

PLANNING BOARD

DATE: September 22, 2016
TIME: 7:00 P.M.
PLACE: Large Meeting Room
FOR: Regular Meeting
PRESENT: Brandee Nelson, Chair; Jonathan Hankin; Jeremy Higa
Pedro Pachano, Associate Member
Chris Rembold, Town Planner

Ms. Nelson called the meeting to order at 7:00 P.M.

FORM A'S:

There were no Form A's presented.

MINUTES: SEPTEMBER 7, 2016

Mr. Hankin made a motion to approve the minutes of September 7, 2016 as amended, Mr. Higa seconded, all in favor.

PUBLIC HEARING: 624 SOUTH EGREMONT ROAD SPECIAL PERMIT 860-16

Ms. Nelson elevated Mr. Pachano to a voting member. Ms. Nelson said the public hearing was being recorded. She explained to the applicant, Marcia Stamell, that the special permit would require 4 out of 5 affirmative votes to be granted. She said there were only four voting members present and offered Ms. Stamell the opportunity to postpone the public hearing until a full board would be present.

Ms. Stamell said she would go forward with the hearing at this meeting.

Ms. Nelson read the public hearing notice into the record. The notice was posted in the Berkshire Record on September 2, 2016 and September 9, 2016. Abutters and the 9 towns abutting Great Barrington were notified.

Mr. Hankin made a motion to open the public hearing, Mr. Higa seconded, all in favor. The public hearing was opened at 7:03 P.M.

The Board conducted a site visit prior to the meeting.

The application is for construction of a six foot fence within the front yard setback at 624 South Egremont Road in accordance with sections 4.2.9 and 10.4 of the Zoning Bylaws. The applicants, Marcia Stamell and Arthur Yanoff were present.

Ms. Stamell said a large Norway spruce in the front yard will be removed for safety reasons. The proposal is for the construction of a natural wood, tongue and groove fence. The fence is consistent with other fences in the neighborhood. She said the fence will be as minimal as

possible. It is being constructed to provide privacy, silence some of the traffic from a busy road and help to keep the dust from the road down.

Mr. Hankin asked how long the fence would be.

Ms. Stamell said she is requesting a 40 foot long fence but we want the shortest fence possible.

Mr. Hankin said the reason for this process is due to opaque fences in Housatonic that were being built on the property lines. The fences had no oversight and often blocked visibility for pedestrians and vehicular traffic. This permitting process was adopted to allow fences with oversight.

Ms. Nelson asked if there were any letters.

Mr. Rembold said the Highway Department did not comment. The Selectboard voted at their September 16 meeting to send a positive recommendation on the application. The Board of Health sent a letter saying there are no Board of Health issues. The Conservation Commission sent a letter stating there are no issues within their jurisdiction.

Mr. Hankin said he approached the property from Seekonk Cross Road. He said there were no sight issues from Seekonk Cross Road.

Ms. Nelson agreed.

Ms. Nelson asked if there were any comments or concerns from the Board. There were none.
Ms. Nelson asked if there were any comments or concerns from the public. There were none.

Mr. Hankin made a motion to close the public hearing, Mr. Pachano seconded, all in favor.
The public hearing was closed at 7:08 P.M.

The Board reviewed the criteria of 10.4.2., there were no issues.

Mr. Pachano made a motion to approve the special permit application for a 6' tall solid wood fence up to 40 feet in length, Mr. Hankin seconded.

Role call vote:

Mr. Higa aye

Mr. Hankin aye

Mr. Pachano aye

Ms. Nelson aye

The motion passed 4-0.

SITE PLAN REVIEW: 47 RAILROAD STREET

Applicants Ian Rasch and Sam Nickerson were present to discuss their application for a mixed use development at 47 Railroad Street. Sarah Gapinski and Michael Valenti were present from SK Design Group.

Mr. Rasch began the presentation saying the proposed mixed use development will have 5 commercial storefronts and 12 market rate apartments. The proposal fits into the Village Center Overlay District bylaw. It would create density in the downtown area. It would provide a pedestrian corridor by providing 2 new storefronts in the alley that leads from Railroad Street to Castle Street. We feel that the reuse of this site make a lot of sense.

Ms. Gapinski the building is 8500 square feet. The 4800 square feet to the north, Martin's Resturant, is not part of the application. She said there is limited parking in the back where the dumpster is currently located. There is also a drain line that belongs to the Town that runs through the back of the site. The line is 100 years old and will need to be considered during the project.

