

TOWN OF DEDHAM
COMMONWEALTH OF MASSACHUSETTS

John R. Bethoney, Chair
Michael A. Podolski, Esq., Vice Chair
James E. O'Brien IV, Member
Jessica L. Porter, Member
James McGrail, Esq., Member
Ralph I. Steeves, Associate Member



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Jeremy Rosenberger
Town Planner

TOWN OF DEDHAM
450 WASHINGTON STREET
DEDHAM, MA

MINUTES OF THE PLANNING BOARD MEETING
VIA TELECONFERENCE
NOVEMBER 12, 2020, 7:00 P.M.

BOARD MEMBERS:

John R. Bethoney	Chair
Michael A. Podolski, Esq.	Vice-Chair
James E. O'Brien IV	Member
Jessica L. Porter	Member
Jim McGrail, Esq.	Member
Ralph Steeves	Associate Member

PLANNING DEPARTMENT STAFF:

Jeremy Rosenberger	Planning Director
Michelle Tinger	Community Planning & Engagement Specialist
Jennifer Doherty	Administrative Assistant

GUESTS:

Steven Findlen	Senior Project Manager, McMahon & Associates
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Minutes prepared by Angela Fracassi of Minutes Solutions Inc. from a video recording.

1. CALL TO ORDER

Mr. Bethoney called the meeting to order at 7:00 p.m. and explained the meeting procedures and protocol to the public.

2. **PUBLIC HEARING**
95 EASTERN AVENUE – SALETIN REAL ESTATE GROUP, MAJOR NONRES-
IDENTIAL PROJECT

Guests:

Kevin Hampe	Attorney, representing Saletin RE Group
Cris Crecelius	Principal, Saletin Real Estate Group
Jeff Saletin	Principal, Saletin Real Estate Group
Brandon Carr	Project Engineer, DiPrete Eng.
Rolf Biggers	Project Architect, BMA Architectural Group
Richard Fraiser	Project Architect, BMA Architectural Group
Michael Saletin	Saletin Real Estate Group (SREG) Management LLC.
Jeffrey Dirk	Traffic Engineer, Vanasse & Associates

Saletin Real Estate Group (SREG) Management LLC. requested a special permit for a major nonresidential project, special permit for hotel use in a flood plain overlay district, major site plan review, variances to exceed the allowable floor area ratio (.58 proposed, .35 max. allowed) and building height (75.5 ft. proposed, 40 ft. max. allowed) and associated waivers to construct a six (6) story, 125 room hotel and 435 off-street parking spaces.

Ms. Porter stated that the project parcel extends beyond 95 Eastern Avenue and onto 600 Providence Highway, which is located on the other side of Route 1A from her personal residence making her a direct abutter. She stated that due to state ethics guidance and the potential for a perceived conflict of interest, she was recusing herself from participating in the review of this application.

Ms. Porter left the meeting at this point.

The Chair appointed Mr. Ralph Steeves to review this proposal in place of Ms. Porter. The Chair noted that this was the second meeting covering this proposal. At the first meeting, the required notices were read for the public hearing, and the public hearing was continued to this meeting.

Mr. Kevin Hampe spoke on behalf of the Applicant.

Mr. Hampe provided an overview of the proposal. He noted that the plans call for a 120-room hotel, and not the 125 rooms noted in the agenda. Mr. Hampe noted that the hotel would generate approximately \$650,000.00 per year and \$4.6 million over the next 10 years. He submitted Addendum B to the Applicant's proposal to clarify clerical errors in the original application.

Mr. Chris Crecelius joined the meeting on behalf of SREG. He noted the benefits of a modern, high-quality hotel built in the town.

Mr. Brandon Carr joined the meeting and spoke on behalf of the Applicant. He described the geography of the proposed hotel. He noted that SREG

purchased the property, which is currently a neglected parking lot, in July of 2019. Mr. Carr presented an overview of the planned site use including a shared parking plan. He noted that they are proposing a reduction in the parking spaces from 490 spaces to 433 spaces.

Mr. Richard Frasier joined the meeting and spoke on behalf of the Applicant. He spoke to the exterior design of the building.

Mr. Carr presented the landscape and lighting design for the project and status update of the various permits required. He further noted the benefits that the new hotel would bring to Dedham.

The Chair asked that the lot lines of the proposed site be clarified on the site plan. It was confirmed that the proposal is for the hotel to be built on a stand-alone lot, not a divided lot. The Chair noted that the plan as it is presented does not include a subdivision of the property for the development of the hotel. Because the area to be developed is not subdivided, the rest of the property would have to be brought up to code in relation to the new development.

