Call to Order

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

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

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

Mr. Crow reopened the hearing.

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

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

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

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

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

Ms. Kendall questioned whether a building height of no more the 35 ft., to adhere to the zoning in the area, and prohibited stacked parking should be design considerations. She also expressed concern regarding setting a bad precedent by allowing stacked parking to accommodate more units and the parking requirements. Mr. Burke cited the Zoning Bylaw Section 8.5.7. He stated that the existing building is 43 ft. and the proposed building is 42.6 ft., and explained why the setback will be increased from 30 ft. to 47 ft. He pointed out the downtown district mixed-use building typology, which is similar to the proposed design. He also noted that the stacked parking solution exceeds the number of required spaces and is economical.
Mr. Rubertone recognized that stacked parking addresses a need. But he was also concerned with setting a precedent and wished the stacked parking at 12 Pond St. was completed and feedback available.

Mr. Zammuto outlined the building’s amenities and the benefits they will bring to the area.

Mr. Crow opened the meeting for public comments.

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

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

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

Mr. Crow reopened the Site Review hearing continued from the March 12, 2020 meeting.

Mr. Matchak repeated the conference bridge call-in number and directions.

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

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

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

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

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

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

Mr. Matchak confirmed the latest plans dated 3/12/20 are available on the town website.
Mr. Crow opened the meeting for public comments.

Mark Dassoni commented on various aspects of the project's challenges, particularly the wetlands and the site layout.

Cathy Rooney mentioned suggestions she offered Mr. Rodenhiser concerning buffering plantings around Building 1. She also raised concern regarding the need to consider trees critical root zones.

Mr. Crow requested an extension for the decision filing deadline on the Site Plan Review until April 16, 2020. Mr. Barbieri agreed to submit the extension.

Mr. Buchanan made a motion to accept the continuance on the Site Plan Review deadline until April 16, 2020. The motion was seconded by Mr. Williams with a vote of 5-0-0; Rubertone-aye, Buchanan-aye, Kendall-aye, Williams-aye, Crow-aye.

Mr. Buchanan made a motion to continue the 81 W. Union St. public hearing until April 9, 2020 at 8:15 pm. The motion was seconded by Mr. Rubertone with a vote of 5-0-0; Rubertone-aye, Buchanan-aye, Kendall-aye, Williams-aye, Crow-aye.

**Review and Approval of Minutes**

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

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

There were none.

**Report from Board Members and Town Planner**

**Peter Matchak**

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

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

**Preston Crow**

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

**Adjournment**

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