

TOWN OF DEDHAM
COMMONWEALTH OF MASSACHUSETTS

John R. Bethoney, Chair
Michael A. Podolski, Esq., Vice Chair
Robert D. Aldous, Clerk
James E. O'Brien IV, Member
Jessica L. Porter, Member



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PLANNING BOARD
MINUTES

May 10, 2018, 7:00 p.m., Lower Conference Room

Present: John R. Bethoney, Chair
Robert D. Aldous, Clerk
James E. O'Brien IV
Jessica L. Porter

Not Present: Michael A. Podolski

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

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. Mr. Podolski was not present for this meeting.

Applicant:	Nordblom
Project Address:	Stergis Way
Zoning District:	Highway Business
Representative(s):	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Kevin F. Hampe, Esq., 411 Washington Street, Dedham, MA• Keith P. Hampe, Esq., 411 Washington Street, Dedham, MA• Todd Nordblom, Vice President, Nordblom Company, 71 Third Avenue, Burlington, MA 01803• Todd Fremont-Smith, Senior Vice President of Development, Director of Mixed-use Projects, Nordblom Company, 71 Third Avenue, Burlington, MA 01803

Nordblom is the new property owner for Stergis Way, and would like to have an informal meeting regarding working together to develop the property. There are multiple buildings and businesses in the area, which is zoned for Highway Business. A mixed-use development would require a Special Permit. It is a 90-year-old family-based real estate firm. Projects have

included the Wegman's project in Burlington and redevelopment of the Boston Globe facility on Morrissey Boulevard.

The company has recently purchased Stergis Business Park, which is about 100,000 square feet of industrial buildings dating back to the 1950's; these are functionally obsolete. The property is located next to Legacy Place. They feel that the location is perfect for housing due to its proximity to Wigwam Pond and being within walking distance to Legacy Place. At their apartment location in Burlington, they have seen that people are coming down to the retail location and supporting restaurants, stores, and supermarket. They feel that the food anchor at Legacy Place would be a tremendous amenity for the site. They are aware that there are traffic issues and missing pedestrian connections, so they propose looking at the larger area, spending money on traffic, master planning, and pedestrian master planning. They have reached out to Jeff Dirk at Vanasse and Associates, and have begun thinking about how to get people to retail amenities safely. They think that with their budget and the project, they may be able to fix some of those problems.

The existing bylaws state that a Special Permit is needed for this particular mixed use, which involves a 10% commercial or retail component. They are considering a couple of hundred units, not the rumored 500 units on Wigwam Pond. They want to do something that is appropriate to the scale and that can be efficiently managed. Nordblom is generally long-term holders and think generationally. They greatly respect investing in the communities in which they are located. Retail is one of the big considerations as it does relate to traffic and a very different traffic profile, and may not be complementary with what currently exists. It fits the profile based on the floor area ratio and a 5.5 acre site. They have had preliminary conversations with the Conservation Commission, and see real opportunities for making a public connection to the pond resource; this has historically been disconnected. They would love to see a Master Plan of sorts that would encourage more participation from abutting land owners. There are number of public/private types of collaborations that could happen that would be of great interest to them in envisioning the next use of Stergis and things that may be on the Town's checklist already.

Mr. Bethoney asked what the visions of the site were that made them interested prior to purchasing the property. Mr. Fremont-Smith said that the site cannot be what it currently is. There are many empty, or becoming empty, buildings. They would like to put in well-designed housing adjacent to Legacy Place to create a mixed-use environment. There could be retail buildings, kitchen showrooms, or other types of buildings. It is an opportunity to tie the neighborhood and everything together. Their preference is housing. It would be mixed use in the sense that there would be a commercial component, and mixed-use in the sense that the neighborhood is a mixed-use.

Mr. Bethoney asked what the development might look like. He had heard that it would be horizontal mixed-use by using buildings that are currently on the site, or redesigning the site. Mr. Fremont-Smith said he understood the zoning, and it would be integrated. Mr. Hampe showed renderings of what could be built. Mr. Bethoney said that everyone agrees that the site does need to be redeveloped.