Ms. Gapinski said the project will require a special permit for work in the VCOD and mixed use as well as Site Plan Review for exterior alterations and reconstruction. The kitchen in the back will be demolished. There will be interior reconstruction to fit the uses.

Ms. Gapinski said a 2900 square foot addition will be built along the southern end. It will be close to the property line. The maximum 75% lot coverage will not be exceeded.

Mr. Hankin said there is a new manhole proposed for the storm sewer. It is very close to the retaining wall. How will it be accessed for work?

Ms. Gapinski said a special structure will be used to facilitate maintenance. Time will be spent working out the details.

Mr. Hankin said it would need to be serviced in the future.

Ms. Gapinski said yes. Access will be worked out.

Mr. Nickerson said he is working with the Town on an easement to maintain the line.

Ms. Nelson said the line can not go under the basement.

Ms. Gapinski said no.

There was discussion of parking. Ms. Gapinski said 11 parking spaces are required for the residential use. Arrangements have been made to lease 12 parking spaces in the Taconic parking lot. The lease will be for 10 years.

Mr. Hankin asked where will the current users, the residents of the Barrington House apartments park?

Mr. Rasch said he made the arrangements with Richard Stanley. He said he does not know about parking for the Barrington House.

Mr. Hankin asked how much of the Taconic lot is Town owned.

Mr. Rembold said the Town owns most of the lot. There is small portion that is privately owned. He said there is also a small unpaved portion of parking that is privately owned on Railroad Street.

Ms. Gapinski said the area is pedestrian friendly. The parking spaces are approximately 225 feet from the building. In addition there should be less traffic demands than that of the restaurant use.

Ms. Nelson asked what the principal point of egress will be for the building? She asked if there will be a loading zone for deliveries?

Ms. Gapinski said the main lobby will be the primary entrance for the residential units. There will be stairs in the alley for another egress for the residential units. The stairs will be maintained in the winter. Deliveries can be made to the main lobby for the residential units and to the main doors of the retail spaces.

Mr. Rasch said every store has its own entrance, bathrooms and utilities. They are self contained.

Mr. Valenti said only the residential units will have use of the elevator.

Ms. Nelson said people who have been shopping will most likely double park in front of the building to unload.

Mr. Rasch said the brick area in front of the building is within the Town right of way. We can work something out.

Ms. Nelson asked about other deliveries, such as UPS.

Ms. Gapinski said there is a 12 foot wide area access area from the former fire house. There are some restrictions in place but deliveries can be made through that area.

Mr. Rasch said there will be a small dumpster that will require a bi-weekly pick up from a commercial hauler. UPS will park along the front for the stores if necessary.

Ms. Nelson said there needs to be a principal point of access for the loading zone.

Ms. Gapinski said the main lobby and the store fronts will be the main point for the loading zone.

Ms. Nelson asked about the trash pick up.

Mr. Rasch said the truck will back down the alley from Castle Street.

Ms. Nelson asked if the truck will exit the alley onto Railroad Street.

Mr. Rasch said bollards will be in place on our end of the alley so the truck will exit onto Castle Street. It is our intention to make the alley a pedestrian way. We plan to discourage vehicular traffic. The sight line onto Railroad Street is terrible so it is best to shut it off.

Ms. Nelson asked about emergency services.

Mr. Rasch said there will be access from both Railroad Street and Castle Street. The alley will not be open.

Ms. Gapinski went through the drainage plan as presented in the submission. Upgrades will be made to the sewer connection. The gas connection will be upgraded if it is necessary. Underground utilities are preferred and it is anticipated that improvements will be made.

Ms. Nelson asked what the surface treatment will be in the alley.

Mr. Rasch said he would like to have brick pavers like in front of the building. The goal will be to have the fire house project be consistent with our plans. There are discussions regarding the coordination of efforts.

Mr. Pachano asked if the paving would be done anyway.

Mr. Rasch said yes regardless of what happens with the discussions. If the owner of the fire house does not want to coordinate with us we will come up with something interesting to pull people in.

Ms. Nelson suggested using planters to screen the utility area from your space. They are very different.

Mr. Rasch said yes we will define our area if there is not a coordinated effort.

Mr. Hankin asked how the snow will be removed from the alley.

Mr. Rasch said it will be plowed and removed as necessary.

