

PLANNING BOARD

DATE: October 22, 2015
TIME: 7:00 P.M.
FOR: Regular Meeting
PLACE: Large Meeting Room
PRESENT: Jonathan Hankin, Chairman; Suzanne Fowle; Brandee Nelson; Malcolm Fick
Jeremy Higa, Associate Member
Chris Rembold, Town Planner

Mr. Hankin called the meeting to order at 7:00 P.M.

FORM A'S:

Patrick McColgan from Taconic Land Surveyors was present with a Form A application on behalf of Martha Klay, 30 Gilmore Avenue, for a perimeter survey to resolve a boundary line issue with the abutting property of Todd Morrelli, 115 Cottage Street.

Ms. Fowle made a motion to approve the Form A, Ms. Nelson seconded, all in favor.

MINUTES: OCTOBER 8, 2015

The Board postponed approval of the minutes from the October 8, 2015 meeting.

SITE PLAN REVIEW: 79 BRIDGE STREET, LLC

Present for 79 Bridge Street LLC Attorney Edward McCormick; Attorney Kathleen McCormick; Engineer Jim Scalise; Architect Michael McKeown; Traffic Engineer Jon Dietrich; Landscape Architect Craig Okerstrom Lang; Dave Carpenter and applicant Vijay Mahida.

Mr. McCormick said there are some technical changes as a result of comments made at the last meeting.

Mr. Hankin said he will allow the comments but he wanted to address some items that need to be shown on the plans prior to the applicant's presentation. His comments are as follows:

Existing buildings:

- Footprint area for the three sections
- Total footprint
- Total square footage

Proposed building:

- Footprint area for the three sections
- Total footprint
- Total square footage
- Some very basic dimensions-
- If it is being moved off the existing footprint, how far?
- Set backs from the property line for things that are close:
 - Retaining walls
 - Transformer/generator enclosure

FIRST FLOOR PLAN

- Should loading door be a double door? There is a double door into the public spaces.
- Should the trash enclosure be flipped? The dumpster pick up, now takes place in the patron parking area as opposed to the service area. **Mr. McKeown said the radius for the trash trucks is necessary that is the reason for locating the dumpster where it is. He said he could think about making a change.**
- Is 22' access to service, adequate for parking spaces? Should these be compacts?
- The handicap entrance to the banquet hall is an exit door, that enters into a rated stairwell (no decoration) and under the stair landing. There is no canopy. This also logically is the first entrance that people parking in that lot see and want to enter. Adjust handicap spaces toward front entrance. Some gesture with landscaping to draw people to the front entrance. Shouldn't just be signage.
- The west side walk that wraps around to the north side of the conference wing, is that for egress or is there an intentional connection to Bryant, perhaps a back door to the conference space?
- The entrance to the pool/exercise area is a bit labyrinthine. It also puts people in their bathing suits & robes potentially in the lobby area to get the elevator.
- Doors to the restaurant area are not handicap accessible and need to swing out for egress.
- Is this a fireplace shown between restaurant and lobby area? Probably gas fired? Where does it vent?
- Major window on the east elevation is into the banquet coat closet.
- What is fencing between mews and Bryant? What are grades between the two properties? **Mr. Scalise said the fence is existing we are not proposing a fence. Mr. Mckeown said the west side of the pool wing will have a fabric on the side of the building for plants to grow. He said he is not aware of a fence. Mr. Scalise said the wall is approximately 2 feet high.**
- Concierge is misspelled.
- A north arrow on Architectural Plans would be helpful.

SECOND FLOOR PLAN

- Will there be access to the roof deck above the porte cochere?
- Consider adding a two-story porch to the center piece of the building to scale down the massing. Provide access to the porch. Reinforce connection to the street and pedestrians.

THIRD FLOOR PLAN

- ADA King Room is furthest from elevator. Is this a good idea?
- Will there be access to the roof deck above the conference entrance? Could be positive in terms of linking hotel to the street. **Mr. McKeown said there is no intention of allowing public access to any roof area.**

Mr. Hankin concluded reading his list of questions/comments. Mr. Scalise presented updated information dated 10/22/15 from the SK Design Group.

Mr. Scalise said the driveway entrance was shifted slightly to the east. Brick pavers will be incorporated into the driveway to direct people to the rear of the property for check in. A sidewalk has been added all the way around.

Mr. Hankin asked about saving the oak tree on the corner of the east driveway at the entrance.

Mr. Scalise said the tree would be removed. He said the Conservation Commission looked at the tree as well. The tree is within the pavement of the new driveway. It was agreed that it would have to be taken down.

Ms. Nelson said she agreed with Mr. Hankin that the driveway should be moved to the west so as not to impact the tree. She said mature trees are important to Great Barrington.

Ms. Scalise said he understands the importance of the tree.

Mr. Scalise said there are 95 parking spaces required for the project. There are 109 spaces proposed. He said one space was added near the building for more accessibility. He said River Walk will have parking on the northwesterly side of the parking lot near their shed. There will be a curved wall in that area of the parking lot as well.