Mr. O'Brien asked that they review at the Town's Master Plan. He thanked them for coming to the Board informally, saying it helps out so many potential projects. He liked the generational aspect of their proposal, saying that they become stakeholders in the project. He also

liked the fact that they are looking toward conservation, saying the pond has been isolated, and it would be nice to having something new. He said that the pond used to be used for cutting ice. Mr. Aldous asked how many buildings they would have. Mr. Nordblom said there would be one. There are five existing buildings. The front two buildings, K & G and the fertility clinic, would remain. The three rear parcels would be the focus with one building. Ms. Porter asked how the footprint would change. The existing three buildings are Concord Electric, Hobart, and HD Supply. These would be consolidated into one building. They have studied the soil preliminarily, and know that they will need to make adjustments when they study it further. The idea is to try to keep everything under one roof. Ms. Porter asked if they have reviewed the Transit Oriented Development study, which has backed up the demand for housing in that area.

Mr. Bethoney noted that the infrastructure is seriously lacking there, i.e., pedestrian infrastructure, roadway, and the intersections at Route One and Enterprise Drive. In order to increase the density there, it will have to be carefully studied. He was happy they came to the Board very early, prior to starting anything. He was certainly interested in redevelopment of the area.

Mr. O'Brien asked about height of the building and if they would ask for additional height in their Special Permit request. Mr. Nordblom said they are considering a ground floor podium with four residential floors above. He was reminded that 40 feet is the maximum height. Mr. Bethoney said the Special Permit gives the Planning Board the authority to look at the entire project, analyze the benefits and how they outweigh the negative impacts, and award relief based on the overall project and how it benefits the community. There are certain standards in Special Permits, and they should address all of those in their presentation. Mr. Fremont-Smith said they are not in a rush, so they will work with the Planning Department closely. Mr. Bethoney said a new town planner will be starting on May 15, 2018; there has been no planner November 2017. He suggested that Mr. Hampe contact the office.

Jim Maher, Parks and Recreation Commission, said that as the area begins to be build out, there will be recreational needs for the residents that the commission cannot meet. It will be the responsibility of the developers to build recreational programming for their residents. There is no land for a park, walking trails, or ball fields. His understanding was that it was being targeted for a future 55+ community. Mr. Bethoney said it is not this specific site, but another in that area. He said that those types of standards can be incorporated. He asked Mr. Maher if he felt that any applicant coming in to do this type of density should also consider recreational uses and to work closely with the Parks and Recreation Commission to come up with a proposal. Mr. Maher said yes. Mr. Hampe said that he can assure everyone that Nordblom is fully invested in working with the Town to develop recreational-type uses for the property as well. They will talk with the senior community, Parks and Recreation Commission, and anyone else that would be necessary to the Planning Board that the benefits outweigh the negative impact of the project.

Discussion with Applicants for Associate Planning Board Member Position

Andrew Pepoli

He has been a resident of Dedham since 2015. He is currently on the Capital Expenditures Committee and is a Town Meeting member. He is interested in helping the Town and volunteers his time. He has worked in commercial real estate, property management, asset man-

agement, and development (for details, please see his résumé). He has had a lot of experience in commercial development and has knowledge of permitting, management of mixed-use, multi-family, industrial office, and laboratories. He felt that his skill set would offer a unique perspective, as he understands commercial development, objectives, and profits.

Ms. Porter asked what drew him to the real estate field. Mr. Pepoli said he enjoyed construction, seeing under-utilized real estate used to its full potential, and how it can work for a neighborhood and a town. He felt that working in commercial real estate would help him find projects that would better the community.

Mr. O'Brien asked Mr. Sisson how many special projects are lined up. Mr. Sisson said 9-10 are anticipated. Mr. O'Brien asked Mr. Pepoli if he had enough time to sit for all of these projects, and Mr. Pepoli said he would need information on the time commitment. Mr. Bethoney said that the position requires that the associate member be present for all Special Permit projects for Public Hearings and meetings. He/she would be eligible to vote only if a member could not vote due to absence or conflict of interest. The associate member would need to be present for all meetings related to a Special Permit only, not regular agenda items. These projects will have significant challenges for which a developer will be put to task. The associate member must have the awareness and interest to hold developers to the highest standard. Mr. O'Brien added that each applicant will need understanding because each Special Permit is an animal of its own and takes time, sometimes months, sometimes over a year. He noted that Legacy Place took two years and Hebrew Senior Life took three years. Mr. Pepoli said he was fully aware of this and the importance of attending all the meetings.