The Chair asked if SREG has provided any upgrades to the existing property in the lead-up to the application under consideration.

Mr. Crecelius noted that SREG has been making improvements to the property since its purchase, including roofing replacements, lobby renovations, improving tenant's spaces, working on the parking, and upgrading landscaping.

The Chair asked how the patrons of the hotel would be accessing Dedham Square. He also asked how the hotel would address neighbors' issues and use of the access road. Further, the Chair noted that occupancy of the completed project would only be granted if the finished project matched the description in the Applicant's renderings. Specifically, if 30-foot trees are illustrated in the rendering, the Applicant would be responsible for installing those trees prior to occupancy being granted. The Chair also requested that if the Applicant refers to the development as a "nationally-flagged" hotel, that the Applicant display the national flag in its images of the proposed hotel.

The Chair then opened the floor to the members of the board for questions.

Mr. McGrail The Applicant noted that the development would be "dark-sky compliant" and requested clarification.

Mr. Carr responded that dark-sky compliant refers to lighting directed down in order to reduce light pollution.

Mr. McGrail inquired whether the number of parking spots proposed is typical for this kind of development.

Mr. Carr responded that the typical range is one to two parking spaces per hotel room.

Mr. McGrail asked if there would be charging stations installed for electric vehicles.

Mr. Carr answered that there are 4 charging stations planned to be installed.

Mr. McGrail inquired if there is a plan to make the area safer for pedestrians and bicycle traffic.

Mr. Carr answered that the Proposal included resurfacing the road up to the entrance and providing pedestrian sidewalks on Eastern Avenue. He noted that they are open to suggestions for further improvements.

Mr. O'Brien echoed the Chair in noting that the Applicant must decide if they are subdividing the property. He also raised concerns about the road that cuts through the parking lot, in that it is not actually a designated road. He also asked that the hotel design and decorating be more representative of the Dedham community.

The Chair opened the floor to the public.

Martha Abdella, 12 Marion St., noted the importance that the development looks like the plan and design. She requested that there be innovation in the design and not to look like other buildings in Dedham.

Stephen Greenbaum, 200 High St., Boston (attorney to Pearl Realty Associates, abutted to this project), noted concern that the access road proposed to be shared by the Applicant is subject to an exclusive easement to his client, their tenants, and customers. He noted that the Applicant cannot make any alterations to any of the recorded easements of his client without their permission.

The Chair noted that the board had received his correspondence for consideration and that the Applicant would be given the opportunity to respond another time.

Suzanne MacRae, 88 Abbot Road, inquired if an assessment of the need for an additional hotel had been conducted, and asked if there has been an assessment of the effects to public safety.

Mr. Crecelius stated that two professional market studies had been completed that support the need and demand for the development. With regards to safety, Mr. Crecelius stated that safety concerns are more typical of older hotels.

Sarah Smegal, 150 Monroe St, noted that the traffic study indicated that there may be a queue of up to 12 vehicles as a result of the development and that this was more than what she would consider acceptable. She welcomed the project acknowledging drainage issues and noting the attention this was being paid in the design. She also noted concerns regarding the height of the project and expressed disappointment that the hotel would not host amenities such as a bar or gathering space.

The Chair noted that other projects seeking special permits of this scale have provided the town with shared use of their amenities when appropriate as a demonstration of how the project would be beneficial to the town. He noted that the concerns of the public would be addressed during the review process.

The next meeting will include addressing the concerns from the public noted during this meeting and to review traffic issues and related studies.

The Chair suggested an independent third-party architectural consultant review of the aesthetic considerations of the proposed project.

Mr. McGrail asked how the architect peer consultant would be chosen. The Chair noted that the consultant would be working on behalf of the town at the expense of the Applicant. Further, that the planning director would assist the board in obtaining a peer reviewer.

On a motion made by Mr. O'Brien, seconded by Mr. Podolski, it was resolved to engage an architectural consultant to peer review the proposal. A roll call vote was conducted. Motion carried unanimously.

On a motion made by Mr. Podolski, seconded by Mr. O'Brien, it was resolved to schedule the next meeting to review the application regarding 95 Eastern Avenue on December 2, 2020, at 7:00 p.m. A roll call vote was conducted. Motion carried unanimously.

Ms. Porter returned to the meeting.

