

Town of Franklin

355 East Central Street
Franklin, Massachusetts 02038-1352



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

PLANNING BOARD

October 23, 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; William David, Vice Chair; Beth Wierling, Clerk; Rick Power; Jennifer Williams; Jay Mello, associate member. Members absent: None. 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.

A. Meeting Minutes: August 7 & 21, September 18, 2023

Motion to Approve the Meeting Minutes for August 7, 2023. Rondeau. Second: Williams. Vote: 5-0 (5-Yes; 0-No).

Motion to Approve the Meeting Minutes for August 21, 2023. Rondeau. Second: Williams. Vote: 5-0 (5-Yes; 0-No).

Motion to Approve the Meeting Minutes for September 18, 2023. Rondeau. Second: Williams. Vote: 5-0 (5-Yes; 0-No).

7:00 PM PUBLIC HEARING – Initial 10 Kenwood Circle

Site Plan Modification

Documents presented to the Planning Board are on file.

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

Mr. Edward Cannon, attorney on behalf of the applicant; Mr. Andrew Lee, Director of Operations of Lasership; Mr. Paul Oliveria of Haynes Group; Mr. Jeffrey Dirk of Vanasse & Associates (via Zoom); and Brandon Li of Kelly Engineering (via Zoom) addressed the Planning Board.

Mr. Cannon provided a review. He said the building has been in existence since 1987. The business that is there has been there since 2017. He said the prior business was a similar shipping business to that which the applicant operates. He said the applicant did not realize they needed a site plan modification as it was a very similar use. He said that when this was discovered, the applicant made this application so the Planning Board can review their operation and impose appropriate conditions for their operation. He said there were some issues that triggered that in terms of traffic along Kenwood and some parking issues which they believe they have addressed.

Mr. Lee stated that they run a small e-commerce small package company. He said they have about 100 locations across the country. He said they have independent contractors come into the building, scan, and load cargo vans with small packages; they do this very quickly and then leave. He said that when they come into the building, they turn their vehicles off as there is a no idle policy. He said they have parking attendants in the yard; they keep the flow off the street and through the parking lot.

Mr. David asked how many vehicles are there at one time. Mr. Lee said there are about 25 to 35 vehicles at one time. He said there are about 150 in total from about 6 AM to 9:30 AM. He explained each has a designated time to show up. Mr. Cannon explained that the yard marshals are from an outflow of this application process and Vanasse & Associates recommendations. Mr. Li shared his screen and reviewed the plan. He showed where the parking ambassadors are located on the site.

Representative of Vanasse & Associates said they performed observations at peak morning times. He explained how the parking ambassadors operate. He said they recommend that they keep a 24 ft. wide clearance between the valet parking area and the front row of parking. He said that other than that, they did not see any extensive cueing. He said that appears to be a successful solution.

Mr. Cannon addressed some of the comments/concerns raised by the fire chief and some of the measures that the applicant has done to address those comments. He said that signage and striping was recommended and the applicant says that is not a problem as a condition. He said they would add the dumpsters to the plan. He stated that the current plan seems to be addressing the flow of traffic and the concerns that were raised.

Ms. Love stated that this has been raised to the building commissioner. She said there has been a lot of concerns from other tenants in the area about parking on Kenwood and the traffic this brings. She said that the Planning Board can decide if BETA should review the traffic. She asked where the vehicles would be pulling into the building. Mr. Lee explained that there was a drive through on the east side of the building. Discussion commenced on the entering and exiting of the vehicles. Ms. Love recommended a drive through pattern and expanding the east side of the property for circulation.

Mr. Maglio said this issue was brought up to him in March. He said it seems like the applicant has a plan to address the issues; he has not gotten to the site to see how effective it is. He said something long-term may be needed.

Planning Board members asked questions and made comments. In response, Mr. Lee explained that the trailers unload between 2 AM and 5 AM with the packages that the drivers are delivering. He said the drivers deliver usually by 8:30 AM and occasionally to 9:30 AM. He said it is the drivers who are waiting and are the ones parking on the street. He said that it is recently that the parking marshals have been in effect, and they believe it is working. He explained that when the drivers are told to come back later, they do not tell them specifically where to go; the drivers go possibly to Dunkin' or wherever they want to wait. Mr. Lee said that now with these changes, the operation is going very smoothly.

