



PLANNING BOARD

Town of Ayer

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Approved 6/13/2023

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TOWN OF AYER
TOWN CLERK

Minutes of February 14, 2023 - Ayer Planning Board Meeting

Location: First Floor Meeting Room, Ayer Town Hall

Meeting was recorded and then broadcasted on APAC

Members Present: Jonathan Kranz, Chairman, Ken Diskin, Vice Chairman; Julie Murray, and Nathan King

Also Present: Mark Archambault, Town Planner

Absent: Geof Tillotson, Clerk

Chairman Kranz called the meeting of the Planning Board to order at 6:15 PM.

General Business

Approve the Agenda

At 6:15 PM Ms. Julie Murray made a motion to approve the agenda as presented. Mr. Nathan King seconded. No discussion. Unanimous vote to approve. (4-0-0)

Public Hearing, Site Plan, Special Permit and Stormwater Permit – Nasoya Foods, USA 1 New England Way

At 6:16 Mr. Ken Diskin made a motion to continue the Public Hearing for Site Plan, Special Permit and Stormwater Management Permit for Nasoya Foods, USA 1 New England Way to the next scheduled Planning Board meeting on February 28, 2023. Ms. Julie Murray seconded. No discussion. Unanimous vote to approve. (4-0-0)

Public Hearing, Site Plan Review – 14 Washington Street, Seal Harbor Companies

Present: Cal Goldsmith, Representative from GPR, Inc., and area residents

At 6:17 PM Chairman Kranz read aloud the public hearing notice for Site Plan Review for 14 Washington Street.

Mr. Mark Archambault, Town Planner, stated that the office has received the missing building elevations for the proposed project and the application is now complete and ready to accept for consideration.

At 6:19 PM Mr. Ken Diskin made a motion to open the Public Hearing for 14 Washington Street, mixed use development and accept the application and plans as complete. Mr. Nathan King seconded. No discussion. Unanimous vote to approve. (4-0-0)

The Board went over the items the Board will discuss this evening regarding the proposed project.

Mr. Archambault stated that there are a lot of items for the application that the Board needs to consider and there are still a few outstanding questions from the Town Counsel on the application that have not been answered at this time.

Mr. Cal Goldsmith, GPR, Inc. gave the Board some background on the property which is 9,400 sq. ft. lot, the existing building and paving takes up around 94% of the lot. The proposed project will remove the south addition that demolition had started on at the first of the year but had to stop due to structural issues. The proposed will be a 5,800 sq. ft. building in replacement of the 6,300 sq. ft. resulting in a 12% decrease in impervious surface. The historic building will be preserved along with the north addition; the south addition is the only item being removed and will be replaced with a new residential structure that will be set off the road. Parking will be the biggest discussion point for the project due to its location. Mr. Goldsmith went over the layout of the five residential units, two on the first floor and three on the second floor, and the commercial unit within the building. There will be six parking spaces proposed at the front of the building, with a green space in the front between the proposed spaces preserving the look of the building. There will be a reconstruction walkway and stairwell on the south side of the building, and a new walkway on the north side. The proposed parking is for one space per unit and one visitor space; they are not required to have a handicap parking space unless one is required for a tenant.

Mr. Goldsmith went over the parking requirements as stated in the Zoning Bylaw. Mr. Goldsmith stated the Zoning Bylaw mentions that if the building predates zoning, which the fire station does then the parking requirements do not need to be met as listed in the Zoning Bylaw unless the new use is more parking intensive than the previous use. Mr. Goldsmith stated that it is their argument that the fire station needed more parking for events and training days than the newly proposed residential use. If the Board does not agree, then there will be some special permits required to reduce the parking on site for the proposed project. Mr. Goldsmith stated that under the current zoning the parking requirement for the proposed would be two parking spaces per two bed-room unit, along with visitor parking. There is no requirement for commercial parking in the Downtown Form Based Code District.

