

Planning Board

John R. Bethoney, Chair  
Ralph I. Steeves, Vice Chair  
Robert D. Aldous, Clerk  
James E. O'Brien IV  
Michael A. Podolski, Esq.

**TOWN OF DEDHAM**  
COMMONWEALTH OF MASSACHUSETTS



Dedham Town Hall  
26 Bryant Street  
Dedham, MA 02026-4458  
Phone 781-751-9242

Administrative Assistant  
Susan Webster  
[swebster@dedham-ma.gov](mailto:swebster@dedham-ma.gov)

**PLANNING BOARD**  
**MINUTES**

Thursday, March 26, 2018, 7 p.m., Lower Conference Room

**Present:** John R. Bethoney, Chair  
Robert D. Aldous, Clerk  
James E. O'Brien IV  
Michael A. Podolski, Esq.

**Not Present:** Ralph Steeves

**Staff:** John Sisson, Economic Development Director  
Susan Webster, Administrative Assistant

Call to order 7:15 p.m. The Pledge of Allegiance was recited. Plans, documents, studies, etc., referred to are incorporated as part of the public records and are on file in the Planning and Zoning office.

**Applicant:** Early Childhood Education Center (ECEC)  
**Project Address:** 1100 High Street, Dedham, MA  
**Case #:** **SITE-01-16-2061**  
**Zoning District:** Single Residence A  
**Representative(s):**

- Daniel Bradford, AIA, Vice President, KBA Architects, 6 Thirteenth Street, Charlestown, MA 02129
- Dave Roberts, 64 Oakland Street, Dedham, MA, Chair, School Building and Rehabilitation Committee
- Michael Williams, Principal, KBA Architects, 6 Thirteenth Street, Charlestown, MA 02129
- Nick H. Havan, P.E., PTOE, Senior Traffic Engineer, Nitsch Engineering, 2 Center Plaza, Suite 430, Boston, MA 02108
- Fayssal J. Husseini, P.E., Vice President, Transportation Engineering, Nitsch Engineering, 2 Center Plaza, Suite 430, Boston, MA 02108

• Stephen Bilafer, 147 Court Street, Dedham, MA  
**Town Consultant:** Philip Viveiros, P.E., PTOE, McMahon Associates

The Applicant is before the Board with a presentation of the off-site mitigation measures on Route 109 as part of their Certificate of Action. He introduced the team.

*Testimony was extremely difficult to hear despite the use of six microphones, possibly due to malfunction of the recording equipment. In particular, Mr. Bradford was nearly impossible to hear. Every attempt was made to hear and transcribe this meeting.*

Mr. Bradford said that, after a lot of back and forth with the Planning Board and Town Engineer Jason L. Mammone, P.E., the applicant is ready to go to Town Meeting for financing. They submitted technical drawings, and worked closely with Mr. Mammone on his comments, making adjustments where necessary.

There is already a curb cut, and a new exit curb cut is proposed on Route 109. Site work has been started including putting down a binder on the parking lot and commencing construction of the building. On the overpass over Route 128, they propose a static posted sign on MassDOT property stating "School Ahead." They are looking at, in cooperation with the Town and MassDOT, consideration of lowering the posted speed on the overpass. It is currently 30 mph in Westwood, 45 mph on the overpass, and 35 mph on the Dedham side. They have performed the analysis they need. The next layer of traffic calming is locating a flashing sign indicating the posted speed and the speed at which vehicles are traveling. This would be placed to the west of Booth Road. There would be another flashing sign for those traveling westward on Route 109.

With regard to traffic calming, they propose two islands, one 100 feet long and one 120 feet long, which would allow filtered access onto the driveway. The islands start just east of Deerpath Road. These islands would be planted with the exception of the lead edges, which will be concrete. They will use maintenance friendly, durable plantings that stay compact with trees that have a more vertical habitus than horizontal. They will be sized to stay compact with a width of about eight feet. They will not become a maintenance issue. They also propose introducing a turn off lane. There would be one way onto the site and one way off the site, and one way flow while on site. To get into the site, they propose a left turn lane with queuing of up to three buses; they anticipate three to four buses being used, but they will not come to the site at the same time. The current road width will allow for the turn off lane, so they will not be widening the road. They propose stamped pavement at either end of the islands, which will show cars that they are entering an area that is not a high speed lane. The travel lane at that point will be choked down to 11 feet, 5 inches for traffic calming.

Mr. Bethoney asked for a description of signage from the Westwood side. Mr. Bradford said the sign, which would be static, would say "School Ahead" on the overpass. He again said that speed studies have been done and they want the speed lowered to 35 mph instead of the current 45 mph. They will appeal to MassDOT for this. There will be a flashing sign indicating the posted speed and the speed at which vehicle are traveling. They will also introduce an "Entering Dedham" sign at the beginning of the first island, and there will be signage to indicate traffic travel to the right.

Mr. Aldous asked if they had given any thought to a right turn only at the exit so there could be no left turn crossing into traffic on Route 109. With highway traffic going in to Boston in the morning, this could be problematic. Mr. Bradford this had been a thought, and it could be done at certain times of the day. He said they would need to determine what the waiting time would be to turn left. He said they have had a good dialogue with the abutters. One of their concerns was the nature of living on Route 109, not the impact of the project. *Unintelligible*. He said they cannot change the signaling, and putting a signal in was ruled out.