3 Guest **PUBLIC HEARING** Attorney, Hinckley Allen
John Connelly, Esq. **222 AMES STREET – NORFOLK & DEDHAM MUTIAL FIRE INSUR-**
Jeff Tompkins, Esq. **ANCE COMPANY, MAJOR NONRESIDENTIAL PROJECT**
Joel Murray, Esq.

Norfolk Dedham Mutual Fire Insurance company requested a special permit for a major nonresidential project, a special permit for a retaining wall in excess of four feet, and a major site plan review to demolish an existing office building and construct a three-story office building and 176 off-street parking spaces at 222 Ames Street in Dedham. This is a continuation of a previous hearing. The Applicant was represented by their solicitor John Connelly.

Mr. Connelly noted that there were 2 requests made at the previous hearing. One request was for existing site photographs that have been submitted. The second request was a construction management plan, which has also been submitted to the planning director. Mr. Connelly noted that they had a meeting with the Design Review Advisory Board that culminated in the approval of the project, which has also been submitted. He further noted that there are no unresolved issues with regards to the peer review and that this had also been submitted to the Planning Board.

After confirming that the members had reviewed the information received from Mr. Connelly, the Chair called on Steven Findlen, the peer reviewer to comment on his findings.

Mr. Findlen noted that they have resolved all issues identified by the reviewer and he confirmed that the project met or exceeded all requirements which formed the basis of his analysis.

The Chair opened the floor to questions or comments from the Board and the public. There were none.

On a motion made by Mr. McGrail, seconded by Mr. Podolski, it was resolved to close the public hearing regarding the project on 222 Ames Street. A roll call vote was conducted. Motion carried unanimously.

The Chair requested that an agreement be made that a Certificate of Action be prepared that would bind the applicant to uphold the conditions and agreements it had acknowledged during the course of the hearing. Agreement to such a certificate would be a prerequisite for final approval.

On a motion made by Mr. Podolski, seconded by Mr. McGrail, it was resolved to approve the major site plan review pending receipt of a mutually agreed upon certificate of action that notes the various agreements and conditions that were made throughout the review process. A roll call vote was conducted. Motion carried unanimously.

Mr. O'Brien requested that photographs of the property be sent to the Dedham Historical Society. Mr. Connelly stated that the photographs would be sent as requested.

On a motion made by Mr. Podolski, seconded by Ms. Porter, it was resolved to approve the special permit for the retaining walls at 222 Ames Street. A roll call vote was conducted. Motion carried unanimously.

On a motion made by Mr. Podolski, seconded by Mr. O'Brien, it was resolved to approve the special permit for the non-residential portion of the project. A roll call vote was conducted. Motion carried unanimously.

ACTION: The Planning Board and staff will draft a Certificate of Action regarding the agreements and conditions placed on 222 Ames Street.

The certificate of action will be reviewed on December 2, 2020, at 7:00 p.m.

**4. PUBLIC MEETING
322 & 326 WASHINGTON STREET and 25 & 27 HARRIS STREET-
PETRUZZIELLO PROPERTIES LLC, MINOR SITE PLAN REVIEW**

Guests

Peter A. Zhaka, Esq.
Giorgio Petruzziello
James White
John Gethrol
Mike McKay
Ken Cram

Attorney for the Applicant
Property Owner, Petruzziello Properties LLC
Dedham Bank Representative
GCG Associates Civil Engineering
Architect
Traffic Consultant - Bayside Engineering

Mr. Zhaka and Mr. Petruzziello represented Needham Bank regarding a Minor Site Plan Review for a one-story, 1,879 sq. foot retail bank building with drive-through teller/ATM and ten off-street parking spaces at 322 & 326 Washington Street and 25 & 27 Harris Street.

Mr. Bethoney recused himself due to a professional relationship with Mr. Petruzziello and turned the meeting over to Mr. Podolski to act as Chair for the hearing. Mr. Bethoney then left the meeting.

Mr. Zhaka introduced those present representing the Applicant. He provided a brief history of the Needham Bank and a description of its property at the address above. He noted that the property is currently occupied by CNT Paint and Patriot Motors. The subject property is in the Central Business Zoning District. There has been a filing with the Conservation Commission. A special permit for the drive-thrus had been obtained via the Zoning Board of Appeals following a hearing on October 25, 2020, the decision

for which was filed on November 4, 2020. The project had yet to be brought before the Design Review Advisory Board. The Applicant and the architect will be attending the December 2020 meeting of the DRAB board to present the project for consideration.

