

# Town of Franklin

355 East Central Street  
Franklin, Massachusetts 02038-1352



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## PLANNING BOARD

### September 18, 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 dialing into the meeting using the provided phone number or participating by copying the provided link. Members in attendance: Gregory Rondeau, Chair; Beth Wierling, Clerk; Rick Power; Jennifer Williams, Jay Mello, associate member. Members absent: William David, Vice Chair. Also present: Michael Maglio, Town Engineer; Amy Love, Planner; Gary James, BETA Group.

#### 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.

Chair Rondeau stated the meeting agendas are getting busy; he asked the Planning Board members if they would be open to adding another meeting on October 23, 2023.

***Motion to Add another meeting on October 23, 2023. Rondeau. Second: Williams. Vote: 4-0 (4-Yes; 0-No).***

#### **A. Endorsement: Prospect Hill Subdivision**

Ms. Love reviewed that the applicant submitted the mylars to be endorsed. The subdivision is partially accessed through Franklin, and all lots are located in Bellingham. Bellingham has approved and signed the mylars. The private road covenant has been signed by the Town Administrator.

***Motion to Endorse Prospect Hill Subdivision. Wierling. Second: Rondeau. Vote: 4-0 (4-Yes; 0-No).***

#### **B. Meeting Minutes: July 10 & July 24, 2023**

***Motion to Approve the Meeting Minutes for July 10, 2023. Rondeau. Second: Williams. Vote: 4-0 (4-Yes; 0-No).***

***Motion to Approve the Meeting Minutes for July 24, 2023. Rondeau. Second: Williams. Vote: 4-0 (4-Yes; 0-No).***

#### 7:00 PM **PUBLIC HEARING** – Continued

##### ***0 Upper Union Street Solar Project***

Site Plan Application

*Documents presented to the Planning Board are on file.*

***TO BE CONTINUED***

Ms. Love stated that the applicant requested a continuance to October 16, 2023.

***Motion to Continue the public hearing for 0 Upper Union Street Solar Project, Site Plan Application, to October 16, 2023. Rondeau. Second: Williams. Vote: 4-0 (4-Yes; 0-No).***

7:00 PM        **PUBLIC HEARING** – *Continued*  
                  ***15 Liberty Way***  
                  Site Plan Application  
                  *Documents presented to the Planning Board are on file.*  
                  ***TO BE CONTINUED***

Ms. Love stated that the applicant has gone through all their Conservation Commission issues; they are now looking at the engineering plans and the stormwater. She recommended this be continued to October 16, 2023.

***Motion to Continue the public hearing for 15 Liberty Way, Site Plan Application, to October 16, 2023. Rondeau. Second: Williams. Vote: 4-0 (4-Yes; 0-No).***

7:00 PM        **PUBLIC HEARING** – *Initial*  
                  ***Upper Union Street***  
                  Scenic Road Permit  
                  *Documents presented to the Planning Board are on file.*

***Motion to Waive the reading. Wierling. Second: Williams. Vote: 4-0 (4-Yes; 0-No).***

Ms. Love reviewed that §170-53 of the Town Code requires that any tree or stonewall removal within a Scenic Road must seek a permit through the Planning Board. The applicant is proposing to remove 30 ft. of stonewall and several small trees and shrubs in order to install an access road to the proposed solar farm. The DPW Director submitted a letter. She reviewed that the Planning Board will need to take a vote if they are in agreement of issuing a permit to remove the trees and stonewall.

Chair Rondeau confirmed 30 ft. are being removed. He asked if some of the stone could be relocated.

Mr. Richard Tabaczynski with Atlantic Design Engineers on behalf of the applicant addressed the Planning Board. He explained that the existing stonewall is not well manicured. He said they could take the stones/boulders and create a radius on each side like an entrance for the project. Chair Rondeau said that would be good if it was feasible.

