



Town of Ashland

MASSACHUSETTS

MINUTES OF MEETING
ASHLAND ZONING BOARD OF APPEALS (Hybrid)
February 11, 2025, 7:00 PM
Zoom Video Conference Meeting

Minutes Approved on: February 25, 2025
Amended: March 25, 2025

1 Present: John Trefethen, Chair
2 Brian Forestal, Member
3 Daniel May, Associate Member
4 Stuart Siegel, Associate Member (Virtual)
5 Ryan Sullivan, Associate Member
6

7 Absent: Nathan Band, Member
8

9 Also present: Peter Matchak, Town Planner
10 Alvaro Esparza, Assistant Town Planner
11 Lisa Mead, Town Counsel
12

13 **Call the Meeting to Order**

14 Mr. Trefethen called the meeting to order at 7:00 PM. Mr. Trefethen announced that this meeting is
15 being recorded and broadcast live by WACA-TV and livestreamed on Facebook. Remote participation
16 is available using the Zoom Video Conferencing platform for convenience only. Any disruption with the
17 Video Conferencing Platform will result in the platform being shut down, however the meeting will
18 continue. Meetings will continue to be broadcast on WACA TV and livestreamed on Facebook.
19

20 Mr. Trefethen welcomed new ZBA Member Daniel May and looks forward to his participation going
21 forward.
22

23 **Continuance of Public Hearing – 10-60 Main Street**

24 Mr. Trefethen read the Public Hearing Notice: The Ashland Zoning Board of Appeals will hold a
25 Public Hearing to hear the petition from SLV Ashland, LLC, requesting a Comprehensive Permit per
26 M.G.L. Chapter 40B, Sections 20-23 to allow for the development of two (2) multifamily story
27 buildings for 250 apartment units, and 337 concealed podium parking spaces. The applicant also
28 proposed to restore and convert the northernmost mills 7,500 sq. ft. into commercial and retail space,
29 some of it open to the public. The property in question is located at 10-60 Main Street, Assessors
30 Map 14, Lot 128, in the Ashland Overlay Downtown District A (ADD-A) and Industrial base zoning.
31 Mr. Trefethen stated that tonight's meeting will deal with Traffic issues of the project; during the last
32 meeting, the Applicant's Traffic Consultant gave an overview of their Traffic Plan. Tonight, the
33 Town's Peer Reviewer has issued a Report and will give a presentation.
34

35 Mr. Trefethen read the list of reports and letters received from various Town agencies and
36 committees, as well as from the community. Mr. Trefethen stated that all items can be found on the
37 Planning Department webpage.

38
39 Robert Michaud, Managing Principal of MDM Transportation Consultants, explained that MDM was
40 retained as an independent peer consultant to represent the Town's interest and the potential impact
41 the project may have. Their purview is to determine whether the submitted application conform with
42 good industry practices, and ensure that any impacts are properly accounted for and that any mitigated
43 actions to support the project have been accounted for in the plans.
44

45 Mr. Michaud explained that they have issued a letter dated January 31, 2025, which documents their
46 primary findings and the review of the Applicant's submitted Traffic Report prepared by Vanasse &
47 Associates. Their purview is transportation-oriented traffic study, and transportation elements of the
48 Site Plan.
49

50 Mr. Michaud stated that the submitted application materials were prepared in a good, professional
51 standard and are thorough, however, there are a number of areas that they have requested clarification
52 on as they relate to Public Safety and future operations.
53

54 Mr. Michaud shared a PPT Presentation that overviewed six primary elements with comments:

- 55 • Driveway Sight Lines
 - 56 (Main Street Driveway)
 - 57 ○ Ideally locate driveway opposite Pleasant Street
 - 58 ○ Restrict driveway operations
 - 59 ○ Ensure landscaping complies with sight line criteria
 - 60 (Myrtle Street Driveway)
 - 61 ○ Modify sight line to reduce wall impacts
 - 62 ○ Ensure landscaping complies with site line criteria
 - 63 ○ Consider secondary access for garage

64
65 Mr. Michaud stated that for these reasons they have instructed the Applicant to take another harder
66 look at driveways.
67