Mr. Zhaka noted that a traffic report was submitted. He further noted that the project was submitted for peer review, but they have yet to receive any peer-review comments.

Mr. Zhaka provided a detailed description of the project. He noted that green space has been added to the front of the proposed project as per the request of the planning committee, and the Applicant had been working with the town's engineers to augment the property's green spaces.

Mr. Zhaka noted that the electrical power lines at the site are unsightly. The approximate cost of burying the power lines was estimated to be between \$1.5 and \$2 million. The Applicant proposed proceeding with burying only the power lines on Harris Street and installing a new pole for the power lines on Washington Street.

Mr. Petruzzello stated that they spoke with the electricity provider and burying the power wires that run along Washington Street is not an option at this time. They proposed the installation of a new 52-foot power line post to replace the existing, crooked 42-foot pole.

Mr. Carter spoke to the sidewalks, parking, and drainage on the site.

Mr. McKay spoke to the layout of the building and the currently proposed design of the structure. He stated that a large number of windows on the structure will assist with the building's transparency. He also discussed some of the finish materials detailed in the structure.

Mr. McKay stated that the building will meet or exceed current energy efficiency standards.

Mr. Zhaka noted that the traffic report estimated that the site would receive 306 vehicles per day. That would be 135 vehicles going into the parking area and drive-thru, and 135 vehicles leaving these areas. Mr. Zhaka further noted that the Applicant believes this estimate to be somewhat exaggerated, but for the purposes of discussion, they will work with these numbers. He stated that during the morning and evening peak use hours, the report stated that 29 vehicles (17 entering and 12 exiting) during the morning peak, and 62 in the evening peak. Mr. Zhaka noted that it had been estimated that at no time will the demand for the drive-thru exceed the queue availability of four vehicles. Furthermore, signage would be installed to ensure that it is

communicated that no queue spill-out onto Harris Street would be permissible.

Mr. Zhaka noted that as a result of the COVID-19 pandemic, online banking has increased and that the proposed project is better suited to the current situation. The design calls for a walk-up window for service in addition to the two drive-thru service windows.

Acting Chair Mr. Podolski requested that Mr. Findlen weigh in with his analysis of the project prior to questions from the board.

Mr. Findlen stated that he was still reviewing the minor site review of this project and would have more details once the review was complete.

The Acting Chair opened the floor to questions or comments from the Board.

Mr. Steeves noted that the building did not have an American flag in the rendering.

Mr. White stated that a flag would be located on the property, potentially on the roof of the building.

Mr. Steeves inquired about plans for the property of the former bank location once this site is developed.

Mr. Petruzzello stated that there are no confirmed plans for the site yet.

Mr. McGrail commented that Mr. Petruzzello had contributed significantly to the aesthetics of the town with his various developments in Dedham. He expressed some concern with the design of the building as proposed.

Ms. Porter echoed Mr. McGrail's comments regarding the design and having concerns about the aesthetic appeal. It was opined that the design was somewhat sterile. She further noted that the Applicant is seeking permission to maintain the exit of the site as a two-way turn and had some concerns regarding this.

Mr. Zhaka stated that the low level of traffic expected of patrons of the bank would make the two-way turn at the exit of the site feasible. He noted that there is low traffic in the area and little risk with respect to the left turn at the exit of the site.

Ms. Porter inquired if the Applicant had investigated reversing the flow of traffic at the site and swapping the exit and entrance.

Mr. Zhaka responded that, because the driver's side of the patron's vehicle must be on the drive-thru window side of the building, the current traffic flow plan is the only feasible option.

Ms. Porter asked if pneumatic tubes could be installed to enable exchange of documents and currency between patrons and employees.

Mr. Zhaka responded that other site plans considered many options, but the current plan made the most sense with the irregular shape of the property.

Ms. Porter asked if it was considered to have only one curb-cut.

Mr. White stated that the current design reflects lessons learned at his other bank locations where there is confusion regarding the use of the parking areas.

Ms. Porter asked if the project under review is similar in square footage to the bank's existing location.

Mr. White responded that it was, but the other location has two stories.

Ms. Porter inquired how many employees would be on site when the business was open and if the employees would occupy the bank parking spots.

Mr. White responded that there would be eight employees at this branch and that the Applicant was planning for employees to park at an alternative location close to the site.

Mr. O'Brien questioned the feasibility of making safe left turns from the proposed exit at the site as designed, noting the proximity of the Rotary.

