

Town of Franklin

355 East Central Street
Franklin, Massachusetts 02038-1352



Phone: (508) 520-4907
www.franklinma.gov

PLANNING BOARD

June 5, 2023 Meeting Minutes

Chair Gregory Rondeau called the above-captioned meeting held in the Town Council Chambers at 355 East Central Street, Franklin, MA, to order this date at 7:00 PM. The public had the option of attending the meeting live at the Town Hall, dialing into the meeting using the provided phone number, or participating by copying the provided link. Members in attendance: Gregory Rondeau, Chair; William David, Vice Chair; Beth Wierling, Clerk; Rick Power; Jennifer Williams, Jay Mello, associate member. Members absent: None. Also present: Michael Maglio, Town Engineer (via Zoom); Amy Love, Town Planner; Gary James, BETA Group (via Zoom).

7:00 PM Commencement/General Business

Chair Rondeau reviewed the Zoom platform call-in phone number and the Zoom link which were provided on the meeting agenda. The meeting was audio and video recorded.

A. **Minutes Approval: April 24, May 8 & May 22, 2023**

Motion to Approve the Meeting Minutes for April 24, 2023. Rondeau. Second: Williams. Vote: 5-0 (5-Yes; 0-No).

Motion to Approve the Meeting Minutes for May 8, 2023. Rondeau. Second: Williams. Vote: 5-0 (5-Yes; 0-No).

Motion to Approve the Meeting Minutes for May 22, 2023. Rondeau. Second: Williams. Vote: 5-0 (5-Yes; 0-No).

7:00 PM PUBLIC HEARING – *Continued*

Maplegate North Solar

Site Plan Application

Documents presented to the Planning Board are on file.

Ms. Love stated that the applicant requested a continuance to the next meeting on June 26, 2023.

Motion to Continue the public hearing for Maplegate North Solar, Site Plan Application, to June 26, 2023. Wierling. Second: Williams. Vote: 5-0 (5-Yes; 0-No).

7:00 PM PUBLIC HEARING – *Initial*

100-200 Financial Way

Site Plan Modification Application

Documents presented to the Planning Board are on file.

Motion to Waive the reading. Rondeau. Second: Wierling. Vote: 5-0 (5-Yes; 0-No).

Mr. Doug Hartnett, principal of Highpoint Engineering, representing the applicant Berkeley Partners, addressed the Planning Board. He introduced Mr. Kevin Deabler, principal of Rode Architects, Mr. Brendan Pellerin, asset management director of Berkeley Partners (via Zoom), Ms. Connie Lu, project manager of Highpoint Engineering (via Zoom), Mr. Ben Bruce, architect of Rode Architects (via Zoom), Mr. Nick Campanelli, landscape architect of MDLA (via Zoom), and Mr. Dan Dumais, traffic consultant of MDM Transportation (via Zoom).

Mr. Hartnett narrated a slideshow presentation which was provided in the meeting packet. He explained that Berkeley Partners is a fully integrated Real Estate Investment firm focused exclusively on Industrial Real Estate. He reviewed that the application before the Planning Board is two-fold: the traditional site plan review for the exterior alteration exceeding 600 gross sq. ft. and a parking waiver to reduce the required number of parking spaces from 350 to 262. The project site lies within the Industrial (I) zoning district, the Biotechnology Use Overlay District, and the Water Resource Overlay District. With the exception of the requested parking waiver, the project is allowed by right and complies with the applicable dimensional requirements for the principle industrial zoning district, the water resource protection overlay district, and it is outside the floodplain overlay district. He stated that the project is undergoing concurrent review with the Conservation Commission; they met with the Conservation Commission and were continued to June 15, 2023, pending a review by BETA of the Notice of Intent application. He pointed out that this project will require an ANR lot line adjustment to accommodate the side yard setback requirements. He reviewed that the project includes the demolition of the existing 180,500± sq. ft. office building and the construction of a 220,000± sq. ft. one-story flex-warehouse building (“Building 1”) and a 65,000± sq. ft. one-story flex-warehouse building (“Building 2”) with a shared loading dock/truck court area. The existing 65,000± sq. ft. warehouse building (“Building 3”) and associated loading dock will be maintained. The proposed warehouses are located within developed areas of the property. The south parking lot will be maintained and will continue to be used by tenants of the adjacent warehouse building at 300 Financial Park. The remaining portion of the northwest parking/trailer storage lot will be reconfigured and supplemented with new parking lots to the east of proposed Buildings 1 and 2, and to the west of existing Building 3. An additional trailer storage lot is proposed to the south of existing Building 3. He reviewed the history of the property. He explained and showed the location of the parking spaces, trailer storage spaces, and the docks. He stated that regarding access, nothing has changed around the perimeter of the park. He noted the landscape design and the existing fire pond which will be maintained and embellished.

