tall silo nearby to supply the fuel for the boiler. The old oil tanks will be removed. There is one amendment to the plans, which is that the dumpster will be enclosed in the location of the former guard shack. Four or five people work at this facility and it is not visible from off-site.

Mr. Hartman stated that the existing exterior lighting is dark-sky compliant. No changes are proposed to exterior lighting. The College is ready to begin construction.

Mr. Webber reported on the site visit which was conducted on Tuesday, September 30th. The Board members noted the existence of the former US military bunker, previously operated by NORAD. They were told that the facility is now used as a book depository for the Five Colleges. It houses rare and important books. The boilers are used all year round.

Mr. Webber stated that the waivers that have been requested seem reasonable:

- Landscape Plan (no proposed changes to landscaping)
- Lighting Plan (no proposed changes to exterior lighting)
- Soil Erosion Plan (no significant changes to paving or landscape)
- Sign Plan (no signs proposed)
- Traffic Impact Statement
- Site Management Plan (property is managed by Amherst College)

The Board found under Section 11.24 of the Zoning Bylaw, Site Plan Review, that the application complies with all relevant sections of the Site Plan Review criteria.

Mr. Schreiber MOVED to close the public hearing and to approve the Site Plan Review application with the requested waivers and no conditions. Mr. Carson seconded and the vote was 7-0-0.

SPR2015-00003 & SPP2015-00001 – Joint Public Hearing – Archipelago Investments LLC – 1 East Pleasant Street (the Carriage Shops)

Request Site Plan Review approval for a mixed-use building containing dwelling units in combination with ground floor retail/commercial uses and parking, with 78 apartments on Floors 2 through 5, and request Special Permit to modify maximum building coverage (70 to 80%) and maximum height (55' to 60') (Map 11C, Parcel 278, B-G zoning district)

Mr. Webber read the preamble and opened the public hearing. He gave introductory remarks and outlined how the public hearing would be conducted.

In addition to the Site Plan Review and Special Permit for dimensional modifications being considered tonight, the applicant also recently applied for another Special Permit for dimensional modifications [side and rear setbacks]. The public hearing for the second Special Permit for side and rear setbacks will not be held tonight and therefore the Board will not be discussing or considering it tonight. A separate public hearing will be held for the Special Permit for side and rear setbacks.

Mr. Webber noted that the materials for the Site Plan Review and Special Permit were posted on the Town of Amherst website on the Planning Board webpage. The Board welcomes submission of comments from the public. These comments should be sent to town staff. Citizens should not email or send materials directly to Board members. Contact information for town staff is on the website.

Kyle Wilson and David Williams of Archipelago Investments presented the application. Mr. Wilson reported that the applicants had appeared before the Design Review Board on the previous evening [September 30th] and had received many comments and recommendations which have been passed along to the architects.

Mr. Wilson noted that the drawings that were submitted with the application are not the latest drawings. He distributed revised drawings and gave an overview of the project.

Mr. Wilson reported that Jerry Gates, a principle owner of the Carriage Shops, had approached Archipelago Investments and asked them to partner with him on a redevelopment of the site of the Carriage Shops, which was built in 1962 and has served Amherst for more than 50 years, first as a motel and then as shops and offices. The existing buildings and site need a lot of work and Archipelago Investments would like to construct a building on the site that will serve the town for at least another 50 years.

The applicants have met with the Historical Commission about the mural on the back of the existing building. The meeting went well. The applicants are also close to coming to an agreement with the artist of the mural about recreating the mural on the new building.

Mr. Wilson noted that the Amherst Carriage Inn served a society that was focused on the automobile. Once UMass opened its hotel, the Carriage Inn was converted to retail and office space. The existing building was divided into condominiums and has suffered from deferred maintenance. It would require a significant investment if it were to be renovated. The choice is between further investment in the old building or redevelopment of the site and creation of a new building.

Mr. Wilson presented a plan showing the context of the site in Downtown Amherst. The point where North Pleasant Street and East Pleasant Street come together provides a good place to bring density to Downtown. Mr. Wilson presented plans showing the entire B-G zoning district including the design for Kendrick Park prepared by The Cecil Group. He noted that there were a lot of one-story buildings in the area and lots of surface parking.

The proposed building will be five stories tall and will have residences on the upper four floors. The first floor will contain retail space, collaboration space and parking.

Mr. Wilson reviewed elements of the Master Plan that support development of this site as proposed. He noted that the proposed building is aiming for LEED Gold certification and characterized it as a quality, long-term investment for the Town.

The building is modeled on Boltwood Place, which was also developed by Archipelago Investments. Boltwood Place has attracted a “demographic” that the developers would like to attract to the new building. It is being designed for people who want to live downtown in a high quality rental apartment.

Mr. Wilson presented renderings of the proposed building, noting that the façade was proposed to be covered in hand-formed Massachusetts brick, the same as that used on the Amherst College football stadium, and Atlantic White Cedar.

