

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
DECEMBER 2, 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 (until 7:06 p.m.)

PLANNING DEPARTMENT STAFF:

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

GUESTS:

Steven Findlen	Sr. Project Manager, McMahon & Associates
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1. CALL TO ORDER

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

Mr. Steeves resigned from his position as Associate Member of the Board. He then departed the meeting. The Chair noted the application from 95 Eastern Avenue may be affected by Mr. Steeves' announcements.

2. **PUBLIC HEARING**
222 AMES STREET – NORFOLK & DEDHAM INSURANCE, MAJOR NONRESIDENTIAL PROJECT

Guest:

John Connelly, Esq.

Attorney, Hinckley Allen

The Board reviewed the certificate of action for 222 Ames Street. Mr. Connelly represented the Applicant.

The Board agreed to the following additions to the certification:

- The construction management plan must specify that the Applicant must notify all abutters within 2000 feet, 14 calendar days prior to commencing construction.
- The construction management plan should include any conditions established by the Conservation Commission.
- The historic wrought iron gate must be preserved.

Mr. Connelly stated the Applicant attended a hearing with the Conservation Commission and would attend a second hearing on December 3, 2020. The Applicant had responded to every issue in their peer review and was notified that their response was received and accepted.

The Applicant accepted the proposed revisions.

On a motion made by Mr. Podolski, seconded by Ms. Porter, it was resolved to approve the Certificate of Action for 222 Ames Street, as amended. A roll call vote was conducted. Motion carried unanimously.

3. **PUBLIC MEETING**
LOTS 95, K3, AND 26 ON MEADOWBROOK ROAD – APPROVAL NOT REQUIRED

Guest:

Peter A. Zhaka

Attorney for the Applicant

The purpose of the hearing was to determine the adequacy of access for subject properties lots 95, K3, and 26 on Meadowbrook Road. Mr. Peter A. Zhaka represented the Applicant. Mr. Zhaka explained that the subject property was assigned the address 177 Meadowbrook Road and is in much better condition than it was several years ago, as the roadway has been reconstructed, thereby creating adequate access. Mr. Zhaka presented several photographs of the new roadway. Mr. Rosenberger stated that according to the Fire Department, there is insufficient space for a turn-around, however, one will be constructed.

On a motion made by Ms. Porter, seconded by Mr. Podolski, it was resolved that adequate access had been established on 177 Meadowbrook Road. A roll call vote was conducted. Motion carried unanimously.

ACTION – Mr. Rosenberger will forward a copy of the decision to Mr. Zhaka.

4. **PUBLIC HEARING**
95 EASTERN AVENUE – SALETIN REAL ESTATE GROUP, MAJOR NONRESIDENTIAL PROJECT

Guest:

Kevin Hampe

Attorney, representing Saletin Real Estate Group

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 and building height, and associated waivers to construct a six-story, 125 room hotel and 435 off-street parking spaces. Mr. Hampe represented the Applicant.

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.

Due to the proximity of the parcel to Ms. Porter's home, she recused herself from participating in the review of the adjustments requested for 95 Eastern Avenue.

The Chair noted the Associate Member, Mr. Steeves, who had been reviewing the application in lieu of Ms. Porter, had resigned from the Board at the opening of the meeting. The Applicant requested a continuance to a date certain to allow for the appointment of a new Associate Member. The Chair explained that historically, the Board posted the position, accepted a letter of request for consideration from the public, the Board conducted interviews, and voted for their preferred candidate. He estimated that the process would take approximately 30 days. Mr. Podolski noted that the by-law allows for flexibility in the process, provided that the process is established in open, public Board meetings. Mr. Rosenberger stated that the earliest date available is January 13, 2021.

The Chair noted he forwarded a resume for Mike Sinesi from DSK Architects to lead the review team for 95 Eastern Avenue to provide architectural and landscaping peer review. Mr. Rosenberger stated that he contacted his references in the Town of Westwood and they were overwhelmingly positive.

On a motion made by Mr. Podolski, seconded by Mr. McGrail, Mike Sinesi from DSK Architects would be appointed to the review team of 95 Eastern Avenue. A roll call vote was conducted. Motion carried unanimously (4-0).

On a motion made by Mr. Podolski, seconded by Mr. McGrail, it was resolved to continue the public hearing on January 13, 2021, at 7:00 p.m. A roll call vote was conducted. Motion carried unanimously (4-0).

5. **PUBLIC MEETING**
725 PROVIDENCE HIGHWAY (DEDHAM PLAZA) – FEDERAL REALTY INVESTMENT TRUST, MINOR SITE PLAN REVIEW

Guests:

Sean Selby
Mark Hebert

Arrowstreet Architects
Vice-President of Development, Federal Re-
alty Trust

Zachary Richards
Ian Ramey
Group

Project Manager, Bohler Engineering
Landscape Architect, Copley Wolf Design

Mr. Rosenberger stated that the Applicant had applied for a Minor Site Plan/Modification Site Plan Review for improvements to existing building canopy and façade, parking area regrading, landscaping improvements, and request for waiver reduction of 9 spaces of off-street parking requirements. He explained that it is considered a Minor Site Plan Review because it involves changes to a previously approved application, and the building is not expanding.