Resident (via Zoom) asked where was the 30 ft. going to start and how far is the entrance from Ribero Drive. Chair Rondeau said it was a little way down the road. Mr. Tabaczynski said it was about 230 ft. Mr. Mello explained the location of the road, the entrance, and the stonewall.

***Motion to Close the public hearing for Upper Union Street, Scenic Road Permit. Wierling. Second: Williams. Vote: 4-0 (4-Yes; 0-No).***

***Motion to Approve Upper Union Street, Scenic Road Permit, with the letter from the Tree Warden DPW. Rondeau. Second: Wierling. Vote: 4-0 (4-Yes; 0-No).***

7:00 PM        **PUBLIC HEARING** – *Initial*  
                  ***138 East Central Street***  
                  Site Plan Modification  
                  *Documents presented to the Planning Board are on file.*

***Motion to Waive the reading. Rondeau. Second: Wierling. Vote: 4-0 (4-Yes; 0-No).***

Mr. Brad Chaffee, owner/applicant, addressed the Planning Board. He stated that they were at Design Review; he provided the Planning Board members with a packet of what the building was going to look like.

Mr. Rick Goodreau of United Consultants addressed the Planning Board. He reviewed the property on the locus map. He showed and explained the Site Plan. He reviewed the proposal which includes an addition and reconfiguration of the parking lot with regrading and striping to accommodate both building uses. He said significant pavement is proposed to be removed in the front of the building and replaced with landscaping. He reviewed that they have been before the Conservation Commission and are working through those comments. He said they scheduled a meeting with Town Engineer Michael Maglio and others to review stormwater. He said they are proposing to consolidate all the accesses into one access point.

Ms. Love noted that review letters will be provided from BETA, DPW, and Fire, and she provided a few recommendations. The applicant should provide all structures within 300 ft. of the site, show the main entrance and any other entrances to the building, provide an area(s) for snow storage, provide location, size and sketch of all proposed signs, and provide a complete landscaping plan, including existing vegetation and proposed plantings for the entire site.

Chair Rondeau noted there were two waivers submitted for light spillage and for HDPE pipe.

Mr. Maglio reviewed his comments. He said it is unclear if these two lots are to be combined into a single lot as part of this project. He noted that there appears to be an existing gravel access driveway between #118 and #122 East Central Street. It should be noted if and how this access will be closed off. He said the applicant should provide a calculation indicating the net increase or decrease in impervious coverage on the site. He said a calculation should also be provided showing the underground storage system is able to drain within 72 hours.

Mr. James reviewed BETA's letter to the Planning Board dated September 14, 2023. He noted a paved strip on the south side and said he is not sure if it is wide enough for vehicle access. He asked that if it is not, why would it remain. He noted the grades are up to 6 percent in some locations. He suggested that once it is over 5 percent, when the vehicle door is open, it will swing back shut. He noted the infiltration system is a good size. He noted that there is some minor light spillage.

Ms. Williams asked about how long the house is to remain and what is the purpose to maintain the paved connection area. She noted that only 20 parking spaces are required and asked could some parking spaces be eliminated and add some additional pervious area.

Ms. Wierling requested showing all the buildings on the plan. She noted that #122 is to remain a two-family and asked if the applicant owned #118 next door. Mr. Chaffee stated no. Ms. Wierling asked about parking spaces 21-25 regarding what will prevent headlights from shining into the residential area.

Chair Rondeau noted parking for the two-family house. He said he would like to see signs for the dedicated parking. He noted the grade drop off and asked if a retaining wall would be proposed. He asked about the dumpster location and if there is fencing around it. He asked about the loading docks at the rear of the building and confirmed they were at ground level. He said there should be screening for the loading docks. He confirmed there will be three tenants including the applicant. He confirmed there are two waivers requested. He confirmed the addition is one story. He confirmed the underground detention basin will be green space.

Ms. Kathy Martin, 33 Cross Street, said she was glad the applicant was doing this. She asked about the trees and noted the grade is very steep. She asked if the grade would affect her yard with rainwater. Mr. Goodreau explained the proposed grading for the site and the surface water.