Acting Chair Mr. Podolski noted that he believes burying the wires for the Applicant's site is a welcome improvement to the area. He noted that the cost of burying all the wires would be prohibitive to the project and would not be required by the Board. He asked to confirm the striped area shown on the grounds in the parking area in the plans.

Mr. Zhaka stated that the striped area will be painted on the surface.

The Acting Chair inquired how much space there would be for vehicles reversing out of parking spaces.

Mr. Zhaka pointed out that there will be 19 feet between the back of the parking spaces and the striped area that separates the parking from the ATM drive-thru.

The Acting Chair noted that the proposal would be a major improvement to the site. Mr. Podolski opined that the most significant issue remaining would be if the left-turn from the exit of the proposed development will be permissible. Additionally, it was confirmed that the queue for the drive-thrus has capacity for two cars in the teller drive-thru window lane and two cars in the ATM drive-thru lane (the second car in the ATM lane may need to occupy part of the sidewalk while in the queue.) Mr. Podolski requested that vehicles be added to the drawing of the proposed site for ease of consideration by the committee.

Mr. Steeves inquired why the exit and the entrance could not be switched. **Mr. Zhaka** stated that he would provide more information about why the current design was chosen over the option of the opposite exit and entrance.

Mr. Petruzzello stated the project would be going to the DRAB on December 2, 2020.

Mr. McGrail reiterated that his opinion is that the design is not as good as perhaps it could be and encouraged the developer to take the aesthetics into consideration.

The Acting Chair opened the floor to comments or questions from the public. There were none.

On a motion made by Mr. McGrail, and seconded by Ms. Porter, it was resolved to close discussion of the proposed Needham Bank site on 322 and 326 Washington Street and 25 and 27 Harris Street, and to continue discussions on December 9, 2020. A roll call vote was conducted. Motion carried unanimously (4-0).

5. **PUBLIC MEETING**
22 BRIDGE STREET – ELIE ON BRIDGE STREET, LLC, MINOR SITE PLAN REVIEW

22 BRIDGE STREET – ELIE ON BRIDGE STREET, LLC REPRESENTATIVES:

Elie Bracus
John Malowski

Property Owner
Purveyor of the gas station on site

Mr. Bethoney rejoined the meeting and resumed Chair responsibilities.

Mr. Zhaka represented the Applicant, Elie on Bridge Street, regarding a Minor Site Plan Review for a one-story, 530 square foot automobile inspection bay.

Mr. McGrail recused himself from this review noting that Applicant was before the ZBA when he was a member. As a result of a ZBA vote at that time, there was litigation from the Applicant in which Mr. McGrail was named as a member of the ZBA. Mr. McGrail left the meeting.

Mr. Zhaka stated that the Applicant is planning on adding a 528-square foot addition to the property which is currently occupied by a gas and service

station. The gas station is requesting the ability to build a third canopy for vehicle inspections. A previous special permit was requested and denied, but the application was approved upon appeal. Ms. Tinger provided a report to the Applicant which noted the lack of greenspace. In response, the Applicant proposed raised bed gardens on the north and south-west corner of the property. A new accessible parking sign would also be installed, and the same ground level would be maintained throughout the property, so that no ramping is required.

Ms. Tinger noted that the proposed greenspace at the northern most corner could be curved to improve the traffic flow.

Mr. Zhaka stated that the air-pump has been removed from the area being developed into the raised bed greenspace from the north of the property.

On a motion made by Mr. Podolski, and seconded by Mr. O'Brien, it was resolved to approve the minor site plan review for 22 Bridge Street. A roll call vote was conducted. Motion carried unanimously (4-0).

6. DESIGNING DEDHAM 2030 UPDATE

Update regarding upcoming December 7, 2020, January 26, 2021, and March 23, 2021 virtual open houses.

Mr. Rosenberger presented a flyer for the virtual event for the upcoming virtual open houses.

7. PLANNING DIRECTOR'S UPDATE

This item was tabled for the following meeting.

8. NEW BUSINESS/OLD BUSINESS

Mr. Steeves asked how the next town meeting would be held.

Ms. Porter stated that the meetings will be held virtually. She described the precautions and procedures involved in the virtual meeting.

Mr. Steeves reiterated the necessity for attendees to be able to ask questions of the Board and Applicants.

9. ADJOURNMENT

On a motion made by Mr. Podolski, seconded by Mr. O'Brien, it was resolved to adjourn the meeting at 10:32 p.m. A roll call vote was conducted. Motion carried unanimously.