Ms. Fowle asked if the fence would cross the rain garden.

Mr. Scalise said a "structural" garden will be installed. It will be a structure with an open bottom. Cars will be able to drive around the garden. The soil would need to be replaced over time. Mr. Scalise said he is working with the River Walk botanist who will help develop the plant list. He said we will be very careful to not contribute to the invasives. He said he would prefer to not be specific about the plants as there will be others having input.

Mr. Fick said there are 95 parking spaces total with 22 dedicated to conference component. He asked if 82 parking spaces are enough for 95 rooms.

Mr. Scalise said he would expect there to be enough.

Mr. Carpenter said valet parking will be offered.

Mr. Hankin asked if the existing guardrail along the River Walk is a benefit.

Mr. Scalise said the guardrail belongs to River Walk and creates a clear line between the two uses. The guardrail will remain and we will plant along our side.

Mr. Hankin said it seems that more opportunity for planting would be available if the guardrail were removed.

Mr. Okerstrom-Lang said the tree plantings along Bridge Street would include Aristocrat Pears. Proposed for School Street is the Accolade Cherry. The Cherry is an urban friendly tree. It is a flowering tree reaching 25-30 feet in height. It does well in a planter type environment.

Mr. Hankin said a variance might be required for the retaining wall if it is over 6 feet high within 10' of the property line.

Mr. Scalise said he would make sure the wall is not over 6 feet.

Mr. Okerstrom-Lang said ornamental grass would be planted under the cherry trees on the School Street side.

Mr. Hankin said as lovely as ornamental grass is it dies in the winter. It might be better to use a railing like what was used on the Iredale property.

Mr. Scalise said they would be agreeable to that suggestion.

Mr. Okerstrom-Lang said he consulted with Tom Zetterstrom from Elm Watch about trees in the west parking lot. Under consideration is a classic Oak that would tolerate salt. A Carolina Silver Bell is being considered in front of the terrace. It would grow to 30-40 feet. A type of Dogwood is being considered for the south side between this and the Iredale property. The four season interest of the trees is part of the reason they are being considered.

Mr. Okerstrom-Lang said a perennial garden would be planted along the front porch.

Mr. Hankin asked if the entrance in the front would be accessible.

Mr. McCormick said yes. A handicap ramp would be installed at the west end of the porch to allow access. The ramp will look like a continuation of the porch.

Ms. Fowle asked what the surface of the terrace would be.

Mr. Scalise said a porous paver would be used with some stone.

Mr. Hankin said it seems counter intuitive to present a grand ceremonial entrance that can't be accessed from the street.

Mr. Scalise said it will be looked at. He said the goal is to build a ramp into the porch as a way to balance it and not detract from it.

Ms. Nelson said the porch has character potential. It would be good to direct handicapped individuals to access the sidewalk from the conference center.

Mr. Scalise said that is a good idea. We would need to create a shortcut to cut across the grass.

Mr. Scalise said yes.

Mr. Scalise said the lighting plan has changed slightly, bollard lights are now proposed along the porch. There will be flush lighting on the building facing east. Lights along the walkways and driveway will be downward directed.

Mr. Okerstrom-Lang said the lighting plan meets the dark sky initiatives. The light on Church Street at the entrance hits the curb but the light will be low and meet the guidelines.

Mr. Hankin said there is a tree near the 12 foot high light pole. He said the photometric plan is probably not accurate with the tree there.

Mr. Rembold said there is spill shown onto School Street from the parking lot standards.
Mr. Okerstrom-Lang said the wash from the light can be cut down.

Mr. Scalise said cut off shield will be used.

Ms. Nelson asked that the type of light be listed along with the BUG rating. She said we want to minimize the back lighting, up lighting and glare (BUG).

Mr. Scalise went through the storm water plan for the project. He said the parking lot will drain to the low point at the east corner. A puddle would be created. A slightly larger drain will be used to help the parking lot drain faster. Originally a 2x2 drain was proposed. A 3x3 with a 9 square foot grade area will be used. Both grates would work in a 100 year storm but the larger size will drain the lot faster.

Mr. Scalise said a stormceptor will be installed to catch and remove 77% of the sediment. It is a highly polished system that cleans the water. We have a total of 1.6 inches managed; goal was to meet the 1.0 inch standard.

Mr. Hankin said there is an approximate RAO boundary.

Mr. Scalise said the RAO, Response Action Outcome, is the limit of contamination from a spill that has been remediated. It is expected there is no significant level of risk for this area. We mark it to alert the contractor of the existence of the boundary. If the contractor runs into materials within the boundary it will be addressed and removed.

Mr. Fick asked what the goal of the Stormceptor is.

Mr. Scalise said it deals with the flow rate of storm water. It cleans the first inch of water during a storm. The first inch is where the most contamination is. The next 9 inches of storm water would be clean. The Stormceptor and grates can handle 7 inches of rain before maxing out.