Mr. Bethoney asked if he had knowledge of the Special Permit process, which is the only item being discussed. Mr. Pepoli said he had been through a couple of development projects in Roslindale in 2016-2017 and Danbury, Connecticut in 2015-2016. Prior to that, he was in an assistant role on other development projects, both retail and office. He said he understood the Special Permit process, noting that there are times when you have to weigh the positive and the negative aspects. Mr. Bethoney said that is one of the thresholds. These do not have to be about the site but could be throughout the town.

Mr. Bethoney said that the Board will discuss his application, deliberate, and notify him.

Ralph Steeves

Mr. Steeves read his statement:

I appreciate the time that you people have given me and the rest of us who applied for the position. This letter is submitted in application for the appointment of the associate member of the Planning Board. As you are aware, the primary goal of the associate member is to act on Special Permit applications in cases of absence or inability to act on the part of a member of the Planning Board. My experience with the Planning Board in the Special Permit process is extensive. I have served the Planning Board for 30 years. During my tenure on the Board, I have participated in numerous Special Permit applications, including Legacy Place and NewBridge on the Charles. I have complete understanding of the Special Permit process and have a full working knowledge of the Planning Board and Dedham zoning. In addition, as a member of the Planning Board, I

have already participated in preliminary discussions on so-called scoping sessions and a number of major projects that are formally before the Board for the next year. My background on these projects is critical for the Special Permit process and review...

Mr. Steeves said he has worked with the Board and it is a great job. A lot goes into the Special Permit process. He has not seen anyone talking about mitigation, although it was discussed for Legacy Place and Hebrew Senior Life. He has experience with this as well.

Mr. Aldous asked him if he had the time in the future, and he will. Mr. O'Brien said it seemed like he missed the Board already, and he said he has. He noted that there is no town planner, and Mr. O'Brien said that is why they need help. Ms. Porter asked how originally became involved in planning. Mr. Steeves said he asked the Board of Selectmen if he could be appointed when a member was leaving. They told them they already had someone. He decided to run for the position, and was elected.

Mr. Bethoney said that the Board will discuss his application, deliberate, and notify him.

Robert Curran

Mr. Curran is a lifeline resident of the Town with the exception of his time in the military. He moved back in 2002. He has been a Town Meeting member for 15 years and is a third generation union carpenter. He is a coach, Boy Scout leader, belongs to the Knights of Columbus as a trustee of the building. He has worked in residential construction and moved into the union in 1986 in heavy construction, concrete, and steel. He was an Army medic, for which the Board thanked for his service. He worked on the Hebrew Senior Life project, and is presently working on the ECEC. He was on the crew from the footings to the roof of the new Avery School, and hopes to work on the Public Safety Building when/if it happens.

Mr. Curran would like to be considered as an associate member, particularly because of the prior meeting with Nordblom. He has enjoyed fishing at Wigwam Pond, where there has been a pair of swans for years. He would like to see this protected. He would like to protect the interests of the Town. He volunteered with the Master Plan Steering Committee about 12 years ago. He has worked in Dorchester, and does not want Dedham to become like that. He agrees with Marie-Louise Kehoe's idea of open space, although he does not understand what is going on with the Striar property. Mr. Bethoney said that the Striar property has been fully approved by Town Meeting, the Planning Board, and the Conservation Commission. He does not know why they have not sought funding for the build-out.

Mr. Curran said that a chain is only as strong as its weakest link. He believes that East Dedham is the Town's weakest link. Mr. Bethoney said that redevelopment there is a priority, but the Board cannot do anything about private residential matters. Mr. Curran said he wants to be involved. Mr. Bethoney said he seems passionate about the community and really knowledgeable. He did not mention anything more than being a Town Meeting member. He wondered if Mr. Curran had ever requested being on any other committees. As a lifelong resident, he should become involved. Mr. Curran said he has been busy trying to earn

enough money to send his child to college; he is graduating this year, so he does have time now. Mr. O'Brien said the 2020 Master Plan is a thought, as well as other opportunities. He has a useful skill set that would be a benefit to the Town.

Mr. Bethoney said that the Board will discuss his application, deliberate, and notify him.

The last applicant, Gregory Dignan, could not be present for this meeting. He will be informed that he can have an opportunity to interview at the next meeting on May 24, 2018.

The posting for this position closes tomorrow, May 11, 2018. Mr. Bethoney talked to the Town Council, who said they can interview anyone. However, a decision cannot be made until the close of business tomorrow. Someone else may still apply, and the Board would give that person the opportunity for an interview. He asked the Board to consider this carefully. A vote will be taken on May 24, 2018.

