

The regular meeting convened at 6:34 pm. Virtually via Zoom.

Members present- Mr. Driscoll, Mr. Ajemian, Ms. Guarino, Mr. Geller and Mr. MacDonald

Town staff participating - Ms. Burke, CED Director, Mr. Romulus, Assistant Director, and Mrs. Dorr, Office Administrator.

Mr. Driscoll read from prepared text on Governor Bakers order of 3/12/2020 and how the meeting will be conducted and how to be able to speak at the meeting. He advised the audience that this meeting is being recorded and will be posted within 48 hours on the Town of Bridgewater website or social web page.

60-88 BROAD STREET

The public hearing ad that appeared in the Enterprise on 9/2 and 9/9 was read into the record:

The Bridgewater Planning Board will be conducting a public hearing on September 16, 2020 at 6:30 pm on application by West Point Realty for site plan approval under Section 9.8 of the Town's zoning Ordinance and a special permit under Section 19 for a proposed mixed use project located on Broad Street, Map 21 Parcels 95-98 and 202-205. The proposed project includes 4 mixed use buildings with commercial space on the first floor and residential units on the upper floors as well a separate parking lot to service the buildings.

Troy Clarkson, representing the developer Jim Paskell, made a presentation. He told of some of the investments that Mr. Paskell had made in the community by taking blighted properties and improving them to a level where they are a credit to the community. His most prominent project was the house behind the academy building on South Street which is an example of the care and quality he puts into his projects. The project that will be discussed this evening is a landmark project for the Town of Bridgewater, he said, and it has the opportunity, not only to revitalize, but to transform the CBD. He said back in 2018, the zoning was changed to allow a project like this. He stated that this project is exactly what the Ordinance envisioned when it was adopted. He spoke about this fulfilling the goals of the Housing production plan and the South Shore Chambers plan and development trends that are going nationwide. He spoke about the financial benefit to the Town; they anticipate that it will bring in at least \$400,00 in new taxes. He introduced their technical team-Tim Johnson, Architect and Larry Silva, SEA. He reviewed some of his issues raised in his memo to the Board. He spoke about Sec 19.04- additional density bonuses based upon the performance of the developer and commitments for further improvements and investments by the developer

Jim Paskell said he hopes this will be the Economic engine to revitalizing downtown. He knows there is some concern expressed by residents and neighbors and he said he will do what he can to work thru them.

Tim Johnson gave an overview of the project. 4 separate, 4 story buildings. Type 5 A construction, which is all wood construction; the buildings will be sprinkled; three buildings will have elevators; the first floor of all the buildings will be commercial space; exterior; they have provided sign banding; will be fiber cement materials which typically have a 50 year warrantee; designed to stretch energy code; have space for future solar panels on rooftops; parking at rear along with dumpster and recycling

receptacles; bike parking-1 per unit; can provide for ride share car in each parking area. He spoke about going around the neighborhood and looking at the architectural styles which is mainly the romantic style, Colonial revival and classical and Greek revival; They are still fine turning their building styles, but are using classical 2-1 proportions for windows and classical proportions for the massing and elevations of the buildings.

Rebecca from SEA- The 4 buildings are going to be considered redevelopment from a stormwater standard. There was impervious there will do everything they can to treat and improve drainage from where it was before; there will be underground infiltration chambers on all 4 building lots; the one closest to town will actually share land at 70 Broad St to have some infiltration under the ground; test pits witnessed by the Town Engineer and will address some issues they found while performing the rest pits and determining ground water. Storm water will be contained on-site with an overflow of the larger storm events to Broad St. She addressed Ms. Burke's memo concerning drainage. Parking lot concerns- She said this was an approved parking lot that fell into disarray and they would like to reestablish and use drainage that is there. They will work on buffering, open space and landscaping and update the site plans appropriately. There were concerns of possible wetlands in the rear and she said they are looking into that now and they will file where appropriate. There were questions about signs for the commercial units; SEA will issue a response letter to all of Ms. Burke's comments. They will provide Jonas, the water superintendent, with a water impact report.