Philip Viveiros, P.E., PTOE, from McMahon Associates, is the one of the peer review consultants retained by the Planning Board. He is paid by the applicant, which in this case is the Town of Dedham. He does not work for the Applicant or the Town. He sent a letter to the Town on February 16, 2018, stating that the design conforms to standard engineering practice. There was one minor comment regarding revised signal timings at the intersection of Bridge and High Streets, and he has not received a response to that. He said the other mitigation is adequate. Mr. Bradford said they have done 25% of the redesign on this. Mr. Bethoney said the Board is more interested in whether the signals can be changed. Mr. Hussein said they are doing the design right now, and have proposed timing for the signal. Mr. Viveiros said they are looking for the proposed revised timing based on traffic generation from the ECEC. This was provided by the applicant in January 2017, which had a list of mitigation measures to relieve traffic and speed. Mr. Hussein said they were looking for the proposed change only. This, however, evolved into redoing the entire design. Mr. Bethoney said they are looking for traffic timing changes, but if they want to expand this, fine. Mr. Viveiros said it functions well.

Mr. Bethoney asked Mr. Hussein if he had addressed Mr. Mammone's letter, and asked for a summary of how well they will adhere to his requests. Mr. Hussein said they have gone through all the comments and discussed their approach to the comments by phone. He and Mr. Mammone are in agreement. He said there are issues, i.e., access permitting, that need to be worked on. Mr. Bethoney said that if the off-site mitigation is approved, it will be subject to these issues.

Stephen Gifford, 942 High Street, said the State proposed a speed limit of 35 mph. *He was very hard to hear since he was so far from the microphones.* He was happy to hear about the progress in bringing it down to 30 mph. Mr. Bradford the hope and expectation is that the speed limit will change from 35 mph to 30 mph coming from Westwood. The posted speed coming from Westwood is currently 30 mph, coming over the overpass it is 45 mph, and coming into Dedham it is 35 mph. They have done speed studies, as noted. MassDOT considering lowering the speed has to do with what they see currently. The average speed limit that they saw was close to 50 mph heading east and 51 mph heading west. The argument in having a decreased speed limit to 35 mph is that they consider what the speed is ahead. *Unintelligible*.

Mr. Bethoney asked what the sight distance is from the exit driveway west, and how far west can the driveway be seen. Mr. Bradford said that they trimmed the ledge to increase the sight line. Mr. Bethoney asked if people have enough sight distance while driving 30-35 mph so they can slow down when people are turning left. Mr. Bradford said they did. Mr. Viveiros said they reviewed this, and the measures proposed will work. Mr. Bethoney explained that the sight distance was taken into account on the left turn out of the exit drive. Mr. Gifford said he thought that the proposed 30 mph limit from Route 128 to the Town Common, then returning to 35 mph did not make sense. Mr. Bradford said the proposed the speed limit would be 30 mph coming across the bridge. It is currently 35 mph. *Unintelligible*. Mr. Bethoney said

that if they are trying to slow the speed, they should just make it 30 mph. He asked Mr. Bradford if he thought it did not warrant that. Mr. O'Brien said that this may be a moot point, as the speed limit in Dedham will be 25 mph as of May 1, 2018. Mr. Husseini said that the speed limit coming from Westwood over the overpass is 45 mph right now, going down to 35 mph. Mr. Bethoney asked if it could be changed to 30 mg going down to the Town Common, and Mr. Husseini said it could, but MassDOT has a process for this and does not let town arbitrarily lower speed limits, even on town roads. They need to conduct a study, which the applicant has already done, then ask MassDOT to allow a lower speed. There is a lengthy review process, and it would take a long time. The town could pursue it at a later date. Mr. Podolski said that, early on, the Board suggested that the town speed limit should be 30 mph, but Town Engineer Jason Mammone, P.E., said that we cannot go below 35 mph. That is why the speed is 35. The default speed limit for the town as of May 1, 2018, will be 25 mph in areas where the speed is not posted. However, some streets, including High Street, are an exception to this. Mr. Podolski said that, no matter what the speed limit is, if it is not enforced, it does not make a difference.

Michael Hunter, 1076 High Street, expressed concern about traffic congestion and air quality with traffic queuing. He asked if he could turn left out of his driveway in the morning. He wondered what impact these issues would have on him. He said that buses and cars would be queuing, causing congestion. He asked if anyone had looked at this. Signalization is helpful. He wondered if the site is a planning issue, noting that people drive 35 mph, but the guard rail shows that people are out of control.

Mr. Bethoney asked about environmental impacts. Mr. Bradford said there is a drop period in the morning. It is very staggered. There are three to four buses, but these do not come in at the same time. The rest of the students are dropped off, but this is staggered. The maximum number of cars coming in and out of the campus is ten, and they do not arrive at the same time. He said that congestion will not be an impact.

Mr. Podolski said that the Board cannot make the applicant go below the speed limit, and it has no authority to order the town to go below the limit without meeting other criteria. Mr. Bradford said it is not proposed at this time. Mr. Podolski asked that a "Traffic Calming" sign be placed under the sign on the first island. He also noted that a portion of one of the islands, which is in the state layout and not a town road, requires state permission for construction. He asked what they are doing about that. Mr. Husseini said they have discussed this with MassDOT, and they have no problem with building on the island. They will need to obtain written approval for this prior to digging; this should take three to four weeks. Mr. Podolski asked how much this would cost, and Mr. Roberts said they are meeting with the FinCom on Tuesday night. They anticipate it will cost \$452,000 for the construction alone. With fees and permitting, it will be approximately \$492,000.