Mr. Hebert noted that the property needs renovation, and his teams had identified approximately \$7 million of improvements that can be made.

Mr. Richards presented aerial photographs and the development goals of the project. The Chair noted that the Applicant must present the existing site conditions plan that contains the same information as the proposed site plan. Mr. Richards stated that much of the parking will be regraded, landscaping will be added, storm-water systems will be added, rain gardens in the parking island, accessibility will be improved, additional accessible parking spots added, and traffic calming measures added. The total number of parking spaces will be reduced to make room for a connector walkway.

Mr. Ramey presented the landscaping improvement plans, and Mr. Selby presented the proposed architectural improvements. The new façade would be varied, with instances of differing architectural elements throughout. A low wall of approximately three to three and a half feet would be built in the parking lot with some way finding directions. The building will lose some retail square footage to expand the existing corridor to allow more of a pedestrian-friendly experience, more gathering space, and enhanced landscaping.

The Chair advised that the by-laws state that the Applicant must evaluate the current site and provide the Board with information regarding the current level of compliance. He requested that this information be presented at the next meeting.

The Chair opened the floor to questions from the Board.

Mr. McGrail noted that the site and surrounding area are asphalt-heavy and inquired if the Applicant required all the parking spaces in the plans.

Mr. Richards answered that the team is open to removing additional spaces to add even more green space but chose to keep them rather than apply for an additional waiver. The team is also exploring if planting beds can be installed along the sidewalk.

Mr. McGrail suggested that the parking lot in front of Star Market is too large, and perhaps that lot size can be reduced.

The Chair noted that reducing the number of parking spots was discussed in 2017, and it was noted that the number of parking spots was stipulated in the tenant's lease. He suggested that the peer reviewer should determine the parking requirements.

Ms. Porter suggested that walkability can be further increased by installing a pedestrian crossing and signage in front of the Star Market, installing stop signs throughout the parking lot, adding additional sidewalk, improve the crosswalk to the bus stop. She also noted that according to the by-laws, illuminated signage must be turned off within 30 minutes of the business closing.

Mr. Richards stated that the team would review the suggestions. He stated that currently each tenant controls its own sign and had discussed putting all the signs on a single circuit.

Mr. Podolski inquired about the status of the Monroe Muffler site, and suggested that a speed bump be installed in front of the Panera crosswalk.

Mr. Hebert answered that Monroe Muffler may need to be relocated and noted his suggestion regarding the crosswalk.

The Chair suggested that the access point on the east side is dangerous and should be improved. He also noted that many people work on Providence Highway and take public transportation to Washington Street and walk through the plaza to get to work. He suggested that the Applicant further improve the walkability and create a safe path from Washington Street to Providence Highway.

The Chair inquired where the trucks access the plaza, and if the plans can accommodate trucks.

Mr. Hebert responded that trucks are not permitted on Washington Street, and there is no change to the truck access, and the plan does not include any additional curb or reduced radiuses on the truck route.

The Chair added that this must be shown on the revised plans.

The Chair noted that the southwest entry point onto Providence Highway is dangerous for vehicles turning left and should be improved. He further suggested the installation of bicycle parking and electric vehicle charging stations and noted that the flag poles were not included in the plans.

Mr. O'Brien inquired if there are any vacancies and whether the Applicant anticipates any restaurant tenants.

Mr. Hebert stated that the Applicant would love to add restaurants to bring customers into the center in the evenings.

The Chair advised that outdoor seating must be approved by the Planning Board and advised that he will not waive the peer review requirements for the application.

The Chair stated that the application would undergo the peer review process, and the Applicant will prepare a revised plan to present to the Board at a later date.

Mr. Findlen stated that his firm, McMahon and Associates, can complete the peer review in whatever timeframe the Board deems appropriate.

The Chair advised that the next meeting will be scheduled once the peer review process is complete and opened the floor to questions or comments from the public. There were none.

6. OLD BUSINESS / NEW BUSINESS

Ms. Porter stated that Designing Dedham 2030 Master Plan will hold a virtual open house regarding Economic Development and Transportation on December 7, 2020 at 7:00 p.m. on Zoom.

7. NEXT MEETING

The next meeting of the Planning Board was scheduled for December 9, 2020 at 6:30 p.m.

8. ADJOURNMENT

On a motion made by Mr. McGrail, seconded by Ms. Porter, it was resolved to adjourn the meeting at 9:47 p.m. A roll call vote was conducted. Motion carried unanimously.