Ms. Burke noted they need a lighting plan and a snow storage and maintenance plan. Rebecca will discuss with Mr. Paskell on the lighting and will submit something on the snow storage. She commented that the parking lot across the street may satisfy that. Mr. Driscoll noted there was no site plan submitted for the two parcels on the East side. She said they submitted an approved plan for the parking lot that was approved back in 1993. She said it was constructed, but just fell into disarray. The catch basins and infrastructure are all there, she said; it just needs to be repaved and cleaned up and restriped. Ms. Burke noted that she did not know that was their intent, so she does not have a comment at this time, and she does not believe that the Town Engineer has responded. Mr. Clarkson said they did receive the detailed comments from the Planning Board dated 9/11 and are in the process of providing a detailed response. Mr. Driscoll asked if the architectural site plan was adjusted? There were parking spaces that did not comply. Rebecca said it is the same parking layout that was presented to them. The architect laid it out, as their goal was to address the drainage, so they will have to coordinate with the architect and Mr. Paskell. If they must provide screening, some of the parking spaces will have to be moved. Mr. Driscoll noted that turning lanes need to be addressed and some of the dead ends behind the buildings where there are no turning lanes. He asked Ms. Burke if Mr. Etoniru was requiring test pits to be done at the parking lot? Ms. Burke said he did not state that it was required, but that groundwater was not documented. Mr. Driscoll suggested that the applicant contact Mr. Etoniru to find out what he wants.

Michael Dutton, Town Manager spoke about the developer's agreement; this is the first case under the new zoning passed in 2018; he felt it was a benefit for the town and will serve as a templet for what we may do in the future.. He explained that the ordinance provides for density bonuses in return for a variety of different items that can be negotiated thru a developer's agreement. Mr. Driscoll asked Mr. Dutton to walk thru the document as it is the Board's first experience with this, which he did. There is a provision for the town to secure space near the Academy Building for additional parking; there is a provision to restore the Veterans memorial in the common and was negotiated not to exceed \$350,000.

There is a conceptual plan prepared by Boston Architectural College that has been agreed upon by Veteran's groups, and an ad Hoc committee that was formed several years ago. In return for that, there is a density bonus of 2 units per acre which would be a total of 6 units. This would be for street scape improvements, pedestrian scale lighting, new sidewalks, bump outs at key intersections, recreational amenities noted in the landscape plan and that component would not exceed \$350,000. A density bonus of 2 units for the placement of solar panels and other green roofing components on two of the buildings. Transfer of development rights to build units that would otherwise be built on the property on the East side of Broad St.

Mr. Ajemian questioned the transfer of development rights and the result is Open Space and he asked, "how are we getting open space"? Mr. Dutton explained that what is contemplated in Mass. General Law is generally open space, but the law allows under Chapter 40A allows for it in a manner that promotes open space, preserves farmland, promotes housing and other community interests. They felt this promotes the rebirth of our downtown and that is the genesis of the TDR.

Mr. Driscoll asked for clarification on the developer's agreement where it states up to or not exceed \$350,000? Does that mean that is the amount paid, or is it the cost? He asked if we would be better served by just saying \$350,000 for each? Mr. Dutton explained that verbiage is in there for the town's protection. He wanted to make sure that we can fully charge for unforeseen issues that may arise like the electrical system needs replacing with the monument project. It is feasible that the project will be less than the \$350,000; each party negotiation on their own behalf, he said, and he is satisfied with the results. Mr. Driscoll questioned the payment schedule for these three components? Mr. Dutton stated that they have not worked out a payment schedule yet. Once the Planning Board has approved this project, they will go back and develop the payment schedule based upon any conditions that the Board may impose. Once it is approved, they can go out and get specific pricing and a specific timeline on some of these improvements. Mr. Driscoll questioned if the board could make an escalation clause for every year the payment isn't made? A million fifty will be much different 5-7 years from now, he said. Mr. Dutton stated that would be up to the Planning Board; if that is something that legally fits into your conditions, then you certainly could do that. Mr. Driscoll commented that before the Board votes on the TDR the applicant would have to provide the draft language of the TDR and the zoning restriction and the public benefit that would be placed on the parcel across the street for the Board to review. Mr. Dutton agreed. Mr. Driscoll commented that personally he is ok with the density bonus, but the zoning allows for one unit per building with the solar and there are two buildings being provided with solar, He asked if we could move those two buildings somewhere else just to comply with the zoning? Mr. Dutton said he would have to take a look at that.

