



PLAN REVIEW AUTHORITY MEETING

Thursday, November 17, 2022 at 6:00 PM

Town Hall - Chapin Hall - 41 South Main Street Randolph, MA
02368

DRAFT- MINUTES

Call to Order: Mr. Tony Plizga called the meeting of the Plan Review Authority.

Roll Call – Plan Review Authority Members Present: Councillor Richard Brewer, Councillor Katrina Huff-Larmond, Councillor Kevin O’Connell, Ms. Christine Holmes, Mr. Tony Plizga, Mr. Chris Pellitteri, and Cpt. Mike Austrino (Fran Blanchard Absent)

Opening Remarks

Mr. Plizga provided opening remarks. The Application for the Fencourt Project is dated 9/8/2022 and was accepted by the Town Clerk on September 28, 2022. In accordance with Zoning Ordinance 200-14.3 the application was referred to the PRA by the Town Council at a recent meeting. As a way of background information, the current zoning in the area that is under consideration is “Residential with a Union Crossing Overlay District.” It is our intent during the PRA review process to do a site plan and design review in detail and provide a recommendation to the Town Council with no major changes to the existing application package. The purpose of this first meeting is for the applicant to provide a presentation and then the floor will open up for general comments and questions of the PRA. At future meetings, we will do a detailed review of the entire package in accordance with 200-14.3 going section by section. The PRA is not required to entertain public comments, but it is my intent at a future meeting that we will probably open up a meeting to public comments. As a reminder, Mr. Plizga read the purpose section of the Union Crossing Transit District, directly from the Zoning Bylaws.

Mr. Plizga opened up the meeting for recommendations of the PRA Chairperson.

Councillor Kevin O’Connell made a motion to nominate Mr. Plizga as the Chairperson for the PRA, seconded by Councillor Huff-Larmond.

Roll Call Vote: 6-1-0 (Abstention: Plizga; Absent: Ms. Blanchard) Motion passes.

Mr. Plizga made a motion to nominate Councillor O’Connell as the PRA Vice-Chair, seconded by Councillor Brewer.

Roll Call Vote: 7-0-0 (Absent: Ms. Blanchard) Motion Passes.

Introductions

Chairperson Plizga requested Clerk, Natalie Oliveras, to introduce each of the PRA members and their affiliations.

Councillor Brewer is serving in his capacity as Town Councillor, Councillor Huff-Larmond is serving in her capacity as Town Councillor, Councillor O'Connell is serving in his capacity as Town Councillor, Christine Holmes is serving in her capacity as a Randolph Resident, Tony Plizga is serving in his capacity as a Planning Board member, Fran Blanchard is serving in her capacity as a Conservation Commission member, Chris Pellitteri is serving in his capacity as the DPW superintendent and Cpt. Mike Austrino is serving in his capacity as Fire Dept. Superintendent.

Mr. Plizga stated Councillor O'Connell is living in the district in which this project is located.

A. Presentations

1. Applicant Presentation

Attorney Kevin Reilly introduced himself and the applicants to the PRA. Present are himself, Mr. Mirag Ahmed who is the principal of the company: Taj Estates of Randolph II, LLC, and Mr. Man Chi who is the project manager. This project if it is approved will result in the removal of the existing single-story structure. The site was previously owned by the Town of Randolph and later became the senior center. It was purchased by his client in 2021 through a watching process. The existing structure will be replaced by three multi-level buildings which will have a total of 107 single and two-bedroom apartment units. This project was designed according to the bylaw. The bylaw was created by the town with certain allowances with the idea to promote living near a transit facility so that folks live within a reasonable proximity of public transportation to get to and from places. The project also includes a commercial space which will be the first-floor area in one of the buildings devoted to a daycare operation where folks who live in the apartment or in proximity to it would be able to use the daycare facility. As you may know, there are significant wetland areas in this plot that will not be disturbed during the construction process. We have designed this to work within the parameters of the bylaw as it was conceived by the town. Mr. Man is here to address any technical questions on the overall design. We look forward to a discussion with the PRA and the residents regarding this project.