The retail space will front on a small courtyard at the southwest corner of the building. There will be signs in this vicinity that will draw people back to the West Cemetery. The signs will “elevate awareness” of the cemetery and the repainted mural.

There will be a storefront opening onto East Pleasant Street, with an entrance into the residential lobby also along East Pleasant Street. There will be space on the 4th and 5th floors for collaboration space, because residents will have ties to the educational community. There will also be collaboration space on the ground floor.

The building will contain covered parking on the ground floor, off the drive aisle on the north side of the building. The drive aisle will be modeled on a “Woonerf” a type of street developed in Europe where pedestrians, cyclists and motorists share the way. Mr. Wilson presented images of this type of street from European installations.

The parking will be enclosed and covered and therefore the applicants are requesting a Special Permit to exceed the 70% maximum building coverage by covering 80% of the site with building footprint. There will be a green roof on the garage. The garage will be “tempered” and this will reduce the amount of insulation required in the building.

The first floor will have floor to floor height differential of 17 to 18 feet. Services will be brought into the building. Current services to the existing building are brought in from the street. Transformers and meters will be placed on the north side of the building. Ventilation for the garage will be located between the two garage doors. The alley between the building and the property line on the north side will have a 4’ wide walkway and a 22’-6” vehicle aisle. There will be some sort of defined edge between the Summerlin property to the north and the subject property. The existing condition includes an asphalt curb and a planting strip with crabapple trees. The property line will be defined in the future to prevent people from driving across the line.

The new building will have a U-shape on the upper floors (2 through 5). The garage will have a green roof which will be a visual amenity for those living on the upper floors. The green roof will detain stormwater runoff which will help in stormwater management. It will not be accessible, except by maintenance staff. The green roof will have about 6” of soil, which will support plant material.

Mr. Wilson described some of the insulation aspects of the new building which will allow it to be highly energy efficient. It will be an “all-electric” building. The mechanical loads will be about ½ the loads of a normal building.

Mr. Wilson presented a cross section through the proposed building and the first floor plan and the upper floor plans. He also presented a site plan.

There will be 36 parking spaces, including 3 handicapped spaces, located inside the building and 150 bicycle parking spaces.

The building will contain a mixture of 1, 2 and 4 bedroom units on the upper floors. The upper floors will overhang the first floor at certain points along the façade.

Mr. Wilson reported that the applicants had met with the Historical Commission on September 23rd to discuss the mural. They intend to work with the Historical Commission, the Design Review Board and the Planning Board on signs.

The applicants are working with the mural artist on the exact location for the mural and what the grading will be like in that vicinity.

The site was cut down from the original grade when the existing “Carriage Shops” building was built to make the site more accessible to cars. There is a 5 to 6 foot grade change at the southeast corner of the existing building. There are trench drains in this location, which involved further cutting. The proposal includes filling to bring the grades up to reconstitute the historic grade around the back of the building. The east side of the building, where the mural will be recreated, will have a better relationship with the grade as a result of the filling.

The applicants met with the Design Review Board the previous night [September 30th] and discussed the handling of the façade, the massing and how to handle the mural and the south side of the building.

Mr. Crowner asked the applicants why they needed the Special Permits.

Mr. Wilson explained:

- The Special Permit for height is needed in order to have 9’ ceiling heights in the apartment units (with a 10’-8” floor to floor distance) and 18’ on the ground floor (floor to floor distance). The greater height on the ground floor will allow for trash pickup and truck deliveries to occur inside the building.
- The Special Permit for building setbacks is requested for the south, east and north sides. A 20 foot side and rear setback is required for properties adjacent to a residential district. The west, or front, of the building does not need a modification of the setback requirement. The applicants wish to bring the mural close to the property line on the east side for ease of access by the public. The new building will be built on the footprint of the old building on the south and east sides.
- The Special Permit for building coverage is requested because of the desire to cover the parking spaces with a roof. The applicants considered an open parking area, but wanted to provide secure parking for their tenants and to provide a green roof for stormwater management. The current proposed plan, with the green roof, shows a decrease in runoff over the existing condition.

Mr. Webber commented on the scale and mass of the building and asked if it could be made smaller to meet the dimensional requirements.

Mr. Wilson explained that the building is proposed to be five stories in height, which is allowed. The applicants are not asking for an additional floor, but are asking for an additional five feet in height.

The applicant’s goal is to bring people downtown to live, which will help to support downtown retail, including potential grocery, hardware and retail stores.

Mr. Williams noted that the Boltwood Place project received 600 inquiries from prospective tenants, supporting the contention that people want to live downtown. Tenants of Boltwood Place include an elderly lady, grad students, two families, two students and faculty of institutions of higher learning. Requests are still being received. The applicants are currently receiving inquiries about Kendrick Place. There is a need for housing for young professors and other faculty members.