Mr. Ajemian questioned where does the responsibility of the town manager ends and ours begin as far as the developer's agreement? Mr. Dutton stated that the Planning Board has the ultimate approval of the overall project as it is presented. You have the right to make reasonable conditions. In this case, the zoning calls for him and Ms. Burke to negotiate the developer's agreement for any contemplated increase in density over the 18 units that is otherwise allowed by under the zoning. What you have here is the negotiation and the specifics of how those 26 units are arrived at and the very specifics of the units that are earned in return for the benefits they see to the Town. Mr. Ajemian asked if we don't like any of it, do we have the right to override the agreement? Mr. Dutton said: you could, that is your prerogative."

Mr. Driscoll felt the board was ok with the density bonus, but needs some tweaks to the developer's agreement, such as moving the solar to a different area, and clearing up things like "not to exceed"....we can make those suggestions, correct? Mr. Dutton said "absolutely".

Ms. Guarino questioned the Bedford Street property with regard to what the house could sell for is different than the amount of money in the agreement? Mr. Dutton explained that there are three units there now and they can have two additional pursuant to the agreement. If we secure that house, becomes under the ownership of the town (needed for parking purposes). If we don't secure the house, then those additional units (at the Hale Street house) would not be permitted as part of this development. Mr. Driscoll asked if that would be up to the CED and Building Dept. to track? Mr. Dutton agreed. Mr. MacDonald questioned the time frame and questioned what would happen if the 5 units were built and then we don't get that property? Mr. Dutton said that no CO will be issued until that part of the developer's agreement is resolved.

Mr. Geller questioned if the drainage under the parking lot meets today's standards; and do the parking spaces comply? It was built in 1992, he said. Ms. Baptista said they will address his concerns in their response letter. She said that at the very least, they will have to use an underground camera to check it out to see what is still there.

Mr. Ajemian commented that he is in favor of a project like this; it is probably the most important project that has come before the Board. He suggested that the board must move along this project slowly to make sure that everything is right. His main concern is the size and design of the buildings. He would have much rather seen a three-story building with a two-story building on both sides, with a much different design. He would like to see 2-3 different alternatives. He spoke about the CVS fitting in; not the regular box that CVS normally builds. He would like to see something like that. As far as the TDR, he stated that he does not regard a parking lot as open space.

Comments received from the public were read into the record:

1. Janet Hanson
2. Carlton Hunt
3. Jim Candito
4. James Walsh-He requested that the reading of his letter stop and he will summarize in public comments.
5. Gina Guasconi

Staff letter read and will be posted on the website.

Email from Mr. Etoniru, Town Engineer read into the record.

Public comment received in chat:

1. Peter Colombotos-commented that zoning has no provision to provide TDR. Ms. Burke informed him that Section 19.04 8A allows for TDR and mixed use in the CBD.
2. Shawn- how many cars per unit? Tim Johnson, architect, explained that for the 7 units, 127 parking spaces are required for commercial and 111 required for residential. Total required is 238. They have provided 213 parking spaces, 25 spaces less than required.

3. Jeff Daniels-20 Maple Ave-asked about Green Space-Mr. Driscoll said that we have a requirement that 20% of the property is vegetated and that deficiency was noted in the Town Engineers response. He spoke about all the empty spaces already downtown and wondered what the plan was to make sure that businesses open in these buildings. Ms. Burke noted that is not a question for the board; it is the developer's prerogative. He questioned how maintenance will be handled after the development is done? Mr. Paskell said they could manage it or have a professional manager on hand.
4. Mark Linde had a question on chat but chose not to speak at this time.
5. Marilee Kenny Hunt-asked how does development on one side of the street with parking on the other side of route 18 enhance public safety downtown? She commented that there have been several chats that haven't been answered and she asked that they become part of the record.
6. Michael McCormick chatted that he felt the developer's agreement needed to be tightened up; felt there were many loopholes with terminology and more in favor for the developer.
7. Dennis Ascii- East Street-How does the developer and the town plan on addressing the additional traffic related to this project?

