



PLANNING BOARD MEETING

Tuesday, October 25, 2022 at 6:00 PM

Town Hall - 41 South Main Street Randolph, MA 02368

MINUTES

In accordance with Governor Baker's Order Suspending Certain Provisions of the Open Meeting Law, G. L. c. 30A, § 20, relating to the 2020 COVID 19 emergency, the Planning Board shall meet remotely to avoid group congregation.

A. Call to Order - Roll Call

Called to order by the chair at 6:06pm

PRESENT

Alexandra Alexopoulos
Tony Plizga
Nereyda Santos
Peter Taveira

ABSENT

Steve Monteiro

B. Chairperson Comments

C. Approval of Minutes

1. Minutes of 9-27-2022

Motion made by Alexopoulos, Seconded by Santos to approve the minutes as presented

Voting Yea: Alexopoulos, Plizga, Santos, Taveira

2. Minutes of 10-11-22

Motion to approve with edits as discussed made by Alexopoulos, Seconded by Taveira.

Voting Yea: Alexopoulos, Plizga, Santos, Taveira

D. Public Speaks

Resident Elizabeth Michel of Flint Locke Road posed a question about the Dow Street project. The Planning Board chair advised that the question is related to the public hearing and the resident could pose the question when that topic is before the Board.

E. Public Hearings

1. Improvement of Dow Street & Mitchell Street

The Chairman opened the hearing by asking for the legal notice to be read. The Planner read the legal notice that was placed in the Patriot Ledger on 10/7/2022 and 10/14/2022.

The Planner provided a summary of the project that is the request by the Town of Randolph to improve Dow Street, a paper street laid out and recorded at the Norfolk County Registry of Deeds. The improvement is necessary as part of the construction of a new elementary school at the former Devine School site on Old Street. The improvement of Dow Street, and a portion of Mitchell Street, will provide additional access to the school property. The project is submitted as an improvement to a paper street under the Subdivision Control Law and regulations of the Randolph Planning Board.

Plans were prepared by Nitsch Engineering as part of the project team for the new school. They meet the Subdivision Regulations for the Town of Randolph with waiver requests submitted on the applicable form. Abutter notices were sent via certified mail to those properties within 300 feet and stamped receipts are on file.

The plans have been reviewed by Randolph Fire Department relative to access by fire equipment and hydrant locations. Correspondence from Randolph Fire is included in the agenda packet.

Joshua Soares, Nitsch Engineering and Jesse Saylor, TKSP Architects on behalf of the Lyons School project team presented the project as submitted on the civil plan set. Plans were shared on screen and a review of the road layout, curbing, grading, drainage, stormwater management and lighting were discussed. The road profiles and layouts were designed to have minimal impact on abutters and not require any temporary construction easements. The project requests waivers from 5 items in the regulations - they are presented on the Planning Board's required form and discussed by Joshua Soares.

The Chairman opened to public comments which were received as follows:

Elizabeth Michel - 7 Flint Locke Road asked if the project includes opening the end of Flint Locke Road from what is currently a dead end.

The Chairman confirms that the street would be opened and will address that further after all public comments are received.

One person listed only as "Abby" raised a hand to speak multiple times. The person was unmuted and permitted to speak at each request but never actually spoke. The

Chairman closed the public comments section as no other requests to speak were made.

The Chairman referenced a letter to the Planning Board from Randolph Fire Department outlining their agreement with the plans as submitted and indicating their concern should any changes be made that would impede accessibility by emergency service vehicles. He further referenced the Board's current regulations and prohibitions on creating dead-end streets where there can be a through way created.

There were further discussions about the waivers, a clarification of terminology on the plans.

Member Taveira asked about establishing traffic controls on Dow Street such as "one way" or restricting traffic during certain hours of the day. He wondered if there would be traffic back-ups that would affect access by emergency services vehicles. It was discussed that the street can manage two way traffic and there will be multiple access points to the school so not all traffic will use Dow Street. The street will be a private way until such time as the Town Council accepts it as public - which is likely to take place shortly after construction is released by the Planning Board. Once the street is a public way, the Town Council can amend traffic rules and regulations with signage or other limitations if they deem it necessary. They may assess traffic flow for a while before coming to any decisions.

Member Alexopoulos pointed out the length of Dow Street and driveway into the school property that would handle queueing cars indicating that a backup impeding emergency response isn't likely. The project team shared the plans again as way of demonstrating this point.

Further Board comments:

Member Alexopoulos appreciates the management of drainage, has no problems with the waivers requested and is glad that the project will attempt to retain as much tree coverage for the abutters as possible.