Mr. Rembold asked about the tree islands.

Mr. McKeown said hardy plank will be used. It will be broken up reusing the dolomite base. The top of the main gable will be similar to the main exterior but it will be a slightly different color and texture.

Ms. Nelson asked how much input the landowner has in the exterior plan.

Mr. McKeown said the plan is a collaborative effort with the landowner.

Ms. Nelson asked if brick will be permitted on the exterior of the building.

Mr. McCormick said there will be no exterior brick.

Ms. Nelson asked if there would be any shakes on the building.

Mr. McKeown said we have not made all the decisions but there will be a variation in materials to break up the massing.

Ms. Nelson asked if there are third party hotel design guidelines coming into play. She asked if there are multiple layers of review.

Mr. McKeown said yes. When the plans have been approved they will have to be submitted for hotel review.

Mr. Hankin said the hotel will not be branded.

Mr. Mahida said no. It will be The Berkshire.

Mr. Rembold asked if there will be any reuse of the brick.

Mr. McCormick said some brick may be used in the library.

Mr. Carpenter said the right side of the lobby area is still being configured.

Mr. Hankin asked if any material from the chimneys would be reused.

Mr. McKeown said it could be used.

Mr. Hankin asked if the chimneys go all the way through the building, they do not show up on the plans.

Mr. Scalise said the chimney will rest on the roof. He said there is no historical concern for them to go through the building.

McKeown said fireplaces may be built. The chimneys would not be used for exhaust.

Mr. Fick explained that the Board cannot say no to the Site Plan Review. We can put binding conditions on the plan. It is up to the Selectboard to decide on whether or not the special permit should be granted.

Ms. Fowle read the Site Plan Review criteria.

Mr. Hankin suggested that some area associated with the river front be incorporated in the plan. He said outdoor seating or some area to focus on the river. He said this would be a benefit to the Town.

Mr. Hankin said he has not seen the required 20% open space.

Mr. Scalise said there are open space calculations. The project exceeds the 20% requirement.

Mr. Hankin said all the construction accesses should be stabilized. He said there is a lot of material proposed to be removed from the west parking lot.

Mr. Hankin said he did not see a designation of an exit out of the west driveway.

Mr. Scalise said he can designate all the exits and entrances for the property.

Mr. Hankin said he would like to see the designations.

Mr. Scalise said typically directional signs are not a topic discussion. He said he would take it under advisement.

Mr. Hankin asked if there will be grasses used on the top and bottom of the wall.

Mr. Okerstrom-Lang said no. He said he would like to use vines.

Mr. Scalise said the top of the wall would have soil so it can be used as a planter.

Mr. Hankin said he is not in favor of tree selection along Bridge Street. He said he does not want to see a mono culture. It would be also nice to emphasize the entrances more.

Ms. Nelson said she would like to see the landscaping plan when it has been signed off by everyone, including River Walk and the Conservation Commission.

Mr. Rembold said we can leave some flexibility in the approval.

Ms. McCormick said an expert will be hired to go over the plans. It will take a while to complete. She asked for a condition with flexibility for the plants.

Mr. Rembold said the Site Plan Review is to be completed by November 22.

Ms. McCormick said we are working with River Walk. We have asked for a meeting.

Mr. Fick suggested going through the list to see if there is additional information needed.

Ms. Fowle read through the Site Plan Review.

Mr. Hankin said he would like to have the cut and fill minimized.

Ms. Nelson said it would be good to save the Oak Tree on the corner of the east driveway.

Mr. Okerstrom-Lang said he had a discussion with the Tree Committee, the tree can't be saved.

Mr. Scalise said he would do his best to save the tree.

Ms. Nelson said she is happy that 1.6 inches of the runoff is being handled.

Addressing the entering and exiting of the site.

Mr. Fick said he would discourage the traffic from exiting onto Church Street. Ms. Nelson agreed.

Mr. Carpenter said the goal is for people to exit onto Bridge Street.

Ms. Fowle said she has concerns about the driveway to the parking lot being so close to the River Walk.

Mr. Scalise said we have to have access around the building for fire truck accessibility.

Ms. Fowle said she is not clear how the clients would go from the hotel to the River Walk.

Ms. McCormick said we will address ways to access River Walk. It is still being discussed.

Mr. Hankin asked if bicycles had been considered for employees who want to ride their bikes to work and clients who might want to ride bikes in Town. It might be nice to have bike racks available or possibly bikes available for clients to use.

Ms. Nelson said she does not see an issue with obstruction of public views.

Ms. Nelson said trees along Church Street will help with screening of the parking lot.

Mr. Rembold asked if the sign for River Walk will be blocked or the historic marker near Bridge Street.

Mr. Scalise said they will not be blocked.

The Board requested more information regarding lighting. There is some concern of light spilling onto School Street and Church Street.

Material submitted at the meeting:

--Updated information from SK Design Group dated 10-22-15