- 68 • Parking
 - 69 There are 211 garage spaces proposed and 126 surface spaces; no parking analysis was
70 submitted by applicant.
 - 71 ○ Confirm parking supply is adequate
 - 72 ○ Define management protocols
 - 73 ○ Loading access and circulation
 - 74 ○ Move-in protocols
- 75
76 • Transportation Demand Management
 - 77 ○ Unbundle Parking (separate cost)
 - 78 ○ Transit Pass Subsidy
 - 79 ○ EV Parking
 - 80 ○ Preferential Parking
 - 81 ○ Dedicated TNC parking spaces
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83 • Monitoring Program (Post Occupancy)
 - 84 ○ Traffic signal review
 - 85 ○ Potential driveway modification

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- Site Plan Considerations
 - Sidewalk designs should mirror those recently built
 - Design for emergency vehicle swept path requirements
 - Evaluate delivery zones/access
 - Define location/protocols for tenant move-in
 - Myrtle Street Driveway alignment, confirm maneuverability
 - Consider secondary access for garage due to flood zone.
 - Modify wall feature at “Public Plaza” to avoid sight line impact.
 - Landscaping features to ensure compliance with sight line criteria
 - Bicycle Parking/accommodation

 - Miscellaneous comments

Mr. Michaud stated that the Applicant’s engineer is in the process of addressing some of these points:

 - Question whether Pine Hill Road intersection should have been included in the Study; at least half of the traffic from the development will use this route, representing more than a 5% change in volume at the first intersection, Pine Hill Road.
 - Seasonal factors relating to traffic volume, suggest “Sensitivity analysis”

106 Mr. May inquired as to the role signage will play as it relates to multiple entrances/exits and the variety
107 of uses that will be occurring, particularly to someone not familiar with the site; Mr. Michaud responded
108 that signage is an important part of any project and is something the applicant should consider and the
109 Board should discuss; including the refuse bin locations and hours.

110
111 Geoffrey Engler, Applicant, stated that he appreciates the thorough analysis; they are still in the process
112 of reviewing the Report and expect to have a response within two weeks.

113
114 Jeffrey Dirk, Managing Partner of Vanasse & Associates, discussed working with Mr. Michaud and said
115 that all comments will be fully addressed. Mr. Dirk stated that updated traffic counts were redone today;
116 he stated that they will factor in the 100 Chestnut Street Project’s Traffic Study after that information
117 was provided by Mr. Matchak.

118
119 Mr. Dirk stated that they are aware of the Myrtle Street driveway sight line issues; the drawings were
120 meant to show the sight line limitations for the Project Team. They will be responding to every comment;
121 their focus is going to be on safety, parking and circulation within the Project site.

122
123 Mr. Trefethen inquired, and Mr. Engler responded that the Swept Path Analysis was done by the Civil
124 Engineer, the plans were designed to ensure that Ashland’s largest firetruck can safely navigate the
125 entirety of the site. They will be subsequent Exhibits to their plans, including loading/unloading and
126 color coded parking analysis.

127
128 Public Comment:

129 Mark Dassoni, resident, discussed the parking as it relates to sections of the Zoning Code; Mr. Trefethen
130 noted that the Applicant has requested multiple waivers to the Zoning Code. Mr. Trefethen stated that
131 questions related to Civil Engineering will be discussed at a future meeting.

132

133 Doug Small, DPW Director, discussed the issue the DPW is currently dealing with is overnight parking
134 on Main Street, which has turned into a bigger issue each year. The counts for the vehicle spaces seemed
135 very low compared to the number of units.

136
137 Carolyn Bell, resident, expressed concern regarding the exit point from Myrtle Street which she believes
138 is a blind corner. She understands the need for housing, but is not convinced the traffic issues are being
139 addressed.

140
141 Joe Magnani, Select Board Member and Chair of the Roadway Traffic Safety Committee, expressed
142 concern regarding traffic, particularly people cutting through Winter Street to avoid the intersection
143 which will create a large amount of traffic redirecting through the side roads. Mr. Magnani stated that
144 this Traffic Study impacts the safety of us all.