Ms. Burke informed everyone that all the public letters, staff letter and Town Engineer's email will be posted on the website tomorrow

8. Beverly Albaugh-85 Broad Street-her comments kept breaking up-inaudible.

Raised hands:

1. Mike O'Connor-60 Vera Drive-expressed disappointment in the progress in the development of this property; has been in disarray for many years. He would like to see some progression in moving forward. He commented that this area is where the density should be and this could be a great center stone project. He is in support of it and hoped that the Town would continue work with Mr. Paskell to make this project go forward.
2. Pat Neary- Happy to see that something will be done with this property. She complemented Mr. Paskell on the renovation of the building behind the Academy Building. Buildings have a very institutional look and doesn't think that meets the goal of the agreement. Bridgewater is a very old, historic community and these designs portray none of that, she said. She asked Mr. Johnson what fiber cement material was for the exterior finish? She said we need to have a New England look to the buildings; not just big, square blocks that are in the sketches provided. We need more green area which the Planning Board is going to address. She stated that we must take climate change seriously and make these buildings solar ready in a specific time frame.
3. James Walsh- 60 Crescent Street-he felt it was important for the "surrounding area" in the agreement be defined. What is that character? He agreed that the height of the buildings is overbearing and suggested that the street scape be lower with the back of the buildings being higher. He commented that this is a step in the right direction and that mixed use will really help to restore the downtown area,
4. Melissa Ramondetta- 317 Lakeside Drive-The project as proposed will alter the entire landscape of the downtown and look and feel of the CBD. Bridgewater is not a city and the buildings as proposed are more appropriate in an urban environment. The project needs scaling down in size, needs more open space and needs to tie in architecturally with Central Square.

5. Bill Wood- 388 Hayward Street-Councilor for District 6-pointed out two key elements to this project: Corner stone of downtown revitalization and the key to getting the empty spaces filled, is the pedestrian traffic, which we don't get much of today. One of the goals of this project, is to bring that pedestrian traffic downtown. It not only will benefit the new businesses but helps nearby restaurants and empty storefronts. This will spur new businesses coming to down.

Ms. Burke suggested that this hearing be continue to a date and time certain to allow the developer time to address all the comments received including the staff letter and Mr. Etoniru's comments.

Mr. Driscoll asked Mr. Clarkson what date he preferred? Mr. Clarkson felt the comments tonight were thoughtful and responses and answers could be provided by the next meeting.

Rebecca said she would prefer a 4-week time frame in order to respond to all comments-have to investigate Mr. Etoniru's concerns with wetlands, have to develop and landscape buffer plan and a lighting plan. Mr. Driscoll wanted it made clear that the architectural site plan needs to become an actual engineered site plan with curbing, lighting, circulation, etc. and everything we expect on an engineered site plan.

Mr. Paskell suggested continuing to October 21, 2020.Mr. Ajemian stated that he would hope that they look at the design and height of the buildings. Mr. Driscoll stated that we need a draft of the TDR for the board to consider.

Mr. Clarkson made some closing statements. He also addressed a statement that someone raised about Mr. Paskell reneging on several projects on Broad Street. He submitted that his presence in Bridgewater has been the opposite. Not only has he never reneged on a project, but he has invested millions of dollars into the community and has received praise from most of the department heads on his detail and care that he takes for all of his properties.

On a motion by Ms. Guarino, seconded by Mr. MacDonald, it was unanimously voted by roll call vote, to continue this hearing to October 21, 2020 at 6:30pm.

On a motion by Ms. Guarino, seconded by Mr. Geller, it was unanimously voted by roll call vote to approve the minutes of 8/19/20.

There were no committee reports or CED report.

On a motion by Mr. MacDonald, seconded by Mr. Ajemian, the meeting was adjourned at 8:39 pm.

MINUTES APPROVED: