



PLAN REVIEW AUTHORITY MEETING

Wednesday, April 12, 2022, at 6:00 PM

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

MINUTES

This meeting will be held remotely and in person. The public is invited to attend this meeting in person or remotely via phone, or computer. This meeting is posted pursuant to the state statute authorizing temporary remote participation as described here:
<https://www.randolph-ma.gov/DocumentCenter/View/1864/remotemeetings23>

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

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

Approval of Minutes

1. Approval of Meeting Minutes of Plan Review Authority Meeting November 17, 2022

Motion to approve the meeting minutes for Plan Review Authority Meeting on November 17, 2022, made by Councillor Brewer, seconded by Captain Austrino.

Roll Call Vote: 6-0-0 (Huff-Larmond, O’Connell, and Blanchard Absent)

Motion passes.

Chairperson Comments

1. Chairman Plizga provided a brief overview of the project. The Union Crossing Transit District is an overlay district. The Fencourt Avenue area is zoned residentially, but by having an overlay district, it allows any owner meeting the requirements of that overlay district to file an application for private construction which then goes to the Town Council for their review and approval or denial. As part of the process, the Town Council sends it to the Plan Review Authority (PRA) which is comprised of three members of the town council, two Randolph residents, one member from the Planning Board, one member from the Conservation Commission, the DPW Superintendent (or a designee), and the Fire Chief (or a designee). We will go through a site plan and design review of the designed project as required in the outlined zoning. We will then provide a recommendation, whether it's for or against the proposed development, and then forward our recommendation to the Town Council to take under advisement. Then they will hold a public hearing at which time public comments will be allowed. Abutters will be noticed of the public hearing. As such, the regulations and zoning do not require us to have any public participation as part of our meeting because that lies with the Town Council. There is no item for public comments on the agenda for this evening.

For the previous project in this district, the PRA decided to have a meeting to allow for public comments. It will be up to this body of PRA to decide whether or not to participate in public comments.

Applicant Updates

Mr. Plizga: Various members of the PRA had comments at which the applicants took it upon themselves to meet with the DPW Superintendent, and Fire Department to address some of the comments/questions. I would ask Attorney Kevin Reilly to summarize the updates since the last meeting.

Attorney Reilly: I am here with Chi Man (the project engineer) and Mr. Mirag Ahmed (property owner). To give you a brief update, we met with Chris Pellitteri from DPW, Captain Austrino, and Chief Cassford, and the project has gone through the Conservation Commission since we last met. We submitted a new set of plans containing the changes that were made. The changes are summarized as follows:

1. Sidewalks and crosswalks were added throughout the site for purposes of better pedestrian circulation. (Mr. Plizga requested that Mr. Chi Man display sheet c-2 of the plans to facilitate what is being described.) There was a concern regarding the sidewalk at the entrance, along the northern property bound and a sidewalk has been added to the plan.
2. The proposed roadway behind building three was eliminated for a more expansive greenway. After consultation with the fire department, we have two roads now which would lead to the rear corners of that building.
3. The dumpsters have been consolidated into one compactor area on the north side of the property.
4. Fire department access is provided from Castleton Avenue by way of a gated entrance as was requested.
5. We will be looping the water main to better serve the development and the neighborhood from Castleton through Union Street as requested by the DPW Superintendent.
6. We eliminated a couple of parking spaces along the gate of Castleton Avenue and added a landscape area which will better allow for snow storage and more green space on the premises.
7. We also made adjustments to allow for fire vehicles and apparatus for the site.

Mr. Chi Man: We are waiting for firetruck specifications from the fire department. We researched the longest fire truck which is 44 feet and did a turning study to make sure the truck can enter and turn on the site comfortably.

Attorney Reilly: I'm not sure if either of you has received anything official from the Conservation Commission. Mr. Plizga: I understand that the Conservation Commission has met but has not developed an order of conditions yet. Mr. Chi Man: Yes, we are waiting for a quorum of the Commission and waiting for their Order on Conditions so whenever that meeting is scheduled, I believe they will take a vote on the project.

