

**PLANNING BOARD MEETING
MINUTES**

Held Thursday, November 10, 2022 in person

Present:

Charles Millard, Chairman; Anthony Murgo, Vice Chairman; Armand Bilotti, Secretary; Member Steve Katz; Alternate Member Michael Sousa

Also Present:

Diane Williamson, Administrative Officer/Director of Community Development; Andrew M Teitz Esq., Assistant Town Solicitor

Not Present:

Member Brian Clark; Alternate Member Richard Ruggiero

Chairman Millard called the meeting to order at 7:00pm and led the assembly in the Pledge of Allegiance.

A motion was made (Murgo/Bilotti) to accept the October meeting minutes.

In favor: Bilotti, Katz, Millard, Murgo, Sousa

Opposed: None

A motion was made (Murgo/Katz) to move the C2 and C3 agenda items ahead of C1.

In favor: Bilotti, Katz, Millard, Murgo, Sousa

Opposed: None

C2. Cortland Lane - Action on request for Release of Maintenance Guarantee

No one was present for this agenda topic.

A motion was made (Murgo/Katz) to approve the request.

In favor: Bilotti, Katz, Millard, Murgo, Sousa

Opposed: None

C3. San Francisco Lane - Action on request for Release of Performance Guarantee

Director Williamson mentioned that the two outstanding items yet to be completed are the Permanent Markers and the As-Built survey.

John Lannon, the developer, requested a bond release for the San Francisco extension. He would like to come to Director Williamson when the two outstanding items are done, and have that released too.

Chairman Millard asked how much we are holding back for that.

Director Williamson responded with \$2,000. It's the record plan, which is the plan that indicates where all the utilities are, and then the permanent markers which are the bounds.

Chairman Millard asked if Director Williamson is comfortable handling it, to which she responded Yes.

A motion was made (Bilotti/Murgo) to release the bond, with the exception of the two outstanding items which will be handled administratively.

In favor: Bilotti, Katz, Millard, Murgo, Sousa

Opposed: None

C1. Public hearing and Action on Combined Master Plan and Preliminary Review for Roger Williams University Campus Master Plan Update. Proposal to update the Master Plan as required by the Zoning Ordinance and includes a proposed new residence hall and a new student center as well as relocated surface parking spaces. Property located at One Old Ferry Road and 45 Ferry Road, Plat 164, Lots 1, 2, 5, 8, 9 and 10; Plat 163, Lots 7 and 42; Plat 167, Lot 44 and Plat 166, Lot 4. Zoned: Educational Institutional

Brian Williams, Chief of Staff at the University introduced himself and walked through the five year presentation. The focus is on the student body, and who the University will serve over the next five to 10 year window. The University is looking to stay approximately the same size in enrollment, but shifting the enrollment with a focus on graduate students, executive education, delivery types of programs, and also leveraging the Providence campus more.

Brian explained that there are a number of new construction projects, as well as renovations to existing projects, that keep the campus look and feel very consistent. The plan is to replace and upgrade rather than expand the campus footprint in Bristol. In 2016, the main five year outlook was to build a new engineering labs building, to think about the waterfront, expand the sailing program, and to think about parking.

Brian continued to explain that the key five year outlook is building a new student center, a new residence hall building, and renovation to the existing academic buildings on campus. The interiors of the buildings will be addressed, but the external facades will remain the same.

Brian referenced the map of campus, and described the residence hall and the student center being approximate to each other, which connects the North and the central parts of campus. The community center would be right in the middle physically of the campus. The new resident hall will be for approximately 350 to 400 students. Once built, an existing, original residence hall will be demolished. The plan is to keep undergraduate residential enrollment neutral, so this will not be an additive building for the campus. The student center is approximately 7500 square feet, with three floors. Currently, the mailroom and a parking lot exists here; that parking would go subsurface, so no parking is lost but it will be hidden from visibility.

Brian added that these two projects enable the University to address the conflict of baseball and softball fields. Currently they share an outfield, so the two teams cannot practice at the same time, which is a title nine issue that needs to be addressed. The softball field will be reoriented, and the baseball field will be moved closer to the parking garage on the very north end of campus.

Brian mentioned that these are the four key projects that are most substantial and significant, and then opened it up for questions.

Secretary Bilotti asked if this is a public hearing. Director Williamson responded that yes, it is a public hearing, so after the presentation it will need to be opened up to the public.

Vice Chairman Murgo asked if any of the maps show where the shell trail is located. Brian responded that the shell trail curls around by the grass fields and then along the waterfront. There have been discussions about having a clear trail marker for the community.

Vice Chairman Murgo asked if the main entrance is how to access the shell trail. Brian responded that the North entrance by the softball field and the law school is the best entrance. There are four spaces for the public. The trail is over $\frac{1}{3}$ of a mile and less than $\frac{1}{2}$ of a mile.

Alternate Member Sousa asked how many stories the new residence hall will be. Brian responded that it will be four stories, and the North residence halls will be a guideline for what it will look like. It will be consistent with that zone and will be further from the street than that building.

Alternate Member Sousa asked if the parking under the new student center will be below grade parking. Adam Gross, an architect working with the University, responded that there is a big slope there, the garage would sit into that slope.

Alternate Member Sousa asked if the number of spaces that will be displaced with the ball field will be the same number of spaces added under this building. Brian Williams responded that it will be space neutral.

Member Katz asked for confirmation that there are no additional parking spaces. Brian responded that at the end of the project, it is space neutral.