Mr. Rembold asked if there will be some special provisions to protect other buildings during construction.

Mr. Rasch said a man lift will be used to install the new windows on the 2nd and 3rd floor. He said there will not be major reconstruction. There is plenty of space with the easement but we will be as careful as possible.

Mr. Hankin asked about contractor parking.

Mr. Rasch said he is talking with Dale Culleton about leasing space in his parking off of Castle Hill for overflow parking.

Ms. Nelson asked when the construction will begin.

Mr. Rasch said he hopes to be able to start in November before the snow. He would like to get a portion of the foundation in the back in and to take the second floor roof off. The project is anticipated to take 12 months.

Mr. Valenti said the addition will be the last part of the project.

Ms. Nelson asked if the utility upgrade would be done this year.

Mr. Rasch said a temporary service will be put in place soon. The permanent service will go in next spring.

Ms. Nelson asked if there will be a restaurant use.

Mr. Valenti said there will be a mixed use. At this point we don't know what the uses will be.

Ms. Nelson asked if there will be grease traps installed if a restaurant use goes in.

Mr. Rasch said yes.

There was discussion of the floor plans as per the submission. There will be a full basement that will provide storage for each tenant. There will be a mechanical space, three retail spaces on Railroad Street and 2 retail spaces in the alley. There will be two stories with residential rental space and a roof terrace.

The new building will not be brick but Cor-Ten Steel that will blend with the existing brick exterior. There will be solar shades on the residential units.

Ms. Nelson asked if the building is listed on the Historic Register.

Mr. Valenti said yes on the State Registry not the local.

Ms. Nelson asked if they would be seeking a Historic Tax credit.

Mr. Rasch said no. He said historic approval will not be necessary as we are not applying for public funding.

There was discussion of the retaining wall that is partially owned by the Railroad. The applicant said it will not be rebuilt but possibly temporarily shored up during the construction process.

Ms. Nelson said she thinks that infill is great. She asked if there is any other information on exterior lighting.

Mr. Valenti said the lighting will comply with code.

Ms. Nelson asked if the lighting will be only wall mounted.

Mr. Rasch said there will be some bollard lighting as well.

Mr. Pachano asked if the distance from the parking area to the most remote apartment is within commonly accepted standards.

Mr. Valenti said yes.

Mr. Hankin asked about the decision to rent instead of selling.

Mr. Rasch said we are long term investors. We want to be part of Great Barrington for the long term. Flipping units and selling them does not keep us involved. We like to work on projects that will be for the long term.

Ms. Nelson asked about the number of bedrooms for the units.

Mr. Rasch said there are 12 units. Ten of the units will be one bedroom apartments. Two of the units will have 2 bedrooms. He said the apartments will rent at market rate. 100 Bridge Street is targeting the affordable units. We feel that diversity in housing stock is important. There are not many high end units that are not condominiums. We are targeting professional people and retired people who want an all inclusive living arrangement.

Mr. Hankin said he wanted it on the record that as he noted at the Design Advisory Committee meeting, he was not happy about the exterior stairs. He said two of the units are compromised by having the stairs run by them.

Ms. Nelson asked about the dumpster enclosure.

Mr. Rasch said the idea is for the enclosure to be a green wall made of out lattice with plants growing up it.

Ms. Nelson asked what the surface treatment will be on the south side of the building where it wraps to the west.

Mr. Rasch said the area will be either paved or pavers will be put in. The plan is for a product that will be permeable. Ideally there will be continuous pavers from the alley. We can control to our property line. There is a grade change that will have to be looked at. Goal is to attract pedestrians.

Ms. Nelson said she would like to see them lock into a minimum standard and to commit to the green wall for the dumpster enclosure.

Mr. Rasch said he would agree to that.

Mr. Valenti said they prefer to screen the dumpster without using a chain link fence. The preference is to use planters. The dumpster will not be seen.

Eileen Mooney asked what kinds of stores are planned for the spaces.

Mr. Rasch said there has been discussion with area tenants who are looking for more efficient space. There has been mixed interest. All of the spaces have separate utilities and separate bathrooms.

A member of the audience asked if construction will be limited to Monday-Friday.

Mr. Rasch said yes.

A member of the audience said the last time paving was done on Railroad Street it pitched the runoff toward 39 Railroad Street building. The request was consideration of this issue when repaving is done for this project.

Ms. Nelson asked if the roof top drainage would be tied into the storm drains.

