



Planning Board – Town of Spencer
Minutes
Planning Board Meeting
Tuesday June 18, 2013 at 7:00 PM
McCourt Social Hall
Memorial Town Hall

Planning Board Members Present: Chair James Whalen, Shirley Shiver, Ralph DiChiara, Mary Stolarczyk, Robert Ceppi and Associate Member Jonathan Viner.

Planning Board Members Absent: None

Staff Present: Michelle Buck, Town Planner and Brynn Johnson, ODIS Clerk

Mr. Whalen opens the meeting at 7:00pm.

1. Central Mass South Chamber of Commerce Presentation

Alexandra McNitt, Executive Director of Central Mass South Chamber of Commerce, provided an update on economic development initiatives in the region. This year they received a grant from the Mass Office of Business Development as well as funds from the private sector to support attracting and expanding businesses and jobs in the area.

Dave Peterson from Smith & Jones Idea Agency gives a presentation on how they are using the funding from this grant to attract people and businesses to this region.

More information on the Central Mass South Economic Development can be found at www.centralmasssouth.com

2. Continued Public Hearing- Major Site Plan Review, Applicant: Old Wardour Holdings, LLC. Owner: Michael Ballou. Project Location: 22 Treadwell Drive. Continued public hearing from April 16, 2013 & May 21, 2013.

Before the hearing begins Mr. Whalen recuses himself do to a conflict of interest. Mr. Ceppi will serve as Chair for this hearing. Mr. Whalen leaves the room.

Mr. Ceppi opens the hearing

Ms. Buck gives an update. Revised plans were submitted just yesterday. She has not had time to review them. The peer review letter from Graves Engineering was received late today, their concerns have been addressed. She is still waiting for the applicant to submit a development impact statement and they should discuss changes to the landscaping, as well as any changes made to the plans.

Mr. Ceppi notes the new plans just came in yesterday and the comments for the new plans just came in late today. Mr. Loin says the last minute changes were minor things, mostly changes requested by the Conservation Commission.

Mr. Loin explains the changes. The small farm pond will be certified as a vernal pool because frog eggs were found in it. They had to change some drainage calculations and a detention basin so drainage does not affect this vernal pool. Also, the Conservation Commission wanted a wildlife corridor through the wetlands so they revised the fence and relocated 14 panels to the East Brookfield side. Now there is an open unfenced corridor/walkway for larger animals to pass freely. The other thing that changed on the plan is the fence along the abutter's property. They met with Ms. Roberts and they decided with her approval on a six feet solid fence on a 2-3 feet berm. The plans show an eight foot fence however an eight foot fence would require a variance from the Town. So they decided on a six foot fence on a 2-3 foot berm.

Mr. Ceppi asks Ms. Buck if we are still waiting on the impact study yet. Ms. Buck says yes. Mr. Loin feels impacts were addressed in their original application letter. Also there was a letter with submitted with a handout. He feels this project has very little impact on the area so the impact study and letter are not needed. He asks for a waiver from this requirement.

Ms. Buck says she understands large parts of the impact study are not applicable or they may have been addressed in some respects. However they haven't put it all together in one place in writing which is what the bylaw asks for. Mr. Loin agrees after some discussion to submit an impact study.

Mr. Buck asks for a fence detail. Mr. Loin agrees to get this.

Ms. Shiver asks for a cross-section view to detail the view from Treadwell drive abutters. Mr. Ceppi agrees he would like a section view with elevations on it. Mr. Loin says he can do that.

Mr. Shiver asks if they met with their landscape architect. Mr. Loin says yes they did but the abutter likes the idea of a fence better than landscaping. So the fence will replace trees on top of the berm. There will be some trees behind the fence.

Ms. Shiver asks who will maintain the fence. Mr. Loin says Old Wardour will own and maintain the fence.

Ms. Shiver asks if they have a decommissioning plan. Mr. Loin says yes they have one if needed. They have one with East Brookfield so they can use the same one in Spencer. Old Wardour can set up a trust that will take care of decommissioning.