Mr. Webber acknowledged that the applicants would like to fit as much housing as possible above the retail spaces. The applicants contend that there are limited opportunities for housing in downtown Amherst. Their approach is to be efficient.

Ms. Ford asked if the applicants could reduce the height of the building by taking 6" from the height of each floor. She acknowledged the need for the 18' height at the ground floor in order to service the building as proposed.

There was further discussion about the height of the building. Mr. Wilson noted that these are proposed to be high quality units, with 9' ceilings and services in the building at the ground floor. If the building height is lowered, it may result in U-Haul trucks and trash trucks operating outside of the building.

Mr. Schreiber expressed his appreciation for what the applicants are trying to do. The plan accomplishes goals of the Master Plan, with a focus on an urban small town feel. Mr. Schreiber expressed support for the green roof, but he asked if plants would be able to survive on the green roof on the north side.

Mr. Wilson stated that plants such as Boston Ivy would be appropriate to grow on the brick walls and on the roof, which will have 6" to 8" of soil. The Boston Ivy can grow on the three sides of the building that face the green roof courtyard.

Mr. Schreiber stated that the Special Permits will be an issue. He noted that higher floor heights will make it less likely for people to use the stairs. Shorter floor heights encourage people to use the stairs.

Mr. Wilson stated that the two bedroom units are about 850 square feet. They will feel more spacious with 9' ceilings.

Mr. Roznoy asked how much the perimeter of the building would need to be shrunk in order to go from 80% building coverage to 70% building coverage. Mr. Wilson stated that exposing the garage parking spaces would allow 70% building coverage. Mr. Roznoy asked if the applicants could keep the green roof and shrink the building. Mr. Wilson stated that if the mural moves back into the building, the building coverage may be reduced.

Mr. Roznoy asked about the changes in the plans that were referred to by the applicant. Mr. Wilson reported that there had been two meetings – one with the Design Review Board and one with the Historical Commission. Recommendations from these meetings included moving the mural back into the building and possible changes to the vertical look of the façade, and the color and percent of brick on the façade. The applicant would like to address some of these recommendations with the architect.

David Moriarty of South Mt. Holyoke Drive spoke in support of the proposed development, noting that the project is responsive to the demand for housing services generated by UMass. He characterized it as a worthy response and as a "non-neighborhood, demand-driven" project.

Pam Rooney of 42 Cottage Street offered comments and questions related to parking, affordable housing, height of the building and design of the north façade. She encouraged the Board to consider conditions that would ameliorate these concerns:

- Parking – a minimum of one space per unit should be required, possibly by providing parking spaces elsewhere; shared parking in the vicinity is not compatible with the high use of Bertucci's and the Pub's parking lots; the Board should consider establishing a parking ratio for this project;
- Affordable Housing – there should be a mandatory number of affordable units provided as part of this project;
- Building Height – the building height may not include the mechanical penthouse and HVAC on top of the building; only one block in Northampton is five stories tall; this building will be an anomaly;
- North Façade – the north façade of the building is primarily garage doors; it is not attractive; this is a major pedestrian route and the façade will be highly visible.

Mr. Wilson stated that the Municipal Parking District has been part of Amherst's zoning for a long time. Its purpose is to foster new development in the downtown. The parking ratios for this new building were based on the reality of the ratios at Boltwood Place where 6 out of 12 units have requested parking spaces. No parking is required, but the applicants are proposing 36 parking spaces for 78 units.

Hilda Greenbaum of 298 Montague Road noted that her son is an abutter to this property and that he submitted a letter. She was encouraged that the Board is looking at the design of the building. She questioned the fenestration and stated that it makes the building look institutional. The windows should echo the design of the existing buildings in the downtown. The building looks huge. She recommended landscaping, or making the building smaller.

Ms. Greenbaum expressed concern about traffic exiting from the new driveway, right opposite Hallock Street, on a curve with cars parked along the side of the road. She expressed concern about sight distance and visibility and encouraged the applicants and the Board to look at the Gateway Traffic Study and to think about whether the proposed driveway will work.

Meg Gage of 208 Montague Road encouraged the Board to look at the larger picture, including the relationship that the town has with the students. She stated that the University is trying to attract wealthier, out-of-state students who have more money and can live off campus, implying that these are the students who could afford to live in this new building.

Ms. Gage presented research on the ratio of students to year-round residents of several college towns throughout the country, noting that the ratio in Amherst is 0.9 residents for every college student. According to her research other places have much higher numbers of year-round residents to balance the number of students.

Ms. Gage recommended that the town approach the legislature to promote more on-campus housing. The town is not managing its relationship with the state in a way that protects our interests, she said.

Bob Abramms of 62 North Prospect Street expressed mixed feelings about the project. He works in an office above the Loose Goose and is a long-time tenant of Jerry Gates. He noted that the neighborhood around the proposed building is "wild" on Thursday, Friday and Saturday nights from 12 to 2 a.m. There is a lot of bad behavior and this project could make the situation worse. However, the Carriage Shops buildings have outlived their useful lives. He encouraged the Board to make sure that the building fits with the context of the town and to restrict the tenants to be only adults.

Joyce Berkman of 66 Cottage Street asked if there had been a comprehensive traffic study. She expressed concern about the safety of children around the new building. She would like the building to be "family friendly" and wants families, diversity and children in the downtown. She expressed concerns about traffic, pedestrian safety, the additional number of people living

in the building, and the aesthetics of the building (no sense of grace, too square, rectangular, uniform and boring). She would like to see a 3 or 4 story building with a sensitivity to beauty.

Alan Root of 33 Kellogg Avenue cautioned that the Board should “beware of people who offer all things to all people at all times”. He expressed concerns about density. He asserted that this building is “too much”, an anomaly and similar to a penitentiary in appearance. The town can increase density without allowing anomalies. It is time to act to “save Amherst”.

Mr. Webber encouraged members of the public to submit written comments to the Board.

Mr. Wilson noted that a Traffic Study had been submitted and that two drive aisles had been reduced to one in this project. He appreciated the comments about the north façade and the research on the ratio of students to full time residents.

Ms. Brestrup noted that the Traffic Study submitted for this project was posted on the Planning Board’s webpage.

Mr. Roznoy encouraged the applicants to look at how many units would be lost if the project were reduced to 70% building coverage.

Mr. Crouner asked that the applicants present a perspective drawing looking down the drive aisle.

Mr. Webber asked that the applicants submit numerical support for this type of building with this number of parking spaces.

Mr. Schreiber asked for a response to the question about affordable housing.

Mr. Roznoy MOVED to continue the public hearing to 7:05 p.m. on Wednesday, October 22nd. Mr. Schreiber seconded and the vote was 6-0-1 (Ford abstained).

IX. PLANNING BOARD COMMITTEE & LIAISON REPORTS

Pioneer Valley Planning Commission – Bruce Carson

Community Preservation Act Committee – Sandra Anderson

Agricultural Commission – Stephen Schreiber

Transportation Plan Task Force – Richard Roznoy and Rob Crouner – Mr. Roznoy reported that the TPTF was well underway with the Transportation Plan and that members would be handing out flyers about upcoming events at the Saturday Farmers’ Market. The flyers would publicize upcoming meetings with stakeholders to be held on October 17th and 18th. Mr. Roznoy encouraged people to submit comments to himself or to Mr. Crouner. Ms. Kruger, former Planning Board member, is now the Select Board’s liaison to the TPTF. Mr. Crouner reported that there will be link on the homepage to a survey and other information regarding the Transportation Plan.

Amherst Redevelopment Authority – vacant

Design Review Board – Kathleen Ford reported that the DRB had met and discussed the project at One East Pleasant Street. There were comments about the scale and appropriateness of the building design. The DRB also reviewed a sign for a new “mindfulness” business, work that had been done on two Conservation areas, including new fencing, grading and other site improvements, and a shed for Fratelli’s restaurant.

Mr. Webber acknowledged that this was Ms. Ford’s last appearance as a Planning Board member and he thanked her and wished her the best on behalf of the Board.

Housing and Sheltering Committee – Greg Stutsman reported that the HSC had met recently and will be issuing a memorandum on Inclusionary Zoning.

Town Gown Study Steering Committee – David Webber and Greg Stutsman – Mr. Webber reported that there is a meeting tentatively scheduled for Tuesday, October 7th at 4:00 p.m.

Master Plan Implementation Committee – vacant

Zoning Subcommittee – Rob Crowner, Stephen Schreiber, Greg Stutsman and Bruce Carson

Mr. Roznoy MOVED to approve the slate of Planning Board Committee Liaisons. Ms. Anderson seconded and the vote was 7-0-0.

X. REPORT OF THE CHAIR – none

XI. REPORT OF STAFF – Mr. Tucker reported that he had recently attended a presentation on changes to the Flood Insurance rules. This fall the Town of Amherst will be soliciting proposals from consultants to work with FEMA on new FIRM maps for the town. This study will also provide more data to help the town to re-examine the FPC zoning district. He noted that the town should be looking at the issue of how to account for climate change and recommended that we may need multiple zones related to flooding, the FEMA zone and an overlay that goes beyond the FEMA zone.

Mr. Tucker also reported that the last Scotland Highland Games Festival of the season would be held in Scotland, CT, on October 12th.

XII. ADJOURNMENT

The meeting was adjourned at 10:15 PM.

Respectfully submitted: Approved:

Christine M. Brestrup
Senior Planner

David Webber, Chair

DATE: _____