Mr. Plizga: There is an isolated wetland area in the back corner of the property, that doesn't have to be replicated where it is an isolated wetland- what does that mean? Mr. Chi Man: We filed a request for determinations. This area is isolated and not based on the wetlands protection act or the state wetland bylaw and does not qualify as a state or town wetland jurisdiction so we do not have to do any replication on this area. Tony Plizga: So whatever the Conservation Commission comes up with as conditions have to be met down the road for this project, likewise with the stormwater permitting process which is a separate process from what we are doing here and

separate to what the Town Council does. Whatever conditions come out of the DPW for stormwater will need to be met.

Attorney Reilly: I believe the Conservation Commission has respected the 25-foot buffer to the wetland area.

Town Department and Commission Updates

1. Department of Public Works, Fire Department, Conservation Commission

A.) DPW Superintendent Pellitteri: The header of the drainage chambers across the middle building was to be moved to the other end of the parking lot to allow for more space due to its current proximity to the building. Mr. Chi Man: We can definitely do that. My understanding is that Weston Sampson is doing a peer review of this project and when we receive their formal comments then we can address those changes. Mr. Pellitteri: I wanted to have that moved before they do the review. I don't want to give them anything that is going to be subject to major changes. Mr. Pellitteri: Near the entrance where the overflow ties to the existing drainage on the street. Mr. Chi Man: Within the last couple of weeks, we've had a contractor help me open up the catch basin and go through the pipe itself. We measured the pipe and invert so we are going to have to show the details of the connections. Basically, there is an onsite catch basin that is tied to a catch basin in this Fencourt area so we will form our connections to the Town's system. We'll have a discussion with the Town Engineer to see where he would like that placed. Mr. Pellitteri: I'd like to see a manhole there instead of a Tee.

Councillor Kevin O'Connell entered the meeting, by Zoom, at 6:20 PM.

Mr. Joseph Dunn entered the meeting. Sorry to interrupt, but I was just speaking with the Town Manager, and I understand that Ms. Blanchard is not here but as far as right now from the Conservation Commission's point of view, we have not received any feedback from the peer review. Mr. Plizga: We are still in our initial stages of deliberation with this being our second meeting, and I don't think we've received anything from the Conservation Commission officially. I know you had an initial meeting and will be meeting a second time to set conditions. Mr. Dunn: Right now we are still waiting on a response from Mr. Chi Man regarding the peer review that we have not received yet.

B.) Captain Austrino: I have the specs for the firetruck turning radius and can get them to you tonight. Mr. Plizga requested to pass that information along to the PRA Clerk, and the Clerk will pass it along.

PRA General Comments and Questions

1. Ms. Holmes: At Desmond Avenue, it looks like there is a fence and then at the end, it looks like there is open space. How far away is that fence from the street? Mr. Chi Man: It is on the property line so it's on the end of the street. Ms. Holmes: Will there ever be access from Desmond Avenue to this space? Chi Man: Not at this time, unless there was a request by the Town then we could consider that. Mr. Plizga: Do you expect any more inflow onto the wetland area? Mr. Chi Man: Based on the calculations, we are reducing runoff on the site. A majority of the site water flow goes towards the wetlands and the isolated wetlands which have an outlet discharging any water into the Truelson Drive area. Any runoff generated from the buildings will go to our onsite infiltration system. It's going to be less water going toward Truelson Drive area as we are retaining the water on site and discharging it at a very slow rate into the wetland area.

2. Ms. Wiggins-Neal: Can you give an explanation about how the fencing is set up? Mr. Chi Man: We are putting up a privacy fence to give privacy to abutters and residents except for the wetland area. Ms. Wiggins-Neal: Is it a certain fence? Chi Man: At this point, we are putting in a white vinyl fence but the type can be more specifically addressed by the PRA. Mr. Plizga: The PRA can make recommendations on the type of fencing in its final report.

Detailed Review vs. Zoning Section 200-14.3

Mr. Plizga: At this time I would like to review the details of the Zoning Sections A through P. It is my intention to review the details except for the building facade, outlines, shapes, colors, styles, or landscaping which will be addressed further down the road.

Section A. Mr. Plizga read Zoning Section 200-14.3, subsection A. Mr. Plizga: I don't look at these drawings as being village-style. I do see sidewalks, I certainly do not see trails or bike access paths. It will be up to each PRA member to decide if this project meets what is outlined in subsection A. Any questions or comments?