Mr. Ceppi asks if there are any questions from the public.

Ms. Roberts, 18 Treadwell Drive, states she was told the fence would be eight feet. She is uncomfortable with a six foot fence. She expected a berm with trees and the eight foot fence so her view of the hill with panels on it would be completely screened.

Mr. Shiver says this is why the fence, berm and plantings all need to be shown correctly on the plan. They Board and Ms. Roberts wants to see a drawing of what the view will be when done.

Ms. Roberts also says she was told the fence will go all the way to the end of her property line behind her house. Mr. Loin says this is news to him he was told she agreed on a 200 foot long fence.

Mr. Ceppi tells Mr. Loin he needs to get back together with Ms. Roberts to come up with a solution she will be comfortable with.

Mr. DiChiara asks Mr. Loin if it's hard to make a drawing of the view. Mr. Loin says he will do a drawing but wants to know where this drawing should be from. There is much discussion. Mr. Loin will have the drawing done from the "eye level" of an average height person looking toward the panels from the end of Treadwell Drive.

Mike Toomey of Ash Street asks what the panels will be cleaned with. Mr. Loin says just water. They don't have to clean them often but if they do it will be with a pressure washer.

Mr. Toomey asks what if an ice storm or something causes stay voltage? Mr. Loin says there is a main disconnect system. If one panel goes down the whole system goes down.

Mr. Shiver asks if there is a monitoring system to alert them if the system goes down. Mr. Loin says yes it's a web-based monitoring system. The police and fire departments will have access to a lock box with keys. Ms. Shiver asks where the lock box is on the plan. Mr. Loin looks and notices it's not on the plan. The box will be added to the plan.

John Stevens of 3 Thompsons Pond Road asks what the financial impact to the Town will be. Mr. Loin says all the financial impacts are still being worked out.

Mr. DiChiara says he wants to make sure this solar farm is something the neighbors will be comfortable. He does not want there to be unhappy abutters like they've had on Paxton Road. He is all for businesses coming to Spencer however this used to be a Town that prided its self on open space now we are dealing with this wave of solar farms. He hopes they can find some sort of practical approach to keep home owners happy even if there is a 960 panel solar farm a few yard away from their property.

Mr. Ceppi asks if there are any more comments. There are none at this time.

The hearing is continued to July 16, 2013

3. Public Hearing – Major Site Plan Review Applicant: Transdevelopment Group. Owner: Holston Land Co., Inc. and Seven Mile River Farm Assoc. Location: 22 Podunk Highway. Project: Expand the automotive distribution operation at the New England Automotive Gateway facility. Dan Feeney PE Beals & Thomas, Attorney Ned Bartlett, Carlos Terron Trans-development Group, Kory Bryant and George Bell from the EBSR are present to represent the project.

Mr. Whalen opens the hearing.

Mr. Feeney lets the Board know they have filed for permits with the Conservation Commission and the ZBA. They met with the ZBA last week and were issued an amendment to a previously

approved Special Permit. Their next hearing with Conservation is June 26th. The ZBA decision has a condition that the light poles be reduced from 100 ft to 60 ft. The change of light poles from two 100 ft poles to five 60 ft poles caused the loss of two parking bays. He has not submitted the revised plans yet.

Mr. Feeney explains NEAG is a facility for the transfer of new automobiles from rail to truck for delivery to automobile dealerships throughout New England. The entire site is approximately 164 acres in both Spencer and East Brookfield of which approximately 80 acres are in Spencer, with access from Route 49. The proposed expansion would be in two phases. Phase 1 will include the addition of eight new rail tracks and a net of 795 new vehicle transfer bays/parking spaces.

Mr. Feeney explains the traffic impact. They had a traffic study done by Vanasse & Associates they found the site as it is now creates approximately 750 vehicle trips per day. The expansion would add fewer than 200 trips per day. Most of these vehicles take a right onto Route 49 and continue toward Sturbridge Route 20 and the Mass Pike. Therefore the traffic impact is minimal in Spencer. There are some minor road improvements to be made such as marking re-painting, signs and stop bars.