Mr. Cannon said Lasership has been in business since 2017. He said that when they came to this location, their business was similar to the existing business, so they did not know that they needed approval for what they were doing. He said when they found out, they are now before the Planning Board. Ms. Wierling reviewed the letter from the fire chief indicating that the measures implemented have not alleviated the problem. She said they are still seeing cars parked. She noted concerns with the staging area blocking eight parking spaces including two ADA spaces. She asked for the hours of the business. Mr. Lee said the building is open 24 hours. He said he does not know what where the hours of the previous business. Ms. Wierling noted that parking ambassadors are not a long-term solution. Mr. Power asked that if the delivery hours are 6 AM to 9:30 AM, why are the ambassadors stationed from 9 AM to 1 PM. Mr. Lee said it was based on volume. Mr. Cannon said the times listed on the plan will be updated.

Chair Rondeau said that he is not keen on cueing in front of the handicapped spots and other spots in front of the building. He suggested some other type of system. He said the problem is when you tell the drivers to leave the site, they are driving around other areas of Grove Street during peak times. He suggested internal circulation and recommended BETA review this. He asked that if vehicles are driving into the buildings, are there gas traps in there. Mr. Maglio said he would look into that. Chair Rondeau said ambassadors are a temporary fix. He said to work with BETA and the town to get this fixed. He requested a circulation plan. Mr. Cannon said he thinks that makes sense.

Motion to Continue 10 Kenwood Circle, Site Plan Modification, to November 20, 2023. Rondeau. Second: Williams. Vote: 5-0 (5-Yes; 0-No).

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

Mr. Brad Chaffee, owner/applicant, and Mr. Rick Goodreau of United Consultants addressed the Planning Board.

Ms. Love said she went over the comments from the previous meeting. She said the applicant provided reserved parking for designated parking spaces for 118 East Central Street and provided curb stops for parking spaces 21-25. She recommended they show on the plans the location of the grease trap by the bay doors.

Mr. Goodreau reviewed the site plans. He said the project consists of a building addition and designated parking on the site to accommodate parking for 122 and 138 site locations. He reviewed the stormwater improvements to the site.

Mr. Maglio said any previous comments he had have been addressed. He said the only issue that came up is the two separate properties and if there is any kind permanent agreement for parking on one lot.

Mr. Gary James reviewed that they had a couple of stormwater comments. He noted that the applicant is requesting two waivers. He confirmed that there will be less pavement.

Mr. David asked about the proposed trash area. Mr. Goodreau showed on the plans how the area would be accessed. He asked about the proposed addition. Mr. Chaffee said it would be a one-story addition. He said the use is listed as office wholesaling on the plan. Ms. Williams asked where the trees are being proposed. Mr. Goodreau explained the locations. Mr. James pointed out that the applicant is proposing a 6 ft. vinyl fence along one edge where the trees are currently sparse. Mr. Goodreau reviewed the two property line areas. He pointed out where the 6 ft. fence on the other boundary line would be. He reviewed the two waivers: To allow the use of PVC and HPDE pipe for the roof drains and underground stormwater storage area, and to allow the site lighting to extend past the property line. Discussion commenced on light spillage.

Chair Rondeau asked if they could combine the two lots. Mr. Chaffee said he would like to do an easement for the liability and for the mortgages. He said he wants to keep them separate and do an easement for the parking. Ms. Love asked about the shared parking easement. She confirmed the easement would be given to 138. Discussion commenced on the easement and legal solution.

Mr. David asked about the location of the snow storage. Mr. Goodreau explained the location and said there are excess parking spaces they plan to utilize. Mr. Goodreau pointed out the jurisdictional wetland on the plans.

Motion to Close the public hearing for 138 East Central Street, Site Plan Modification. Wierling. Second: Williams. Vote: 5-0 (5-Yes; 0-No).

Motion to Accept the following waivers for 138 East Central Street, Site Plan Modification:

- 1. To allow the use of PVC and HPDE pipe for the roof drains and underground stormwater storage area, in grassed area.***
- 2. To allow the site lighting to extend past the property line as shown on the photometric plan***
- 3. To waive or remove pavement necessary to provide the required 4 ft. screening***

And the following conditions:

- 1. Work with the town attorney for the permanent easement for parking to 138 East Central Street prior to construction.***
- 2. Snow will be removed from the site in excess.***

Wierling. Second: Williams. Vote: 5-0 (5-Yes; 0-No).