Attorney Reilly: I think a village means different things to different people. The village can be located in a rural area but the term urban village can also be applied to urban neighborhoods. I've seen concepts of villages that range from one to two-story buildings, and duplex dwellings with five-story levels. It's a fluid concept and I think it's certainly up to discussion and interpretation.

Mr. Plizga: I would almost expect a mix of different types of housing. Here, we have three rectangular buildings and one has a commercial space, as opposed to a variety of housing types.

Section B. - Mr. Plizga read Zoning Section 200-14.3, subsection B. I believe you meet this requirement.

Section C. Mr. Plizga briefly described Zoning Section 200-14.3, subsection C. This describes the process we are currently going through now with the PRA being the first phase.

Section D: Mr. Plizga briefly described and read Zoning Section 200-14.3, subsection D. I will point out the applicant is calling out a daycare center, they are under no obligation to make it a daycare center. They are electing and hoping to make it a proposed daycare but it does not have to be that. A walking trail would be something residents want to see in the wetland areas such as a scenic walkway.

Section E. Mr. Plizga briefly described Zoning Section 200-14.3, subsection E. The frontage has to be 100 feet. The applicant currently has 142 feet. The depth of the lot has to be greater than 75 feet and they well exceed that. Side and rear setbacks have to be at least 30 feet for a three-story building and they are meeting that requirement. The maximum front yard setback is 10 feet which are met. There isn't a lot to provide access for pedestrian circulation other than the sidewalks currently in the plans.

Ms. Holmes: I wonder what they're thinking regarding the proposed business going in this location. Mr. Plizga: As long as it is a commercial building, there is not much say we have in regards to what type of business goes here.

Attorney Reilly: The applicant does have other properties and has used this model which he finds serves the residents of the complex as well as folks who might want to use the commuter rail service and have a spot for their child to be during the day so it works from both perspectives.

Ms. Wiggins-Neal: I agree that this does not look like a village-style structure. A three-story building seems more like an apartment complex. I like the idea of a walkway in the wetlands to make it look more user-friendly.

Section F: Mr. Plizga briefly described Zoning Section 200-14.3, subsection F. The applicants have maximized the number of units on this parcel allowed by the zoning bylaw. That does contribute to the congestion due to the large wetland area and lack of village-style appearance.

Section G: Mr. Plizga briefly described Zoning Section 200-14.3, subsection G. They are allowed to get 40 feet of height for the building so they are meeting the requirements according to this bylaw. Ms. Holmes: I'm concerned about the congestion this will cause.

Section H: Mr. Plizga briefly described Zoning Section 200-14.3, subsection H. With the wetlands, they are well in excess of open space.

Section I: Mr. Plizga briefly described Zoning Section 200-14.3, subsection I. There is flexibility in terms of how many parking spaces are required.

Attorney Reilly: Based on the bylaw, there are 30 spaces required for the daycare. So other than the staff, people would be picking up and dropping off so we cannot imagine all the spaces would be used. We currently have 175 parking spaces available in the development.

Mr. Plizga: As members will note: there is one way in and one way out which is by the daycare. I see this as having circulation issues regarding the complex. Hearing no comments, I will continue.

Section I: Mr. Plizga briefly described Zoning Section 200-14.3, subsection J. I believe there are at least 3-4 bike racks that meet the requirements of this section.

Section K: This section pertains to landscaping. I will not go into that at this time because I think it's a little premature. As a reference, on the other project within this zoning district, the project was approved subject to landscaping and building facade colors, finishes materials, and architectural features which was done after the permit was granted and then the applicant came before the PRA at a later date to discuss this further.

Section L: Mr. Plizga briefly described Zoning Section 200-14.3, subsection L. Once again, this will be discussed at a later time.

Mr. Plizga: One item I'd like to address is the parking. Cpt. Austrino, do you see any issues with the parking lot design? Cpt. Austrino: I'd like to see the updated plans containing the specs for the firetruck turning radius.

Section M: Mr. Plizga briefly described Zoning Section 200-14.3, subsection M. This essentially states that if this project is approved then all internal streets will remove private.

