



Town of Ashland

MASSACHUSETTS

Planning Board Meeting Minutes

Zoom Video Conferencing

Town Hall, 101 Main Street, Ashland Massachusetts 01721

March 26, 2020 – Approved at 4/23/20 meeting

1 ***Call to Order***

2 Preston Crow, Chair called the meeting to order at 7:15 pm. Joe Rubertone, Member; Dale
3 Buchanan, Member; Tricia Kendall, and Phil Williams, Member were present. Peter Matchak,
4 Town Planner, Lisa Mead, Town Counsel were also present.

5
6 Mr. Crow said that the meeting is being recorded and broadcast by WACA TV and reviewed the
7 meeting agenda. Peter Matchak announced the Zoom conference number, the meeting ID and
8 provided the conference participation instructions.

9
10 **Public Hearing - 29 & 41 Alden Street Special Permit and Site Plan Review**

11
12 Mr. Crow reopened the hearing.

13
14 Terry Morris, Attorney representing the applicant Charles Zammuto, spoke and stated that
15 the applicant and the project team including Ron Burke, Architect from Burke Design Group
16 and Rick Salvo, of Engineering Alliance were also in attendance.

17
18 Mr. Morris explained that last Thursday the project team attended a meeting with the Design
19 Review Committee (DRC), and although the committee did not have a quorum the project
20 plans were reviewed to obtain their initial feedback. The project team reviewed the site
21 changes the DRC recommended. The items included an additional handicap space at the
22 entrance, elimination of the interior walkway at the front of the building in favor of
23 additional pervious surface. At the rear they changed the fence style to compliment the
24 building, designated a snow storage area, added bicycling parking, exterior bollard lights
25 and screened the roof solar panels and mechanicals. Mr. Morris felt the committee was
26 pleased with the changes and said the project team is scheduled to reconvene with the DRC
27 next Thursday for a formal review.

28
29 Mr. Salvo provided additional information concerning the questions raised at the last board
30 meeting, including the curb cut adjacent to the abutter to ensure entrance to the access
31 easement, the elimination of the secondary walkway, and the 2,000 sq. ft of paved surface
32 area adequate for snow storage.

33
34 With the elimination of the secondary walkway, Mr. Buchanan questioned the access from
35 the handicap spaces to the building. Mr. Salvo responded that an additional accessway can
36 be included. Ms. Kendall questioned the shape of the snow storage area and whether snow
37 removal equipment could easily access the space.

38
39 Mr. Burke addressed the fourth-floor allowance and said that the building size is well
40 proportioned, taking into consideration the transition from the commercial to residential
41 architype, and if the fourth floor is eliminated the proportions would be impacted.

42
43 Ms. Kendall questioned whether a building height of no more the 35 ft., to adhere to the zoning
44 in the area, and prohibited stacked parking should be design considerations. She also
45 expressed concern regarding setting a bad precedent by allowing stacked parking to
46 accommodate more units and the parking requirements. Mr. Burke cited the Zoning Bylaw
47 Section 8.5.7. He stated that the existing building is 43 ft. and the proposed building is 42.6 ft.,
48 and explained why the setback will be increased from 30 ft. to 47 ft. He pointed out the
49 downtown district mixed-use building typology, which is similar to the proposed design. He
50 also noted that the stacked parking solution exceeds the number of required spaces and is
51 economical.

52
53 Mr. Rubertone recognized that stacked parking addresses a need. But he was also concerned
54 with setting a precedent and wished the stacked parking at 12 Pond St. was completed and
55 feedback available.

56
57 Mr. Zammuto outlined the building's amenities and the benefits they will bring to the area.
58

59 Mr. Crow opened the meeting for public comments.
60

61 Members of the public spoke including Cathy Rooney and Mark Dassoni. Concern was raised
62 regarding the large trees on the Alden St. residential lot line and the adjacent snow storage
63 area, the additional exterior handicap parking space accessibility and location, the Alden St.
64 driveway next to the access easement, and the building's topology and density.
65

66 Mr. Buchanan made a motion to continue the 29 & 41 Alden St. public hearing until April 9,
67 2020 at 7:30 pm. The motion was seconded by Mr. Rubertone with a vote of 5-0-0
68
69

70 **Public Hearing – 81 West Union Street Phase II Special Permit and Amended Site Review hearing**
71

72 Mr. Crow reopened the Site Review hearing continued from the March 12, 2020 meeting.
73 Mr. Matchak repeated the conference bridge call-in number and directions.
74