Mr. Campanelli reviewed the landscape design attributes as provided on the slideshow presentation. He explained the entry into the campus from Washington Street, and he stated that they are looking to maintain as much of the natural buffer as possible. He noted that the fire pond will be revised to give a park-like experience for the visitors and users. He stated that they will try to provide islands where possible in the parking areas. He reviewed that the project will have plantings and street trees. He discussed the proposed pond path; they will use existing vegetation and add to it. He noted landscape materials selection has been made with reference to the Franklin Best Development Guidebook.

Mr. Hartnett reviewed grading and drainage and the stormwater/utility infrastructure as shown on the provided slideshow presentation. He stated that they have done a traffic evaluation conducted by MDM Transportation.

Mr. Dumais reviewed the Traffic Impact & Access Study for this project dated April 2023. He reviewed the transportation summary, statistics, and key findings as provided in the slideshow presentation. He discussed trip generation and stated this project is a moderate trip generator, it generates fewer trips than as-of-right office use, and adequate capacity at gateways of LOS D or better. He reviewed the Trip Generation Summary slide. He discussed that the site would generate just over 514 trips per day. He reviewed build conditions for weekday morning peak hour and build conditions for weekday afternoon peak hour as shown on the slides. He reviewed off-site improvements. He reviewed that at King Street at Washington Street, if requested by the Town of Franklin, the proponent will work with the Engineering Department to diagnose and repair, if

necessary, the vehicle detection system at the King Street at Washington Street signalized location to re-establish fully actuated traffic signal operations. He reviewed Transportation Demand Management (TDM) which includes an on-site transportation coordinator, preferential parking for carpools, vanpools, electric vehicle charging stations, preferential parking for low-emission vehicles, workforce transportation program, off-peak shift changes, automatic employee payroll reduction, commuter assistance programs, guaranteed ride home, pedestrian infrastructure, bicycle racks, secure covered bike parking, and on-site support services/amenities.

Mr. Hartnett stated that they received BETA's initial traffic memorandum, and they will be fully engaged with BETA to review their comments.

Mr. Deabler narrated this portion of the slideshow presentation. He showed and reviewed the architectural floor plans and perspectives. He explained that the pond is an attractive feature, and they want to make it available to enjoy. He reviewed the entries to the two buildings. He stated that they believe the building designs will attract good tenants. Mr. Hartnett stated that they are proud of what this project will bring to the area. He stated that Berkeley Partners has reached out to the other building users and neighbors to talk about the project. He stated that they received BETA's comments and would like to meet with BETA directly; he stated that they had done that when 300 Financial was permitted.

Ms. Love stated that the applicant was before the Conservation Commission. She stated comments have been received from Town Engineer Michael Maglio, BETA, and Fire. She noted that when 300 Financial Way was permitted, the Town wanted no truck access onto Grove Street, and it was a condition that all truck traffic used Washington Street. She stated that any signage will need to file with Design Review Commission.

Mr. Maglio stated that this is a pretty substantial project. He stated that he reviewed the plans. He discussed his letter to the Planning Board dated May 31, 2023, which included, but was not limited to, that there are two runs of HDPE pipe called out on the plans, one 24" diameter along the south side of Building 1 and one 18" diameter along the north side of Building 2. The Planning Board typically requires reinforced concrete pipe for on-site drainage systems. If the applicant proposes to use HDPE for some of the drainage pipes, a waiver should be requested. He reviewed that it is unclear if the fire loop around Building 1 is proposed to be 8" or 10" diameter pipe. Also, there should only be one domestic water service to Building 1 with one water meter. To simplify the new waterline layout, the designer may consider a single fire loop around the building with the proposed fire hydrants and domestic service connected to that loop. He reviewed that Building 1 calls out for a van ramp into the building; a gas trap should be identified on the plans where any interior floor drains are connected to the sewer system. This work should also be coordinated with the plumbing inspector.

Mr. James of BETA stated that they submitted their review letter last week. He stated that overall, he agrees with Mr. Maglio. He noted there are about five different types of curbing associated with the site. He said that he does not think there is enough soil test pit data. He noted that they are in a water resource district, so they will be looking at a greater degree of treatment and pre-treatment of discharges going into the pond. He stated that he would not mind meeting with the applicant. He stated that this has been done in the past on some of the bigger sites. Chair Rondeau stated that if they wanted to set that up, it would be fine. Mr. Hartnett discussed the test pits. He stated that the tenant has a high degree of sensitivity to excavations going on out there. He stated that we spent the better part of six weeks coming to agreement where the test pits would be. He noted that this is a data center for MMC, and they are sensitive to vibrations or knocking out any telecommunications into the building; so, they were limited to where they could test. He stated that MMC is not going to vacate for another few months.