Section N: Mr. Plizga briefly described Zoning Section 200-14.3, subsection N. Would you be phasing this development? Attorney Reilly: It would be done as a single-phase construction.

Section O: Mr. Plizga briefly described Zoning Section 200-14.3, subsection O. The Town Council will take consideration of the PRA keeping in mind they do not have to follow our recommendations. They are the decision-making body and we provide recommendations only.

PRA Preliminary Recommendation Discussion

Mr. Plizga: What is the height of the retaining wall that is on the North side? Mr. Chi Man: It is about 4-5 feet or so. Mr. Plizga: I believe that based on the height of that wall, you may need a fence above it which I think you have there is that correct? Mr. Chi Man: Yes, we do. Mr. Plizga: Could you call out the height of that wall on subsequent drawings? Mr. Chi Man: Yes, of course.

Mr. Plizga: I don't see the snow storage areas pointed out on these updated plans. Can those also be identified? Mr. Chi Man: We have snow storage space on site and an available row of parking is also available for snow storage as shown on the screen. We can add those specifications back in.

Mr. Plizga: Is there any mechanical or electrical equipment that is not shown that we would want to place landscaping or bollards around for their own protection? Mr. Chi Man: Not that we can think of at this point. Mechanical would most likely be on top of the buildings or concealed. I'd like to see a few bollards around the transformer, at least on the roadside. Mr. Chi Man: We can add that.

Mr. Plizga: My next question is directed toward my fellow Town Council members. I know there is an existing complex in the town where there have been a lot of compactor issues where it doesn't properly get emptied and a lot of the residents are finding it difficult to use so I'm not sure if a compactor is the best solution. Would there be a management team onsite to answer questions and concerns? Attorney Reilly: There will be a management/maintenance person on call at all times and that phone number would be available to the residents. Mr. Plizga: The concern would be that the dumpster is emptied frequently enough so that they remain clean. Dumpsters never get emptied enough. Attorney Reilly: We will be sure to keep the area clean.

Ms. Holmes: I am concerned about rodent control. Mr. Plizga: As with any construction project in the town, it would be part of the plan that there is erosion and rodent control which is done with all construction.

Mr. Plizga read portions of Zoning Section 200-14.3, subsection K. The intent of this is to shield the neighbors from the project and if this project were to go forward it would be my intent to put one of the conditions that we did on the previous project which is to request putting a bright orange ribbon inside the property line that cannot be touched so you're forced to leave at least 20 feet of the natural vegetation untouched. We also did this with the previous project in the same district. I'd make the 20 ft no-disturb buffer only on the Truelson side.

Councillor O'Connell: I would like to see a tree buffer by the daycare area. For the previous project in this district, three members went with the applicant and went through each tree that could remain. it may improve the buffer and help save trees. Mr. Chi Man: That is exactly what our intent is.

Ms. Wiggins-Neal: Where would the fencing go if there is a 20-foot tree fence? Mr. Chi Man: The fence would be at the property line. It would be up for discussion what type of fence is used. Mr. Plizga: A natural stock fence would be more appealing which would blend in with the woods. Ms. Wiggins-Neal: If we could keep it more natural-looking, a lot of the residents would be pleased to see that instead of a white picket fence. Any wooded or vegetated area uses a wood fence and any open residential space uses a white fence. Mr. Plizga: Later on we can specify these recommendations.

Councillor Brewer: We know because of the wetland and what was proposed would have been cut down on the units so it's really dense. I do agree that parking is an issue for the daycare. I could see parents double parking to run their kids in or pick them up. I agree it doesn't have the village look. you have to add an affordability piece to it. You're building a dense project, you have to help out the Town.

Mr. Plizga: To that point, where we do not have the final say, we may end up putting something in our report regarding the affordable housing issue and I suggest being prepared to have a proposed percentage.

Councillor Brewer: Where the building will be stacked, would they be willing to pay for the equipment that may be needed by the police or fire departments to ensure proper public access to the satellite radios. Attorney Reilly: Like a repeater? Councillor Brewer: Yes, we've been told by various buildings that connection is difficult. I want to make sure that if there is an issue with the connection getting through, would you be willing to pay for the proper equipment? Attorney Reilly: The applicant says yes.