Mr. Goldsmith went over some of the questions from other Town Departments, including a question from the Board of Health regarding the location of the dumpsters on the property. Mr. Goldsmith stated that there will be no dumpster on site and there are two locations for single roller trash containers.

Mr. Goldsmith went over the landscape location but does not have a landscape plan as the property owner Mr. Gallaher would like to have his landscape architect design the plan. The waiver requested for the site is for screening as it is not possible to screen the property from the abutting properties.

Mr. Goldsmith went over the drainage details of the site and stormwater design for the project stating the property has some challenges. There will be some stormwater detention on site with some stormwater flowing into the street as it does now.

Mr. Archambault asked Mr. Goldsmith to go through the elevations of the project since those have been received by the Board.

The Board reviewed the elevations for the project. Mr. Goldsmith went over the details for the Board. The Board then reviewed the floorplans for the project.

Mr. Nathan King asked about the square footage of the dwelling units.

Mr. Goldsmith stated that they are each around 800 square feet, with two units proposed on the first floor and three on the second floor.

Mr. Ken Diskin had several comments on the plan notes and addressed them with Mr. Goldsmith. Mr. Diskin said that the plans state the building footprint but the total square footage is not listed anywhere on the plans. Mr. Diskin requested the total size of the planting that will be removed if the handicapped parking is added.

Mr. Goldsmith went over the details on where the handicapped parking will go and will add a plan showing the parking.

Mr. Diskin requested that the landscaped, grassy area be raised to prohibit anyone from driving on it. Mr. Diskin also requested a review of the lighting on the building as the current historic lighting most likely does not meet current requirements. Mr. Diskin requested additional design on the gutters around the building. Mr. Diskin requested soil testing for the proposed subsurface stormwater system, and requested a report on any soil testing that is done. Mr. Diskin requested that Mr. Calvin Moore be involved in landscaping the slope to the side of the project to help create some screening.

Mr. Nathan King had a few comments on the proposed project including parking concerns, and requested a parking management plan for the property, the amount of trash containers that will be able to fit on site and allowance for space for recycling as well. Mr. King asked what the requirements for stormwater are for the site.

There was a brief discussion on Stormwater Standards and the Town's Stormwater Regulations.

Chairman Kranz opened the meeting for public input.

Charles Hanson, 18 Washington Street, expressed concern with the closeness of the building and thought it was not allowed. Mr. Hanson stated when the project was first proposed for redevelopment both additions were to be removed.

Mr. Diskin stated that with the Downtown Form Based Code, it allows for 0 setbacks.

Mr. Alan Manoian, Economic Development Director, stated that the Board should review the transects for the area as each one has different setback requirements.

The Board reviewed the Zoning requirements for the project for compliance.

Mr. Hanson expressed concern about lack of privacy with a building on the property line.

Mr. Goldsmith stated that he believes the property owner will be having discussions with the abutters regarding the setbacks and development of the property.

Mr. Dennis Curran, 51 Pleasant Street, asked about keeping the historic look of the building.

Mr. Diskin stated the construction of the building will fall under the Building Commissioner and not this Board.

Mr. Manoian stated that the building is on the historic register and the Historical Commission will review the project as well. The property owner, Mr. Gallagher, is aware of the review and restrictions on the property.

Mr. Curran expressed his concern with the parking for the apartments on the site.

Mr. Goldsmith stated that the parking concerns with the site will be addressed in the parking management plan.

The Board started to discuss the parking concerns with the site.

Mr. Diskin mentioned that the Board received a comment from Chief Johnston stating that when the property was used as a Fire Station there were never more than 4 vehicles parked in the front of the property and all others parked elsewhere. Mr. Diskin stated that the Board should disregard the argument for limited parking and just move through the special permit and waiver process for parking.

The Board had a brief discussion on the special permit and wavier process for the property.

Chairman Kranz called for a 5-minute recess at 7:30 PM

Chairman Kranz reconvened the meeting and started the discussion on the three waivers requested for the project.