Mr. Man, the professional engineer for the project, presented each site plan and design as provided in the application package to the PRA.

Site Plan C-1: The first sheet is the "Title Sheet" which shows the project site on Fencourt Ave off of route 139 and it is approximately 500 feet from the T-Station. The project is designed to meet all the dimensional requirements.

Site Plan C-2: The second sheet is the "Layout Plan" which shows the incoming and outgoing traffic with a crosswalk allowing for pedestrian access. The curb is wide enough for two-way traffic. The site has three buildings, with the first building having the daycare center on the first floor and the second and third floors being residential units. In the back of the building, there is a backdoor play area designated for the daycare. There is fencing around for the security of the children. The parking lot is designed to have an ample turning radius for vehicular traffic traveling through the site. For public safety purposes, there is also a driveway going around the far end of the building designed for emergency access only. The driveway is designed as grass

pave permeable pavement which is a reinforced system. A portion of the site is vegetated wetlands. We met with the Conservation Commission and got ANRAD approved. Our design is not to disturb any wetland areas with a 25-foot buffer to conserve natural resources. Bike racks have also been designed throughout the site to promote residents to use bicycles as an alternative to public transit stations. It is definitely a pedestrian-friendly facility.

Mr. Plizga: What is the plan circulation for drop off at the daycare and exiting residents? Mr. Chi: We created a one-way in, one-way out access so people dropping off at the daycare would circulate around the island and exit. Mr. Plizga: So I would just like to point out that the exit is the same exit for the rest of the residents. Mr. Chi: Correct.

Site Plan C-3: We will generally follow the existing contour of the site. The site is going to be a net import so we don't anticipate taking any material out except for unsuitable material that needs to be exported to another facility. We have designed the grading such that we have a surface catch basin system and all the runoff will be captured by the catch basins and then treated by the stormceptor which is a water quality unit before it is discharged into the hedge area, which is the underground infiltration area built into the ground. We do have an overflow pipe that directly discharges any runoff that exceeds the capacity of the system. There is a catchment area near the entrance, and then in the middle of the site we have an "E" shape infiltration system and then in the back area we have a couple systems that will capture the parking lot runoff. The roof runoff will be directly going into the recharge system because it is considered clean water. The emergency driveway area will be a grass paved surface so rainwater will infiltrate right into the ground.

Mr. Plizga: To PRA members: Comments or questions regarding stormwater will be addressed by the DPW Superintendent, and any additional questions should be general in nature.

Site Plan C-4: The plan consists of the project's utility plans. The project will utilize public utilities such as water and sewer services from the town system. We are planning to connect to the city water system. There is a water and sewer main on Fencourt Ave nearby we can connect to, and gas and electricity are also available.

Site Plan C-5: This sheet consists of the demolition and erosion control plan for the construction site. The erosion control will be in place with stacked filter sock installation and the construction entrance which will be a stone path to help remove dirt from the truck's tires before leaving the site.

Site Plan C-6: This plan displays the tests done on the site to confirm groundwater elevations and soil conditions. Mr. Plizga: Are there any contaminants on this site? Mr. Chi: As far as we know, there are not any red flags regarding contaminations on the site.

Site Plan C-7 and C-8: A sheet with general details describing the construction details such as types of fencing, trash enclosures, and more was previewed.

Site Plan of Land: A boundary survey of the lot was done by Borderland Engineering, Inc. A subsequent plan displays the photometric prints. All the lighting is going to be shining inwards to the site.

Site Plan A1.1, A1.2, and A1.3: These plans contain architectural drawings of the units with essential corridors. The units are very similar on each floor. There is additional parking on the side of the daycare building. Site Plan A1.4 displays a photographic view of the entrance from Fencourt Ave.