Motion to Approve 122 to 138 East Central Street, Site Plan Modification. Wierling. Second: Williams. Vote: 5-0 (5-Yes; 0-No).

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

Ms. Love stated that the applicant requested a continuance to November 6, 2023.

Motion to Continue 3 Fisher Street, Site Plan Modification, to November 6, 2023. Rondeau. Second: Williams. Vote: 5-0 (5-Yes; 0-No).

7:00 PM **PUBLIC HEARING** – Continued
 Maplegate Solar South
 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 November 20, 2023.

Motion to Continue Maplegate Solar South, Site Plan Application, to November 20, 2023. Rondeau. Second: Williams. Vote: 5-0 (5-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; Mr. Brendan Pellerin, asset management director of Berkeley Partners; Mr. Daniel Mills, principal MDM Transportation; Ms. Connie Lu, project manager of Highpoint Engineering (via Zoom); and Mr. Andy Ramirez of Berkeley Partners (via Zoom) addressed the Planning Board.

Ms. Love reviewed that the Planning Board requested that the applicant upgrade the vehicle detection system at Washington Street and King Street and look at removing the sidewalk in front of 553 Washington Street. She reviewed that several options have been submitted by the applicant, but the applicant has indicated only

Plan 1 would be able to be implemented. She said she deferred to the Planning Board on how they want to handle the traffic.

Mr. Maglio reviewed that all previous comments have been addressed. He said other issues regard the traffic. He explained his concern about the traffic on King Street and that it is not an ideal situation. He explained the traffic for the current warehouses. He said with this proposed development, there will be an 83 percent increase in trucks going through that intersection. He reviewed the alternative the applicant provided.

Mr. James reviewed the applicant's stormwater infiltration and noted that they are still looking for a few more details.

Mr. Hartnett discussed refinements to the site entrance and the exit movements. He said the plan addressed the recommendations that BETA made, and he explained the improvements including a concrete rumble strip. He said they met with the Conservation Commission and expect that when all items are addressed the meeting will be closed in early November.

Mr. Mills reviewed the traffic plan. He stated that they have gone through BETA's and the Planning Board's comments. He addressed the traffic island at the signalized intersection. He clarified some of BETA's comments. He noted that they conducted a level service analysis of the intersection. He noted it is an atypical intersection. He explained that they analyzed the intersection as a four-way stop analysis. He said they analyzed the movements at the intersection. He said the intersection is expected to operate at a level C. He said they are willing to work with the Planning Board and applicant to develop signage regarding Ivy Lane. He discussed the King Street signal as shown on the plan. He explained what happens when a truck approaches the intersection. He explained it is a function of the right of way of Washington Street. He explained what would be necessary to improve that situation including cooperation with the private property owner. He said there is low frequency of vehicles tracking over the nose of the island. He explained some alternatives for this. He explained and showed examples of mountable features made for truck traffic. He suggested alternatives for the nose of the island including a rumble strip application. He recommended in all cases pulling the nose of the island back. He discussed options for a full right turn lane and that there is still a pinch point. He explained various options and the consequences of each. He discussed the options that would impact the abutting property.

Ms. Jaklyn Centracchio, traffic consultant of BETA Group, reviewed the concept that she said would be the best as it eliminates the pinch point and they would be better able to turn at the intersection. She said this takes care of what BETA's concerns are.

Chair Rondeau asked by about how many feet the abutter would be affected. He asked if the option would improve the abutter's site as well. Discussion commenced as to the encroachment onto the abutting property, the right of way, the curb line, and the grade. Mr. Hartnett reviewed that it may be about 30 ft. plus into the abutting property. Ms. Wierling said she understands what they are trying to do by looking into options that involve the abutter's property, but she thinks the abutter has made it clear that she is not interested. Ms. Wierling said therefore, they cannot keep revisiting asking the abutter if she is willing. Ms. Wierling said that option 1 is the only option to work without affecting the abutter; therefore, they should focus on making option 1 work as currently it is not quite where the Planning Board wants it to be. She said this is a valuable project for the town, but they need to make it work. Discussion commenced on what to do to improve option 1 and the traffic. It was noted that it is an acceptable level of service at level C.