Member Katz added that since his wife works on campus, he knows that parking is an issue on campus. Brian responded that there are some plans in the future to expand parking.

Assistant Town Solicitor Teitz asked for confirmation that Member Katz' wife works on campus. Member Katz confirmed. Assistant Town Solicitor Teitz indicated that Member Katz needs to recuse himself from this topic on the agenda. Member Katz then stepped down from the podium.

Alternate Member Sousa asked for the location of the residence hall that's being demolished. Brian responded that it is Maple Hall, which is one long building with the same capacity of about 350 students. The goal for the future is to have smaller buildings in this location that open up lines of sight to the bay, and not having one very long building that blocks the view.

Alternate Member Sousa asked for confirmation that for now, the area will be restored to grass fields. Brian confirmed.

Vice Chairman Murgo asked if anything is being added to the aquaculture program. Brian responded that yes, some of the growth and changes on other parts of campus are allowing us to move some of the non-aquaculture programs out, so that we can keep expanding our aquaculture footprint. Marine Sciences is one of the largest student majors, so it's one that we definitely want to keep investing in.

A motion was made (Millard/Murgo) to open the public hearing.

In favor: Bilotti, Millard, Murgo, Sousa

Opposed: None

Laura Thomas, 7 Old Ferry Road, introduced herself as the new owner of the lighthouse. She mentioned that there are three houses there that are on well and septic systems. The owners are concerned when Roger Williams says they will be expanding, as they want to make sure their water is protected. Laura mentioned a ten year plan that showed renovations happening in an area that would directly affect the watersheds of these houses, and their ability to have clear, fresh water. Laura asked if those plans are addressed as part of this process.

Director Williamson responded that what is being referenced is the 10 year proposed strategic plan which is on page 45 of the book. It indicates new construction on the existing surface parking lot when you go down old Ferry Road to the right. They are proposing a future parking garage there, which is part of the presentation in the master plan. Typically, things that are in the five year plan are much more of a concern because of the shorter horizon that they could happen. However, concerns on the 10 year plan can be addressed now or clarified.

Secretary Bilotti asked for confirmation that any work in the 10 year plan will have to come back to the Board before it's started. Director Williamson confirmed that yes, anything in the 10 year plan will come back in 5 years.

Alternate Member Sousa asked Brian to confirm that he has heard the concern regarding septic and water, and to have the engineers address those concerns when they come back to propose the parking garage in the future. Brian confirmed. He added that the 10 year window is a projection of possible projects. Any construction that we do, we work with the town to understand the concerns.

Marilyn Tolleson, 5 Old Ferry Road, lives right behind the lighthouse. She would like the University to really consider and think about this parking structure before it's all nailed down. From a logical standpoint, we have x amount of cars parked in that lot at the moment where certain runoff comes from. If there is a multi-level, let's say it's four levels, that's four times more cars. With the rainwater, and everything else washing whatever could come out of these cars all down the hill towards us with our wells. There is also a natural stream, which is right below the paved parking lot. It's really important that before we start adding more cars, to consider where all this runoff is going to go, and what it's going to do to our only source of water. I mean, it'd be nice if you wanted to give us some water to drink, so we'd be safe, but we don't know what it's doing to us already. Marilyn added that it would be nice if the University provided safe water to these houses.

Chairman Millard stated that the University should consider putting a water line in.

Marilyn added that she has been in her home since 1986, and the question had been asked then. It did not seem like anyone would consider letting the houses attach to the dorms that are at the bottom. If this was considered, there would be less to be concerned about.

Chairman Millard asked if the University would consider this. Brian responded that yes, the University can consider this based on the comments and concerns. He added that any parking structure built would be gaining one level of parking, due to the slope on that side of campus. The parking structure would not be four stories. The concerns about water runoff is something to build into the planning and the design process that we do.

Marilyn added that they are hoping someone can go down there and really see the natural spring. Brian responded that someone from the facilities team would be a good person for Marilyn to connect with.

Chairman Millard asked if the University would have to deal with runoff when they come back and present to the Board in the future. Director Williamson responded that yes, and there may be wetlands involved so they would have to make sure they are in compliance there as well.

Terry Hubbard, 66 Ferry Road, asked if there is going to be something added off of 45 Ferry Road. Director Williamson responded that it's the President's house, and it's listed because it's part of the campus zoning district that requires the master zone process. There are no improvements proposed for it.

A motion was made (Murgo/Bilotti) to close the public hearing.

Bristol Planning Board Minutes November 10, 2022

In favor: Bilotti, Millard, Murgo, Sousa
Opposed: None

A motion was made (Sousa/Millard) to approve the Roger Williams University Campus Master Plan Update as submitted, based on the draft Findings of Fact presented with the conditions noted and final to be handled by the Technical Review Committee.

In favor: Bilotti, Millard, Murgo, Sousa
Opposed: None

Member Katz rejoined the podium.

Vice Chairman Murgo mentioned that he might not be able to attend the December meeting. Director Williamson responded that the December meeting might be canceled due to lack of agenda topics.

A motion was made (Murgo/Katz) to approve the annual calendar.

In favor: Bilotti, Katz, Millard, Murgo, Sousa
Opposed: None

A motion was made (Murgo/Katz) to adjourn the meeting.

In favor: Bilotti, Katz, Millard, Murgo, Sousa
Opposed: None

Meeting adjourned at 7:32pm

Respectfully submitted by Doran Smith, Recording Secretary

Date Approved: 1/12/2023 Planning Board: agBilotti