Mr. Goldsmith stated that they requested a waiver for the requirement for visual impact exhibits due to the fact that the building is existing and hoped the architectural plans provided would be enough for the Board.

Mr. Archambault stated that the submission of the elevation plans and the architectural plans is fine with a waiver to Section 4.b.3.

Mr. Archambault commented on the waiver request for a full landscaping plan stating that he is not sure if the Board should waive the plan completely.

Chairman Kranz stated that he does not see a need for a full landscaping plan as there is very little planting on site but would like plans for the ADA parking, solutions for the abutter screening, and to have the owner to discuss planting the slope owned by Mr. Calvin Moore.

There was a brief discussion on the proposed waiver request and the requirements for the property.

The Board then reviewed the request for a traffic impact study.

Mr. Archambault stated that the requirement for traffic impact is more for larger projects and recommends that the Board vote on the waiver this evening.

At 7:55 PM Mr. Ken Diskin made a motion to grant the waiver request for Section 4.E.2. of the Site Plan Regulations for the traffic impact study. Ms. Julie Murray seconded. No discussion. Unanimous vote to approve. (4-0-0)

At 7:57 PM Ms. Julie Murray made a motion to continue the public hearing for the site plan review for 14 Washington Street to the next meeting. Mr. Nathan King seconded. No discussion. Unanimous vote to approve. (4-0-0)

Town Planner Update

Mr. Archambault mentioned that there is a new company moving into 1 Bishop Road and since it is a change of use it needs a Special Permit and Site Plan Review. Mr. Archambault stated that back in 2018 he brought to the Board the idea of having a minor Site Plan Review process that can be changed within the Site Plan Regulations. Mr. Archambault would like to have the Board add a minor Site Plan Review to the Regulations to help with any minor Site Plans that come before the Board.

Mr. Archambault stated that MRPC has another round of DLTA grants and wanted to bring the item to the Board's attention and may apply for a grant to help with the Board's future planning needs or infrastructure concerns.

Minutes November 9, 2022

At 8:05 PM Ms. Julie Murray made a motion to approve the minutes from the November 9, 2022 meeting as presented. Mr. Nathan King seconded. No discussion. Vote to approve. (3-1-0), Mr. Ken Diskin abstained.

Minutes December 13, 2022

At 8:07 PM Mr. Nathan King made a motion to approve the minutes from the December 13, 2022 meeting as presented. Mr. Ken Diskin seconded. No discussion. Vote to approve. (3-1), Ms. Julie Murray abstained.

Old and New Business

Chairman Kranz mentioned that he would like an update from the members on their projects for the Board that were discussed at the previous meetings.

Ms. Julie Murray stated that her idea for helping with accessibility for Board members includes an information sheet on site visits which she has begun working on. The information sheet will include start and end times and what to expect while on site.

Ms. Murray said the Master Plan working group is starting to work on the individual Town Department goals and will be meeting with each Department to discuss those goals.

Mr. Nathan King mentioned that he would like to have the Board work on Zoning and Regulations regarding housing and the train station. Mr. King mentioned that he has not had a chance to do any research at this time but will be working with Ms. Janet Providakes in regards to housing.

Chairman Kranz stated that Mr. Diskin's project for more trails and connectivity in town has been making progress and looks promising.

Approved 6/13/2023

Mr. Diskin mentioned that his other project for future planning involves housing. Mr. Diskin mentioned that he has been in contact with Ms. Providakes in creating a working group to review the Zoning Bylaws for housing changes.

Meeting Adjournment

At 8:12 PM Mr. Nathan King made a motion to adjourn.

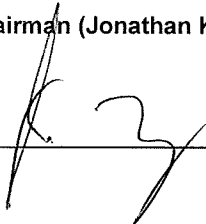
Minutes recorded and submitted by Heather Hampson, Administrative Coordinator

Planning Board Approval

6/13/23

Date

Planning Board Chairman (Jonathan Kranz)

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to be 'JK' followed by a stylized flourish, is written over a horizontal line.