Mr. Goodreau noted the location of the dumpster. Mr. Chaffee said #122 is going to remain; it was fully gutted, and once the site is restored, it will look a lot nicer. He said that regarding the connection, there is a lot of good vegetation, so we kept it the way it was. He said that regarding driving the car through it would probably not work. He said he could put some bollards in there for safety. He discussed parking and said they tried to get as much parking as they could.

Ms. Williams asked if they would support putting in an electric charging station. Mr. Chaffee said that insurance carriers do not want to carry that anymore because of the fires; it is very expensive. He explained the grade change and the locations and said he does not anticipate any headlights shining into any residences. Mr. Goodreau stated that they are relocating the existing curb cut. Chair Rondeau asked for the neighboring house to be put on the plans. He confirmed the applicant will be meeting with DPW and BETA regarding stormwater.

***Motion to Continue 138 East Central Street, Site Plan Modification, to October 23, 2023. Rondeau. Second: Williams. Vote: 4-0 (4-Yes; 0-No).***

7:00 PM        **PUBLIC HEARING** – *Continued*  
                    ***100-200 Financial Way***  
                    Site Plan Modification Application  
                    *Documents presented to the Planning Board are on file.*

Mr. Doug Hartnett of Highpoint Engineering, representing the applicant Berkeley Partners, addressed the Planning Board. He provided an update from the last hearing one month ago. He stated that Highpoint has submitted a revised set of plans to BETA and the Planning Board from the peer review and comments. He stated they received BETA's latest letter on Friday. He stated their traffic consultant MDM is reviewing BETA's traffic letter. He stated they requested a meeting with all the consultants, the BETA team, and Town Engineer Michael Maglio to go over some remaining items; they are having a meeting tomorrow. He stated they met with Conservation Commission and addressed all BETA's comments except for stormwater which they are addressing.

Ms. Love noted her letter to the Planning Board dated September 11, 2023. She stated the applicant submitted the waiver for the HDPE pipe and a draft ANR plan. She noted the applicant should provide additional snow storage and the waiver for the change in parking spaces. She stated traffic will be discussed at the next meeting.

Mr. Maglio stated that the majority of his comments have been addressed. He said there are a few outstanding items related to stormwater which will be discussed at tomorrow's meeting. Mr. James agreed and said the stormwater has become complicated on this and will be discussed at tomorrow's meeting.

Chair Rondeau said the next meeting will pertain to traffic and the following meeting will pick up the balance of items. Mr. Hartnett said they can revise the plans based on information from tomorrow's meeting.

***Motion to Continue the public hearing for 100-200 Financial Way, Site Plan Modification Application, to September 25, 2023. Rondeau. Second: Power. Vote: 4-0 (4-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 September 25, 2023.

***Motion to Continue the public hearing for Maplegate North Solar, Site Plan Application, to September 25, 2023. Rondeau. Second: Power. Vote: 4-0 (4-Yes; 0-No).***

7:00 PM      **PUBLIC HEARING** – *Initial*  
***3 Fisher Street***  
Site Plan Modification  
*Documents presented to the Planning Board are on file.*

***Motion to Waive the reading. Rondeau. Second: Williams. Vote: 4-0 (4-Yes; 0-No).***

Mr. Casey Killam and Mr. Rick Kaplan, owners, and Mr. Daniel Campbell, engineer of Level Design Group (via Zoom), addressed the Planning Board. Mr. Killam noted they have been working on this for about three years. Originally, the redevelopment was for retail office uses with mix of warehouse and manufacturing. Since that time, they have had a change in the real estate market, and now they are not going to do retail at this time. He said they will focus on bringing it up to today's standards aesthetically and keep the uses they have had throughout the buildings. He stated that they just received BETA's comments and will be reviewing those to get them answered.