75 Attorney Peter Barbieri recapped changes that were made to address the open issues,
76 including the landscaping around the storage building. He explained that the Building 3
77 loading door was eliminated to allow the stairs to be wrapped closer to the side of the
78 building. Concerning Building 1, changes were made to the interior layout and relocation of
79 the residential units to the westside of the building, as well as the driveway access into the
80 basement and landscape screening.
81

82 There was discussion concerning the buildings' position near the residential area rather
83 than on the backside of the lot, as well as their overall fit and impact on the area. Mr.
84 Buchanan raised concern regarding the additional traffic associated with the development.
85 Mr. Barbieri responded that a traffic report was provided early on. Bill Rodenhiser said the
86 buildings' positions were selected to allow for parking in the rear and to preserve the
87 wetlands.
88

89 Mr. Crow suggested a condition to eliminate the front driveway and basement access. Mr.
90 Rodenhiser agreed to eliminate the driveway. He also consented to a redesign the free-
91 standing sign and a review of the proposed commercial business signage with the Planning
92 Board. Mr. Crow also suggested a condition to include a landscaping plan for the front of
93 Building 1 to be reviewed with the Planning Board.
94

95 Bart Lipinski, of Grady Consulting, reiterated that the site's triangular shape and the
96 wetlands pose an issue, and the increased setback will provide additional buffering from the
97 residential neighbors.
98

99 There was further discussion concerning the overall project and the applicant's inclination
100 maintain the proposed footprint. In addition, the board talked about the development's
101 mass and fit with the character of the area, the multiple uses and whether the project is
102 overly ambitious.
103

104 There was discussion about convening a subcommittee including a board member, DRC
105 member Cathy Rooney, and the Town Planner to discuss a larger scale design change to
106 address the board's concerns prior to the next board meeting. Lisa Mead, Town Counsel,
107 commented that she thought the board had clearly stated their concerns and therefore did
108 not view a subcommittee as being appropriate.
109

110 Mr. Matchak confirmed the latest plans dated 3/12/20 are available on the town website.

111
112 Mr. Crow opened the meeting for public comments.
113
114 Mark Dassoni commented on various aspects of the project's challenges, particularly the
115 wetlands and the site layout.
116
117 Cathy Rooney mentioned suggestions she offered Mr. Rodenhiser concerning buffering
118 plantings around Building 1. She also raised concern regarding the need to consider trees
119 critical root zones.
120
121 Mr. Crow requested an extension for the decision filing deadline on the Site Plan Review until
122 April 16, 2020. Mr. Barbieri agreed to submit the extension.
123
124 Mr. Buchanan made a motion to accept the continuance on the Site Plan Review deadline until
125 April 16, 2020. The motion was seconded by Mr. Williams with a vote of 5-0-0; Rubertone-aye,
126 Buchanan-aye, Kendall-aye, Williams-aye, Crow-aye.
127
128 Mr. Buchanan made a motion to continue the 81 W. Union St. public hearing until April 9, 2020
129 at 8:15 pm. The motion was seconded by Mr. Rubertone with a vote of 5-0-0; Rubertone-aye,
130 Buchanan-aye, Kendall-aye, Williams-aye, Crow-aye.
131
132

133 **Review and Approval of Minutes**

134 Mr. Rubertone made a motion to approve the minutes of February 27, 2020 as amended. The
135 motion was seconded by Mr. Buchanan with a vote of 5-0-0; Rubertone-aye, Buchanan-aye,
136 Kendall-aye, Williams-aye, Crow-aye.
137

138 **Administrative Matters: future meetings, public hearings**

139 There were none.
140
141

142 **Report from Board Members and Town Planner**

143 **Peter Matchak**

144 Mr. Matchak reminded all that the Town Hall is closed to the public due to COVID-19 social
145 distancing. He mentioned that the Town Meeting may be held as scheduled, but suggested
146 delaying the zoning articles until the fall.
147

148 Mr. Matchak also reported that the Mass American Planning Association and the MAPC are
149 holding a conference call to review legislation at the state-level regarding planning bylaws,
150 zoning and Town Meetings.
151

152 **Preston Crow**

153 Mr. Crow mentioned that the state economic stimulus bill will permit extensions. Mr.
154 Matchak offered to obtain additional information concerning the bill.
155

156 ***Adjournment***

157 Mr. Buchanan made a motion to adjourn the meeting at 10:05 pm. The motion was seconded
158 by Mr. Williams with a vote of 5-0-0; Rubertone-aye, Buchanan-aye, Kendall-aye, Williams-aye,
159 Crow-aye.
160
161
162