Mr. Plizga: If you could talk to your associates to come up with a budget so that they can accomplish this? Captain Austrino: Any project of this size is required by the building code to do media testing. Once they get a certain percentage of the project done a BDA test is done and if the test shows that it's required, per the building code, they have to install a BDA system.

Mr. Plizga to DPW Superintendent Pellitteri: Please consider what requirements you may have for the sidewalks and roadway on Fencourt.

Mr. Plizga: That concludes most of what I had on my agenda for this project. I have no idea where this review authority will go in terms of a recommendation. I'm not sure if that will transfer into a favorable or unfavorable vote. At the next meeting, I may take a straw vote regarding whether or not you are in favor or against the project and if you are against it, please state the reason so that the applicant can have the opportunity to address the concerns. Do you have a meeting scheduled with the Conservation Commission? Attorney Reilly: Not yet. My understanding is that they were having quorum issues. Mr. Plizga: I'd like to ask everyone to read through the zoning for this district.

Cpt. Austrino: Can we request an updated sheet with a fire-turning radius for the new plans?

Next Step/Future Meeting

We are not required to have a public portion of the meeting. My thoughts are that it would not hurt to have a public comment portion with appropriate mailings. I think getting feedback may better prepare everyone.

Attorney Reilly: I think public input is fine but in this case, it may be premature. I think if you want to share the typical "the town has too many apartments, etc." it would not be necessary but if you want to add comments about how things are positioned and provide helpful suggestions that are constructive to the process then we welcome that.

Mr. Plizga: If Randolph wants to continue to get MBTA funding then they're going to have to set aside 45 +/- acres of property that are going to be permitted to have high-density residential units. Certain parcels, by right, will be allowed to do that.

Reilly: The town was forward-thinking with this particular zone. With the transit station in that area, it makes sense.

Ms. Holmes: I live not too far from where this complex is going to be, and I've been here for over twenty years. I think this is wonderful but I also have concerns. Attorney Reilly: The applicant is happy to work with the town to make this the best development possible.

Ms. Wiggins-Neal: A lot of us on Truelson Drive have water pumps- will the flow benefit us if the flow of water is going to Fencourt? Chi Man: I believe so. The flow of water will go through the pipes, instead of onto Truelson Drive and surrounding properties so I believe it would decrease the flow of water while the wetlands in the area continue to take in water overflow.

DPW Superintendent: Can we add on to have a formal stormwater presentation? Mr. Plizga: the only reason I'm hesitating is that generally you have a say on that and the rest of us don't. Pursuant to the bylaw we need to have a formal presentation and it could be streamlined into this process so we don't have to do it a duplicate time. Try to keep it to a minimum and if anyone has detailed questions then you can reach out another time.

Mr. Plizga: Do we want to have a public comment period for a PRA?

Attorney Reilly: What is the applicant's role in this? Mr. Plizga: The applicant's role would be to provide a brief overview of the proposed development and answer any potential questions.

Attorney Reilly: For purposes of listening to constructive criticism versus "we don't want this" then we are open to that.

Councillor O'Connell: The way the other meeting for the other project went was to be more informative. The residents didn't have many of those comments and they actually had some appropriate questions that worked their way into the meetings.

Attorney Reilly: Are we suggesting this is going to be a noticed meeting? Mr. Plizga: It might not have to be formal. I believe Councillor Clifton may have distributed a flyer to residents within a certain distance previously.

Cpt. Austrino: They opened it up to abutters. It was done to give abutters the opportunity to share their opinion. It was towards the end of the process.

Mr. Plizga: maybe at our next meeting we'll discuss our conditions for the public and then schedule the public meeting. I know at the last meeting it became more like a social gathering. There is a different quid pro quo on this project whereas in the other one, they certainly wanted residential units there.

Mr. Plizga: The next PRA meeting for this project will be on May 3, 2023, at 6:00 PM. We should be prepared to discuss any conditions, mitigations, or specifications that would accompany the recommendation.

C. Adjournment

Motion to adjourn was made by DPW Superintendent Pellitteri, seconded by Cpt. Austrino. All members present voted in favor to adjourn the meeting.

The meeting was adjourned at 7:50 PM