Mr. Killam stated that the biggest change on the site plan is that instead of parking spaces they are going to keep the existing building. He stated that the area in the back will continue to be a field as they will not anticipate as much parking needed. Chair Rondeau stated that he was not in favor of stacked parking; he would prefer the open parking that was shown on the first drawing. He reviewed parking spaces as shown on the plan. He asked if the fire department has seen the plans and requested their comments. Ms. Love stated she would follow up. Chair Rondeau asked that the location of the dumpster, handicapped spaces, and snow storage be on the drawing.

Ms. Wierling stated that she understands that there is nothing they can do about market conditions, but she is disappointed they are not going to see any of the retail uses that were hoped for. She stated that there are quite a few comments here. Mr. Kaplan noted that for 3 Fisher Street the plan is to change all the windows because the future plan is for retail, office, or even restaurant. Mr. Killam noted that they have some future creative ideas that they are working on. Ms. Williams asked about the tenant taking over 3 Fisher Street building. She requested the location of the loading. Mr. Killam explained the location which has been there for about 100 years, and it accommodates a tractor trailer. Chair Rondeau asked for the turning radiuses so BETA can look at it. Ms. Williams said she would like to talk about hours of operation and delivery schedule considering the residents across the street. Mr. Killam stated that the tenant has not changed their shift hours. Ms. Wierling questioned what the tenant is producing at 3 Fisher Street. Mr. Killam said PCI is utilizing the stacked parking and they are expanding into 5 Fisher Street. Ms. Williams asked about how the noise would be controlled. Mr. Killam discussed the siding and windows are going to be replaced. Mr. Kaplan discussed the allowed use is light and medium. He stated that with the new materials, it will probably keep the noise inside better. Mr. Killam said they were before Design Review.

Ms. Ann Wallace, 256 West Central Street, direct abutter to the Fisher Street project. She asked for a copy of the new plan to see what is changed. She said she is glad they are redoing the windows. She said she is concerned about a buffer between her condo association and the project. She said her daughter planted arborvitaes, and it was her understanding that Mr. Kaplan was going to do something on his side. She said her concern is headlights and noise. Chair Rondeau gave Ms. Wallace a plan. He said that landscaping is an item to be addressed. Mr. Kaplan said that he went to Ms. Wallace's home and introduced himself. He said that on his side there is only a small amount of room and you cannot plant into the asphalt. Chair Rondeau said that they will look at the landscaping plan once the applicant designs it and they will see how much land is available.

Ms. Love commented that the applicant needs to provide outdoor lighting, open space areas, snow storage, and parking areas. She noted they need to provide location, size, and sketch of all proposed signs, and they need to provide a complete landscaping plan, including existing vegetation and proposed plantings for the entire site. She noted that the Planning Board may want a traffic study regarding what is coming in and out of the site.

Ms. Wierling said she would like to see some of the internal circulation. Chair Rondeau said they should take a clean plan and show the movement, turning, and parking. Mr. Nick Facendola of Level Design Group (via Zoom) said they can show a full traffic turning movement plan for the proposed changes.

Mr. Timothy Buckman, owner 54 Fisher Street (via Zoom), said it was good to hear the Planning Board talk about noise. He said they have noticed a huge increase in noise from trucks backing up. He said he wanted clarification that there should be none of that noise before 7 AM and after 9 PM. He asked for the working hours. Mr. Kaplan said the shifts were with the existing tenant which is PCI at 5 Fisher Street. Chair Rondeau asked for the operation of hours agreed to at the last site plan. He asked the applicant to designate the hours for each building on the plan. He asked for the loading docks to be highlighted on the plans for clarification.

***Motion to Continue the public hearing for 3 Fisher Street, Site Plan Modification, to October 23, 2023. Rondeau. Second: Williams. Vote: 4-0 (4-Yes; 0-No).***

***Motion to Adjourn the Planning Board Meeting. Rondeau. Second: Williams. Vote: 4-0 (4-Yes; 0-No).***

***Meeting adjourned at 8:17 PM.***

Respectfully submitted,

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Judith Lizardi,  
Recording Secretary

***--Planning Board approved minutes at October 23, 2023 meeting***