Member Santos-Pina is glad that lighting is incorporated for safety and understands the waivers.

The Chairman reviewed each waiver requested citing the regulation section and the rationale for the request.. He also confirms that there is no taking of private property or affect.

Joshua Soares reviewed the grades and slopes and explained them further to clarify that they were designed so that there would be minimal impact on the abutting properties.

Member Taveira asked if there was any fencing being provided to abutters as part of this project. The project team indicates there is not.

The Chairman asked the Planner to review the major sections that would be included in the decision if the Planning Board approved the project. The Planner read through the standard DECISION & CONDITIONS pointing out what sections would be included and which would be edited as they relate to the terms of the project.

The Chairman asked about the proposed timeline for construction. Jesse Saylor of TKSP indicated expected completion in the fall of 2024.

Member Taveira restates his concern that the Board is not establishing traffic regulations such as one-way during certain hours and wonders if it can be incorporated in the decision. Further discussion about the Board's authority with establishing traffic regulations and the lack of knowledge of whether Dow Street will be heavily traveled. There was understanding that the traffic regulations could be established once the school is opened and functioning. Further discussion about whether speed bumps or other traffic calming devices could be incorporated and whether they are necessary given the short length of the street. The Town Council can refer any street to Public Safety for a review and recommendation.

Motion made by Plizga to approve the request of the town of Randolph, to construct a portion of the paper street known as Dow Street, and to finish the unpaid portion of Mitchell Street, (aka Mitchell Street extension) in accordance with the with forms D. And P. And the permitting drawing package dated October 4, 2022 and subject to the can aforementioned conditions by Michelle and myself , Seconded by Alexopoulos.

Voting Yea: Alexopoulos, Plizga, Santos, Taveira

The Planner advises the meeting about the appeals process before the public hearing is closed.

F. Old/Unfinished Business

G. New Business

1. ANR - Sunnyside Avenue (Holbrook/Randolph)

Planner introduced the request for lot line adjustments for a parcel that straddles the Randolph/Holbrook town line. The Board previously endorsed an ANR on this parcel that involved relocating a lot line so that land could be conveyed from one parcel to another. This revision resolves the lot lines after conveyance. It has been endorsed by the Holbrook Planning Board and now needs the Randolph Board to endorse it. The Board reviewed the ANR previously endorsed, the current request and confirmed that it does not fall under the category of a subdivision of land and could be endorsed.

Motion made by Plizga, Seconded by Alexopoulos to endorse the ANR.

Voting Yea: Alexopoulos, Plizga, Santos, Taveira

2. 19 Highland Avenue - landscape/retaining wall/roof vent

Miraj Ahmed - property owner

Chi Man - Engineer with Hardy + Man

Discussion of the retaining wall, roof line modification, landscaping, roof vent, refrigeration units and various other updates.

The Planner outlines that a variety of plan revisions for the reference items have been submitted and returned to the applicant with a series of questions for them to respond to before bringing a submission to the Board. The applicant has subsequently modified plans, responded to the questions in a document provided to the Board and provided supplemental information.

The Chairman reminds the applicant that there was a "punchlist" of items to be resolved submitted in writing in June 2021. Some items have been completed and others are to be completed at the end of the project prior to occupancy. The Chairman suggests that the new engineering firm Hardy + Man review them with the property owner to ensure compliance.

Chi - reviews the change in the roofline that was required based on the setback of a portion of the building. The change was never officially submitted to the Board so it is now on a plan for the Board.

The previous set of plans submitted to the Planner had incorrect references on the elevations. That has been remedied on the plan set included in the agenda packet for the Board to review at this meeting.

There was a prior change to stormwater management and a large square manhole structure is on site. The plans submitted for review and approval show an extension of the existing retaining wall to wrap around the raised manhole to conceal the structure. The top of the wall would be no lower than the top of the manhole cover and would be constructed of the same block used in the existing wall. Any soil covered area at the top would be seeded with grass.

The Engineer then outlined the need that the first floor commercial tenants have for refrigeration units. The property owner has a convenience store and a restaurant for tenants. The convenience store requires refrigeration units for their coolers and freezers. The plan shows the units located in front of the retaining wall along Highland Avenue within the landscaped area. The height of the units would not be higher than the retaining wall for the patio area.

The location of the transformer pad was reviewed. The plan shows landscaping at the pad site (a tree). The utility company has already installed bollards around the pad.

The proposed landscaping has been modified following discussions with the Planner as well as the introduction of a picnic table on a concrete pad as was specified on the plan set originally approved.

The project Engineer reviewed the landscaping requirements for the panhandle providing previous documentation from Conservation Commission and Planning about the species to be planted in the restoration area.