Mr. Feeney explains the environmental impact. The stormwater management system is designed to conform to the Mass DEP Stormwater Management regulations. The deep sump catch basins are routed to subsurface infiltration systems as well as infiltration basins sited throughout to protect the water quality. This site borders the Sevenmile River with as well as a certifiable vernal pool.

Mr. Ceppi asks if this expansion will create new jobs. Mr. Feeney says no new on-site jobs will be created.

Mr. Bell explains at length the process of unloading trains. This expansion is needed so the train can be unloaded faster.

Mr. Whalen asks about worker safety. Mr. Bell says they are very focused on worker safety. They are going on 5 years injury free. Mr. Bell explains all the different safeguards in place for employees.

Ms. Shiver asks what the big picture for NEAG, what else is proposed for Phase II. Mr. Bartlett says this is the max build up for this site. Nothing will be proposed after Phase II.

Mr. Michael Toomey of Ash Street asks the following questions.

- What is the holding capacity of the retention ponds? Mr. Feeney reads him some calculations from the stormwater report.
- Have they looked at the chemical and thermal impacts to the wetlands? Mr. Feeney yes as part of the NOI with Conservation Commission.

- Have they cross referenced that info with the TMDL for the Sevenmile River? Mr. Feeney says yes.
- Are they also looking to see how this will affect East Brookfield downstream? Mr. Feeney says yes that is part of the stormwater report.
- Mr. Toomey asks if they are planning to expand the use of this site beyond the shipment of cars. Mr. Bartlett says no they have no plans for anything other than processing cars.

Mr. Mark Violette of the East Brookfield Planning Board asks the following questions.

- How much truck traffic will be going west on route 9? Shaun Kelly from Vanasse & Associates says traffic going down Route 9 will only be making deliveries to local dealer. All other truck take a right onto Route 49 and head to Route 20 and the mass pike.
- Will any of the work be in East Brookfield? Mr. Feeney says a small area of track will be in EB, about a quarter acre.

Ms. Buck notes for the record the Board received a letter from Mr. Toomey about potential larger impacts related to rail capacity.

Mr. Feeney notes he just received Graves's comments today. He requests a waiver from a landscaping plan. The Board does not have a problem with waving this because the site is out of public view.

Ms. Shiver makes a motion to continue this hearing to July 16th. Ms. Stolarczyk seconds the motion. Vote 5-0 to continue.

4. Town Planner Report- Misc. items

- Ms. Buck informs the Board she will talk to Graves about getting peer reviews done on time.
- Ms. Buck asks the Board if they have walked the 115 Wilson Street solar farm to see the extra tree plantings. Some abutters are unhappy with the plantings. No Board members have gone to see the trees yet. Some of the Board members will go on their own before the next meeting. Ms. Shiver adds she thinks they should require all solar projects to hire a landscape engineer.

5. Approval of Minutes- Minutes from April 16, 2013 & April 23, 2013

Motion to approve minutes from April 16, 2013. Shiver/Stolarczyk. Vote 6-0

Motion to approve minutes from April 23, 2013. Shiver/Ceppi. Vote 6-0

6. Adjournment: With no further discussion the meeting is adjourned at 9:31pm.

Submitted by: Brynn Johnson, Jr. Clerk

Approved by the Planning Board on: _____

List of Documents used on June 18, 2013

Items sent to Planning Board prior to Meeting:

- Agenda
- Memo from Michelle Buck to Board dated 6/13/2013
- 4/23/2013 4/16/2013 Minutes
- Central Mass South handout
- Application and Plans for NEAG
- NEAG traffic summery
- Treadwell Solar revised plans
- NEAG review letter from Graves dated 6/18/2013

Items submitted at meeting

- Central Mass South Handout