Planning Board members asked questions and made comments. In response, Ms. Love noted the location of the town's well. Discussion commenced on the energy efficiency of the building and complying with the Stretch Code. Ms. Williams asked about sidewalks and access for employees to get out of the building and

enjoy. Applicant's representative discussed that within the site there is a high degree of attention paid to pedestrians; however, at this time they have not looked at sidewalks to Washington Street. Mr. David asked if they had thought about hours of operation. Mr. Hartnett stated that there has been no tenant selection yet; this is speculative building at this point. Mr. David asked who as a tenant are they going after. Mr. Pellerin stated that given the layout of the park, we would be looking for a tenant that would have ideally 53 ft. truck traffic. Mr. David stated that the space would be too small for an Amazon. Mr. Pellerin stated that they would not be looking for something with van traffic; they would be looking for groups housing 53 ft. trucks. Ms. Wierling asked if they were going to do an ANR plan or there already was one. Mr. Hartnett stated that they do not; if it is the Planning Board's request, they will prepare an ANR plan.

Chair Rondeau stated the he concurred with the traffic. He asked how many existing loading docks are there. Mr. Hartnett stated that there is a nominal number of loading docks now; this is completely different than what it was. He stated that he will provide the loading dock information. Chair Rondeau noted that the numbers for the new square footage do not coincide in all the paperwork; they should be corrected. He stated that there should be no hazardous stored on site. He asked about the height of the building to do a comparison. Mr. Pellerin stated that there are currently three loading docks in the existing building. Ms. Wierling asked for the existing information, so the Planning board can see how the site is changing. Chair Rondeau stated that the big item is the traffic, especially at the intersection; there may need to be upgrades to the road to handle the additional traffic.

Ms. Maureen Sullivan, resident, asked if the Berkeley people went and knocked on doors. She stated that she is a neighbor. She stated that she was surprised to hear that everyone on Ivy Lane stated that they would welcome this. She stated that those trucks cannot pull out of 431 Washington Street without crossing the double line. She stated that no one has ever knocked on her door. She stated that she is very against this, and she will be at every meeting.

Mr. Kevin Boyce (via Zoom) stated that he is on Ivy Lane as well. Aside from the letters they received, he was never approached on this either. He stated that his concern is the turnoff and coming in and out of the industrial park. He stated that there has been a lot of things in the past where trucks will sit on Washington Street and just idle in the middle of the night. It is an inconvenience. It is not the best situation now. He asked for the future, what is going in there and what will the traffic be like; it is non-stop in and out now. Chair Rondeau stated that they will be having more on traffic so stay tuned to the meetings. Ms. Sullivan asked if there is a timeframe. She stated that currently they go 24/7 and it is very noisy. She stated that she is complaining about the night time noise. She wants to be able to turn her TV on and hear it and keep her window open. It is constant and loud. Chair Rondeau stated that he is sure this will be part of the traffic study.

Ms. Love asked if they would do traffic at the next meeting. Mr. Hartnett said it depends on if BETA will have the true peer review done; they will then need time to respond. He suggested scheduling for two weeks and then scheduling a continuance if needed. Mr. Mello stated that he would like more of the existing versus proposed information.

Ms. Love asked if they plan to provide further traffic information regarding the comments, or will BETA go by the original submittal for a traffic meeting. Mr. Dumais stated they have a letter from BETA regarding three minor items; they can get those responded to. He stated that they are waiting for additional comments. He stated that regarding the Planning Board's comments, they can provide the turning movements for the next meeting. Chair Rondeau asked Mr. James that based on comments from the Planning Board and residents, does he think a larger traffic study would be prudent. Mr. James stated that this is going to take some time for BETA's traffic reviewer to get through all this. Discussion commenced on when to schedule the hearing continuance.

Motion to Continue the public hearing for 100-200 Financial Way, Site Plan Modification Application, to June 26, 2023. Rondeau. Second: Williams. Vote: 5-0 (5-Yes; 0-No).

Motion to Adjourn the Planning Board Meeting. Rondeau. Second: Wierling. Vote: 5-0 (5-Yes; 0-No).

Meeting adjourned at 8:17 PM.

Respectfully submitted,

Judith Lizardi,
Recording Secretary

--Planning Board approved minutes at July 24, 2023 meeting