Mr. David said he is okay with the mountable island but is concerned about signage and that the applicant would need to take care of that, not the Town. He said they need to address the cueing of the traffic light with the 83 percent increase in trucks. Mr. Mills discussed that currently the traffic light cueing is malfunctioning and they plan to use a different type of vehicle detection. Ms. Williams asked about the sidewalks that just end on Washington Street and that it is a safety issue. She asked what can be done as part of this project to

get the town closer to executing what is planned for sidewalk continuation. Mr. Maglio said there is some funding available for design work next year and possibly the following year for construction in 2025. Mr. Mello discussed the 398 trucks/cars per day and how many this is per minute. He discussed the pinch point. He said he understands option 1 is the option, but it will leave many people angry about the intersection when they are sitting and waiting. Ms. Williams requested additional clarification about option 1 and option 2. Mr. Mills explained the setup of option 1 and noted that there is some impact to the abutter's driveway in option 2. He clarified that the 400 truck trips per day is the total of both entering and existing. He said it would be distributed throughout the day, but there will be spikes.

Ms. Williams said that option 1 is not feasible, but it is the only option that we have to work with. So, we have to get this to a point that it is feasible. She said she does not feel like any improvements have been made. She read the last paragraph from Highpoint Engineering's letter dated October 11, 2023, regarding the traffic, and then she noted BETA's letter regarding the traffic situation. She stated that the letters have different information, and she said it is not clear if option 1 improves or does not improve the traffic situation. Ms. Centracchio reviewed whether she believed option 1 was an improvement. She said the loop detection is broken now and the applicant is showing that with the video detection, it will be fixed. Ms. Wierling said it is still a question as to whether this is an improvement.

Ms. Love said that maybe the Planning Board can discuss the type of stamped concrete, striping or rumble strips, and option 1. Mr. Maglio said that he would want to touch base with the DPW Director to get more information regarding the flush part of that median specifically for snow plow operation. Mr. James said regarding snow removal, he will defer to the DPW Director. Mr. Maglio discussed pulling back the island somewhat is a little improvement. He confirmed that option 1 is really the only option the applicant can do as the other options involve the abutting property. Ms. Wierling asked Mr. Maglio if he thinks option 1 can be further refined. Mr. Maglio said he does not think they have the room to do anything else. He discussed the video detection system and that it is mounted on the top and not in the road. Mr. David questioned if option 1 is the right option, and he said probably not, but if it keeps the truck traffic flowing, it is at least better than what it is currently.

Chair Rondeau said maybe we can address this on a period of time and try it and see what happens. He said if it does not work, we are going to have to throttle it back. He said that they have done that before if something does not work, they bring it back and revisit it. He said you would have to cut back on the number of trucks entering and existing the building on a daily basis. Mr. Hartnett said it is not unusual for projects like this to have a traffic monitoring program post construction to evaluate the performance of the intersection and the signal; he said he thinks it would be an appropriate condition and solution to give the Planning Board some comfort level.

Ms. Maureen Sullivan, resident at 871 King Street, said she is one house before the corner and she has a double easement onto Washington Street. She said she owns the property at 553 Washington Street, and there are two lots. She said they are not currently for sale. She said she does not need any advice from the Town to tell her to let them do their improvements. She discussed when the first trucking company was installed. She said sidewalks were put in for the Jefferson Remington School and what a waste of money that was as they are going to now take the sidewalks out. She said no one in the neighborhood wants 398 trucks travelling around that little corner.

Chair Rondeau said the sidewalks are staying. He noted option 1. He asked if the applicant can do another round of a sit down to work on option 1 with the best solution of the islands and signage. Ms. Sullivan asked about the islands and how they work. Mr. Mills explained that the divisional island keeps traffic on both sides of the road.

Mr. Hartnett said their goal is to continue to work with Mr. James on the final comments. He said they will then go to Conservation Commission for a decision. Ms. Wierling discussed the Town elections and that two

Planning Board members would be leaving which puts the Planning Board in a conundrum. Ms. Love said new Planning Board members just cannot vote; there will be three members who can vote. Discussion commenced on the continuance date of this public hearing. Mr. Hartnett said he hopes they can work collaboratively and that perhaps they can do some conditioning. Ms. Williams requested agreement between the professional traffic engineers as the Planning Board is relying on their information.

Motion to Continue the public hearing for 100-200 Financial Way, Site Plan Modification Application, to November 6, 2023. Rondeau. Second: Williams. Vote: 5-0 (5-Yes; 0-No).

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

Meeting adjourned at 8:52 PM.

Respectfully submitted,

Judith Lizardi,
Recording Secretary

--Planning Board approved minutes at January 8, 2024 meeting