Site Plan A1.5: This plan displays the entrance aerial view with materials to be used including black architectural roofing shingles, white PVC trim, light blue horizontal fiber cement smooth siding, pearl gray horizontal fiber cement smooth siding, and khaki brown fiber cement panels with a stone masonry texture.

Site Plan A1.6: This plan displays another aerial view of the site with visuals of the entrance and exit. Site Plans A1.7 through A1.9 display various photographic views of the site at aerial and ground level.

Site Plan A10: This plan displays the building sections.

Site Plan L-100: This plan displays the proposed landscape plan. There will be various plants throughout the site including an outdoor amenity/recreation area with picnic areas and barbeque areas for the residents to use. Along the abutting landlines, there will be a 6 ft fence to give the abutting residents privacy.

B. Summary and Closing Remarks

1. General Comments and Questions

Mr. Plizga: Note, our Conservation Commission (Con. Comm.) representative is not in attendance today. Is there a 25-foot buffer from the wetlands that has not yet been approved by the Conservation Commission? When do you plan to meet with Con. Comm? Mr. Chi: That is correct. We plan to have a concurrent filing but we would like to get some feedback from this board. It will be filed very soon. Mr. Plizga: If the 25-foot buffer is not approved, then these plans get modified significantly. If Con. Comm. changes the buffer distance then these plans would have to be revised.

Mr. Plizga: A note that is in our zoning is that there is supposed to be a dense buffer between the structures and residential property. As I see it now, on the side of Truelson Drive, you basically have a fence and one row of shrubbery so my initial thought is that even though it's only an emergency road it's really close to residential property. I'm not sure if it will work. My other comment is that people are going to try to drop off their children and probably double-park and it could back up residents. Lastly, there doesn't seem to be a system of sidewalks. On the left side of the plan, there is literally no sidewalk down the entrance road at all.

Councillor Huff-Larmond: Everyone was curious to know what type of business would go here and I appreciate the daycare but the drop-off and pick up situation could get mixed up with the residents and create traffic. Is the recreation space a picnic area with barbeques? Mr. Chi: Yes, it is. Is the daycare the only business? How many exits are there? Are there any trails? Mr. Chi: There is only one business which is the daycare center. There are no internal trails. There is only one exit/entrance for main use going onto Fencourt Ave.

Mr. Plizga: The emergency access area, there shouldn't be any cars on that. Will it be gated? Mr. Chi: It's just an open lawn area but we can add the gates.

Mr. Plizga: You're planning to put a daycare there but it could be anything, correct? Attorney Reilly: Theoretically it could be anything. I know the applicants already have a similar setup at another site and it's worked nicely for them so hopefully, it could be repeated here.

Councillor O'Connell: How many classrooms is the daycare going to hold or how many students will it have? Attorney Reilly: The max number of children allowed would be 20

students based on square footage. Mr. Plizga: Would it be staggered hours? Mr. Ahmed: It would be staggered depending on when parents drop off the kids. Councillor O'Connell: What kind of buffers do you plan on putting between the outdoor play area and the resident? It seems like it's pretty close to the fence line and it can get loud. The residents are probably used to a quiet neighborhood right now and I'm concerned about that. I am also concerned about the dumpster which seems pretty close to the property line also. Can you further explain the grass for the emergency route area? Mr. Chi: We have the flexibility of relocating the dumpster to a different location if that's a concern. We can speak to the vendor to come up with some ideas to address the issue regarding a sound buffer in the outdoor play area. The grass paved area is a similar system typically used in stadiums or sports venues. It is engineered turf. The purpose of this grass is so that when a truck or emergency vehicle drives over it, the HDP grit will support the vehicle and the ground can sustain the weight. Plowing will also not be a problem. This system has been installed in an elderly facility that required an emergency route and it's been working well.