Annual Review of Planning Board Appointments to Town Committees

Mr. Bethoney said that since Mr. Podolski is not present, this will need to be continued, as he sits on a lot of committees. Mr. Aldous moved to table this issue, seconded by Ms. Porter. The vote was unanimous at 4-0.

Mr. O'Brien said that he has put a great deal of thought into serving on the Master Plan Implementation Committee. He has spoken with W. Shaw McDermott as well. Ms. Porter has put extensive work into the committee, and Mr. O'Brien felt that it was not fair for him to remain on the committee. He asked to withdraw his name from consideration and suggested that Ms. Porter serve on the committee. He said he can act as ex-officio. He advised Ms. Porter to look at other Master Plans from other towns, particularly those towns bisected by highways. A choice needs to be made whether to have more commercial to offset property taxes, or whether the town curtails its building. Ms. Porter thanked Mr. O'Brien, and asked to meet with him to get his perspective on doing the benchmarking appropriately.

Mr. O'Brien was therefore resigning as a member of the Master Plan Implementation Committee. Mr. Bethoney asked Ms. Porter if she was interested in the appointment of the Planning Board to the Master Plan Implementation Committee, and she was. Mr. Aldous nominated Ms. Porter to be appointed to the Master Plan Implementation Committee on behalf of the Planning Board, seconded by Mr. O'Brien. The vote was unanimous at 3-0.

OLD/NEW BUSINESS

Rustcraft Electrical Boxes: Mr. Sisson said he had reached out to Stuart Sohn about the landscaping and electrical boxes to tell him of the Board's dissatisfaction with the landscaping and request for better evergreen screening. Mr. Sohn has not called back.

Virginia LeClair re: Planning Grant

Ms. LeClair, the Environmental Coordinator, has asked that the Board sign a letter for a Municipal Vulnerability Preparedness Grant to help deal with the potential impacts of climate change, i.e., flooding or severe weather. This is a planning grant that comes out of the

State Office of Energy and Environmental Affairs; the letter is an application for funding. Ms. LeClair would work on this with the consulting planner. Attached to the letter is a list of state-approved contractors and vendors. The grant enables community funding for matters such as areas prone to flooding and impacts to infrastructures, which may be a priority in Dedham. There is no cost to the town.

Ms. Porter moved to support the grant application, seconded by Mr. Aldous. The vote was unanimous at 4-0. The letter that Ms. LeClair provided was dated May 9, 2018, and was not on Board letterhead. It will be retyped with the correct date and letterhead, and Mr. Bethoney will sign it tomorrow morning.

David Raftery, 321 Washington Street

Mr. Bethoney recused himself from this discussion due to a professional relationship between the agency at which he works and the applicant. Because Mr. Podolski was not present for this meeting and Mr. Bethoney recused himself, this discussion will be taken up on May 24, 2018. The abutter, Steven Gardos of 70 Maple Place, will be informed. Mr. Sisson will contact Mr. Raftery, who will be urged to bring the site into compliance with the plan of record. Mr. Podolski will contact Building Commissioner Kenneth Cimeno to discuss this. Mr. Raftery should do something about this prior to the next meeting.

Panera Bread Transformer

Mr. Sisson said the discussion about the transformer and menu board relocations was tabled at the April 26, 2018. Mr. Bethoney said this will have to wait for Mr. Podolski at the next meeting on May 24, 2018. He asked Mr. Sisson to let Panera know. Mrs. Webster said that David Webster of Federal Realty also brought in another plan for changes to the sidewalk at the Dedham Plaza. Mr. Bethoney said the Board will not take up any major issues until Mr. Katz is ready. The agenda should only have small things on it until then.

David Spiegel/Pearl Realty

The information given to the Board regarding Pearl Realty's lawsuit against the Board will be discussed at the Board's next meeting. Mr. Podolski said it really has nothing to do with the Board. It is simply a notification that pleading has been made. Town Council said the suit does not hold water, and will not go to trial. It is about family relation issues regarding access/egress to the Best Buy/TGI Friday's sites. Town Council feels that Pearl Realty is using the suit to force negotiations with Mr. Spiegel, and the Board is not responsible.

Mr. Aldous moved to adjourn, seconded by Mr. O'Brien. The vote was unanimous at 4-0. The meeting ended at 8:15 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Robert D. Aldous
Clerk

/snw