145
146 Joan Gonfrade, resident, suggested an island be installed between the in and out areas at the Main Street
147 driveway; move the buildings back and add turning lanes on Main Street; she believes the amount of
148 parking is insufficient; she suggested adding a van to drive people to the MBTA. Ms. Gonfrade noted
149 there was no information regarding school bus stops. There should be a second access in the parking
150 garage, particularly due to the possibility of EV fires; she is unsure if there are sprinklers in the garage,
151 and whether the ladders of the new fire truck will reach the top floors. Ms. Gonfrade stated that she saw
152 the Bancroft Building SLV built in Framingham, and thinks this project is appropriate for that area. She
153 does not agree with the developer on the size and scope of what is proposed at 10-60 Main St. as she
154 believes what the applicant proposes is not appropriate for the middle of the small downtown of Ashland.

155
156 Connie Mannell, resident, expressed concern that coming out of the Myrtle Street exit and turning left
157 is tricky, that it is a blind spot. Ms. Mannell discussed the other developments that are in the pipeline
158 and inquired as to whether they have been considered in the study. Mr. Matchak discussed the status of
159 the current projects.

160
161 Margie Cassell, resident, inquired of Mr. Michaud as to whether Ashland can accommodate the number
162 of cars that will result from this development. Mr. Michaud stated that their purview is to determine if
163 the impacts of the Project were properly analyzed; they use certain standards to understand and identify
164 queues that occur and record traffic flow conditions, this data is extrapolated seven years out and
165 reanalyzed. Mr. Michaud stated that although there will be increased delays and queues, it is not a large
166 change. Mr. Michaud stated that based on the analysis techniques and criteria used, those criteria are
167 met for this Project, their belief is that adequate capacity will be available. Safety is paramount and are
168 the most important aspects.

169
170 Bob Powderly, resident, suggested saving the photo of the traffic as it is now, for future reference.

171
172 Mr. Trefethen discussed future meeting dates; he believes March 11, 2025 would be appropriate to
173 continue discussing traffic issues, as well as begin discussions on Civil Engineering. Mr. Engler agreed
174 on the date.

175
176 Mr. Matchak explained that they will not vote to approve the architect peer review consultant as
177 anticipated, this item will be tabled for now.

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179 **Vote to approve peer review consultant as follows:**
180 a. Architectural: DSK (Dewing Schmid Kearns)

181 Tabled.

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183 **Motion:** Mr. Forestal motioned and Mr. Sullivan seconded, to continue the hearing to Tuesday, March
184 11, 2025, at 7:00 PM, which passed with the following rollcall vote: 5-0-0.

185 **Vote:**

186 Mr. Trefethen: Aye

187 Mr. Forestal: Aye

188 Mr. Siegel: Aye

189 Mr. Sullivan

190 Mr. May: Aye

191

192 **Meeting Minutes: January 7, 2025**

193 **Motion:** Mr. Sullivan motioned and Mr. Forestal seconded, to approve the revised meeting minutes of
194 January 7, 2025, which passed with the following rollcall vote: 5-0-0.

195 **Vote:**

196 Mr. Trefethen: Aye

197 Mr. Forestal: Aye

198 Mr. Siegel: Aye

199 Mr. Sullivan

200 Mr. May: Aye

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202 **Staff Updates and Administrative Matters.**

203 Mr. Matchak explained there are two scheduled hearings at the next meeting; one is going to be an
204 application for 35 Nickerson Road, the other is a one lot 40B Application for Habitat for Humanity at 487
205 Main Street.

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207 **Adjournment**

208 **Motion:** Mr. Forestal motioned and Mr. Sullivan seconded, to adjourn the meeting, which passed with
209 the following vote: 5-0-0.

210 Mr. Trefethen: Aye

211 Mr. Forestal: Aye

212 Mr. Siegel: Aye

213 Mr. Sullivan: Aye

214 Mr. May: Aye

215

216 The meeting adjourned at 8:32 P.M.

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218 **Documents Presented**

219 1) 10-60 Main Street, Traffic Study/Report, Vanasse & Associates

220 2) PPT Presentation, MDM Transportation Consultants

221 3) Draft Meeting Minutes of January 7, 2025