Mr. Plizga: The number of proposed parking spaces is slightly less than required by the written bylaw however the bylaw does allow some flexibility for times of operation so that's a separate discussion but my concern is that the emergency route area contains no place to move snow to the side. I also don't see snow storage areas anywhere. Since you're already on the short side of parking, what are your thoughts on that? Mr. Chi: We do have a landscaping area planned for snow storage. In general, the snow will be pushed to the edge of the landscaped area. In the event there is excessive snow, there will be a contractor to remove snow off-site for disposal.

Councillor Brewer: Is there an affordable piece to these units? Attorney Reilly: As of right now, there is not. Councillor Brewer: Isn't there also a 50-foot no-touch by Con. Comm? Is the wetland flat? Mr. Plizga: We're discussing things on the assumption that the 25-foot buffer is going to be sufficient and this is a significantly larger wetland. Mr. Chi: Yes, the wetland is flat.

Cpt. Mike Austrino: I am a little familiar with the grass-paved surface system but we would need to do some calculations based on the equipment that would be going back there. I also don't see any of the apparatus turning radius on the plans which is typically given out in the beginning of the application process. If you didn't receive that, I can give it to you so it can be added. Lastly, access to the rear of the daycare- is it possible to get some emergency access back there with a gate on Castleton Avenue? The sidewalks exiting the property are limited to one side of the property so if you're in the far back building adjacent to Truelson, there's really no way to get to the daycare building to get onto the street.

Mr. Plizga: Is emergency access required behind structure abutting Truelson Drive? If they didn't have it, would you object? Cpt. Austrino: Not necessarily, we would have to really go through the building plans. There are properties in town where we don't have access to the rear of the building but with new construction, if we have the ability to include that then we definitely want to try. Attorney Reilly: That is certainly a discussion we can have. I think the intention with the surface that's being used is to keep a natural look but also allow access.

DPW Superintendent Pellitteri: A peer review task order was put together for the drainage report so that's ready to go. Looking at the water main, we would like to see that looped through Fencourt back onto Union Street. Right now, we're just extending a dead-end and by doing this will keep the water quality cleaner. With regard to the layout of the sewer in proximity to the drainage, we'll have to take a look at that for separation. There are also a couple of 90-degree bends in the water mains and we'll probably want to see a couple of 45-degree bends to help reduce the friction loss in the water.

Mr. Plizga: At the next meeting, we'll go through Zoning Ordinance 200-14.3 section by section to review everything in detail. Something to think about and discuss further is the front plane of the buildings. There is one plane which are the same so for example you can stagger the units so it's not 300 feet of one plane.

There were no further questions or comments of the PRA members.

Mr. Plizga: The application meets a majority of the requirements listed in Zoning Ordinance 200-14.3, however there is a requirement describing a village style atmosphere which is a system of roads, with smaller parking areas scattered throughout the lot, common sitting areas, includes a clustering of housing that is a neighborhood atmosphere with open space. When I first looked at these drawings, I saw two apartment buildings and a mixed-use building with a big parking lot in front. I didn't see a village. I will leave that with the PRA members and it's something we may want to bring up at the next meeting because even if the applicant were to meet every other concern we listed, this is still not a village-style development.

Attorney Reilly: The site was developed with the bylaw in mind. The site does have its limitations, specifically the lack of frontage (street) and the presence of the wetlands changes the dynamics, but certainly, your point is heard.

2. Next Meeting

The consensus of the PRA is to request that the applicant goes to the Conservation Commission before scheduling the next meeting. The applicant will reach out after they have been able to go before the Conservation Commission.

Attorney Reilly: I appreciate the opportunity to listen to everyone's comments and they will certainly be taken into account.

Mr. Plizga: One last thing to note: This is the package that the Town Council sent to us so this is the package we review. We can do minor changes, but any significant changes would have to go back to the Town Council for resubmittal.

C. Adjournment

Motion to adjourn was made by Councillor O'Connell, seconded by Cpt. Austrino.
Roll Call Vote: 6-0-0 (Holmes and Blanchard Absent)

The meeting was adjourned at 7:25 PM.