An updated set of architectural plans was submitted showing a new structure on the roof. The restaurant tenant on the first floor will need exhaust as part of their operation. There is also a new vent on the wall (Highland Avenue side) for them.

The Chairman comments about the offset at the roofline that was a result of the Board's request to set a portion of the building back so that there wasn't one continuous front. That changed the roofline peak so this change is expected.

There was a lengthy discussion about the proposed location of the roof vent necessary for the restaurant tenant on the first floor. The Board would not like the entire unit to be visible from the Highland Avenue side of the structure. The very top of the vent (the domed portion) visible above the roofline is fine but not the support structures.

Mo Ahmed (on behalf of the owner) indicates that a structural engineer reviewed the interior supports and determined that the location depicted on the plan set is the best place for installation. They have made adjustments to the roof trusses to accommodate the interior mechanisms. They're not sure there is another location that can support the unit. The Planning Board asked that they review all options to relocate the vent so that it is not visible from the Highland Avenue side of the building and bring information back to the Board. Member Taveira asks the applicant to review if there is a decorative enclosure that could surround the vent without compromising its effectiveness. That would also have to be reviewed as to compliance with zoning

The plans also depict a grill vent next to the commercial tenant (restaurant) windows on Highland Avenue. There was a lengthy discussion about relocating this vent so that it isn't easily accessible by the public or affect the outdoor patio area. The Board would like the vent to be raised and repositioned so that it is higher on the wall and even with the top of the window(s).

The Board discussed the location of the refrigeration units and compressors meant to serve the convenience store and restaurant. The concerns about location include the amount of noise they would produce as well as the visual impact despite the depiction of landscaping in front of the units along the sidewalk. They also wouldn't be shielded from view from any guests sitting at the outdoor patio. There was discussion about other potential locations on the site: west side (rear), south across the driveway next to the fence, south near the retaining wall and sign. The Board asked that the applicant review alternate locations that would remove the units away from the sidewalk and patio seating area.

The Chairman commented on the color of the vents at each residential unit - they are beige/off-white. He indicates that in the original decision when it was agreed that "trim shall be white" that it was intended that to apply to ALL exterior trim. It doesn't appear that the statement was clear and doesn't like the color of the vents; they look dirty.

The bollards have been installed around the transformer pad - there are 14 of them which seems excessive but also understand that the utility likely dictated the number and placement. The Board requests that the property owner speak with the utility about using a green paint/sleeve over the bollards instead of the bright yellow seen elsewhere.

The Chairman asked about the proposed stairs to the patio from the sidewalk on Highland Avenue. Based on the top of wall height, the size of the risers and depth of the stair tread, he questions whether the stairs will actually fit on the property without encroaching on the public right of way. The Engineer is to review the plans and site conditions to confirm that the stairs will fit and, if not, develop an alternate plan to be submitted to the Board for review.

There was a brief discussion about the proposed landscape plan. The Planner commented about moving a proposed tree because of the placement of the transformer pad and bollards.

Member Taveira is concerned with the appearance of the utility hardware on the Warren Street side of the building. It was pointed out that there will be landscaping in place to partially obscure them from view. The Planner will review the proposed plant types to ensure they will grow large (wide/high) enough to provide shielding.

Member Santos-Pina asked that the concrete pad proposed for the picnic table area be changed to turf or mulch or something that is not concrete or asphalt.

Motion made by Plizga, Seconded by Alexopoulos to approve the change in the roofline and the bollards around the transformer with a request to have them painted green as a preference. All other items are to be modified as discussed and a new set of plans presented.

Voting Yea: Alexopoulos, Plizga, Santos, Taveira

H. Staff Report

Planner outlines the request from the Norfolk County Register of Deeds to update the Randolph Planning Board signatory authority. The Board previously voted to permit a single Planning Board member signature on certain types of plans. The list needs to be updated since former member Sarah is still listed and new member Nereyda is not. The Planner will coordinate with members to obtain their signatures.

Planner advises the Board of a posting on the Town website about a first time homebuyers assistance program being offered through the state to income qualified residents.

The Board was advised that there will likely be two new subdivision requests coming forward within a few months.

The 2023 schedule should be established soon. Planner will create a draft of meeting dates and have available for the Board to confirm.

The Chairman would like Master Plan items on the next agenda - and on any agenda that is not heavy with project review.

I. Board Comments

J. Adjournment

Notification of Upcoming Meeting Dates: 11/15/22, 11/29/22, 12/13/22

Adjourned at 8:23pm until the next meeting on 11/15/2022