Ms. Gapinski said she didn't know. She will look into it.

There was discussion of an existing issue with the sewer line. Ms. Gapinski said the Waste Water Treatment Plant superintendent has requested a new service connection. We will comply with that request.

Sharon Lewis, a member of the audience said there is water runoff from the hill area that runs into the basement (of Martin's Restaurant).

Ms. Nelson said this applicant has no control over that property. She asked the applicant to manage the run off on their property so as not to add to the existing condition.

Mr. Pachano read through the Site Plan Review criteria.

Ms. Nelson asked if a bike rack would be provided.

Mr. Rasch said yes in the space between the building and the retaining wall. He said the rack would be for tenant and employee use.

Mr. Hankin said he thinks pedestrian safety in the alley should be addressed.

Mr. Rasch said bollards will be placed at the alley entrance from Railroad Street.

The Board said a solid dumpster enclosure must be installed to minimize visual intrusion.

There was discussion of lighting on adjacent property. Mr. Rasch said all of the lighting will be LED and downward directed. The goal is to get an Energy Star rating for efficiency. At this time there are no specs available.

The tenant has will have a ten year lease for parking requirements.

Mr. Rembold asked that the applicant revise the plans to reflect the comments. He said the Selectboard might have some conditions that could conflict with Site Plan approval. He recommended leaving the discussion open to request more details and close some loops. He suggested getting any conditions put on the special permit and approving the Site Plan Review later.

Ms. Nelson said she would like to see the comments added to the plan. She said she would also like to have Mr. Fick's input. She said it seems to meet the VCOD requirements. She said there might be some historical content to consider.

Mr. Hankin said he has no issue with the Cor-Ten Steel. He said this is a fabulous reuse of the property. We want to encourage the use.

Ms. Nelson said she would like to have revised plans for the next meeting.

Mr. Rembold said the public hearing for the special permit is on October 17. He asked that the applicant provide a request for an extension of the decision until the Planning Board's meeting of October 27.

Mr. Rasch said he is trying to get work done this season.

Mr. Rembold said the special permit will still be in the appeal period. Getting SPR approval at the October 27 meeting will not delay the process.

Ms. Gapinski said she would like to have comments from Mr. Fick and Mr. Musgrove prior to the public hearing.

The applicant will return to the next meeting scheduled for October 13.

Mr. Rembold said the Board needs to make a recommendation to the Selectboard on the waiver for on-site parking and make a recommendation on the mixed use.

Ms. Nelson said there is no on-site parking available. She said the applicant has met his parking requirement by leasing 12 spaces. They are required to provide 11 spaces.

There was some discussion of the parking behind the building. There are 5 angled spaces that are barely adequate. The spaces are not required to be maintained.

Mr. Pachano made a motion that the request for a waiver from the on-site parking requirement is reasonable because 12 spaces are provided within walking distance of the site. The 12 spaces are not likely to displace occupants of those spaces, Mr. Higa seconded, all in favor.

Mr. Hankin made a motion to send a favorable recommendation to the Selectboard under 9.6, mixed use, for the development, Mr. Higa seconded, all in favor.

TOWN PLANNER'S REPORT:

Mr. Rembold said the Attorney General had approved the zoning passed at the Annual Town Meeting. The bylaw for the MXD needs to be filed with the DOT Aeronautics division as landing strips are not allowed in the MXD.

Mr. Rembold said he is working on a bylaw for allowing solar for agricultural land in residential zones. He is trying to schedule a joint meeting with the Agricultural Commission for the end of October.

Mr. Rembold reminded the Board they have a joint meeting with the Selectboard on Monday to discuss 40R Smart Growth. The Selectboard will be discussing the plans for Lake Mansfield at 6:00 P.M. on Monday.

Mr. Hankin said he is not crazy about the 40R zoning.

Mr. Rembold said it can be discussed on Monday.

BOARD & COMMITTEE UPDATES:

There were no updates.

CITIZEN'S SPEAK TIME:

There were no comments.

Having concluded their business, Ms. Nelson adjourned the meeting without objection at 8:59 P.M.

Sincerely,



Kimberly L. Shaw
Planning Board Secretary

Material Presented at the Meeting:

--E-mail from Mr. Rembold dated September 19, 2016 Re: Special Permit Procedures

--E-mail from Mr. Rembold dated September 19, 2016 Re: Meeting Notes