

Town of Franklin



Planning Board

**August 9, 2021
Meeting Minutes**

Chair Anthony Padula 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: Joseph Halligan, William David, Rick Power, associate member Jennifer Williams. Members absent: Gregory Rondeau. Also present: Amy Love, Planner; Michael Maglio, Town Engineer.

7:00 PM Commencement/General Business

Chair Padula read aloud the Zoom platform call-in phone number and the Zoom link which were provided on the meeting agenda. The meeting was video recorded.

A. Pre-Final: Housing Production Plan

Director of Planning and Community Development Bryan Taberner stated that this item is under General Business tonight. In two weeks, he would like to return to the Planning Board and have a public hearing on the Housing Production Plan. Tonight, gives the Planning Board the opportunity to discuss the issues and their recommendations. The draft plan was reviewed and had a public review period; a lot of different comments were received. He stated that through the course of several meetings, the plan was presented to other organizations. There has been a lot of discussion on it, and most people have not had suggested changes. He stated that all the comments received during the public comment period went into a new attachment provided at the back of the document. This current document is a preliminary final document as it can still be changed. It is available on the Town's website.

Mr. Halligan stated that as it is such a large document, he has not yet studied all of it. He will need another week or so to go through it. He has no comments at this time. Ms. Williams stated that from the comments provided in the attachment, there seems to be a lot of support. She stated that she is still in support of many of the initiatives. Mr. David stated that he is still reading the document and has no comments. Mr. Power stated agreement with Ms. Williams. He stated that the comments he read were constructive and positive; it seems like the community-at-large is for this. He stated that he needs more time to go through it again, as well. Chair Padula stated that he is in agreement with the rest of the Planning Board regarding needing more time with the document. He stated that he began reading it and has gone through a lot, but has some left. He stated that he has some questions. He stated that the document refers to low low income, low income, and moderate income; these terms are not defined as to what they actually are. He stated that all in all, this is to increase the affordable in Town. He stated that the Town usually goes by 40Bs, and the Town maintains their 10 percent. He stated that he thinks this should be a ballot question, and all the people in Franklin should be able to vote on this as they are all taxpayers and property owners. A few board members should not be voting on this as it is a broad change for the Town. He stated that the Planning Board needs more time with the document.

Mr. Taberner stated that the Town Council and the Planning Board need to adopt the plan before it gets sent to the State; a positive majority vote of both boards is needed to send it forward. Chair Padula confirmed that this is not a time sensitive issue. Mr. Taberner stated that the longer it goes, the more outdated the information becomes. He noted that new Census data will be coming out soon.

Planning Board members agreed to continue this item to August 23, 2021. Ms. Love stated that no vote was needed as the item is under General Business.

B. Limited Site Plan Modification: 27 Forge Parkway

Ms. Love confirmed that she has no comments. Mr. Maglio reviewed his letter to the Planning Board dated August 3, 2021, which was provided in the meeting packet. He reviewed his comments including that the plan calls for a 6" curb to be installed along the loading area, but it does not specify what material is to be used. Additionally, the relocated asphalt parking island calls for asphalt curb. Typically, the material for proposed curb should either be reinforced concrete curb or granite. The project calls for an increase in impervious surface for the new loading docks with no accommodation for the increased stormwater runoff. The new pavement area should meet the current stormwater standards. Chair Padula noted that the Fire Department in their letter to the Planning Board dated August 4, 2021, stated they had no comments.

Ms. Love confirmed that BETA supplied new comments after the meeting packet was prepared. There was some communication between the applicant and BETA. Revised plans have come in based on BETA's comments. Chair Padula stated that the Planning Board did not have the opportunity to read the new comments provided by BETA. Chair Padula confirmed with the applicant that reinforced concrete would be used.

Mr. Mark Santora, engineer, stated that the owner requested that he come before the Planning Board for two items: the landscape plan and the proposed fencing for screening. He reviewed the provided landscape plan. He stated that this is a cannabis growing facility. The owner has concerns about growing grass around the building as they do not want to have any possibility of cross contamination or bringing in seeds or invasive species when walking into the building. They have requested the plantings and landscape features be moved from around the building to the perimeter of the site. He confirmed no landscape has been installed at this time. He reviewed the fencing for screening. He stated that they do not want anyone to have any unauthorized access to the rooftop. He discussed the new proposed fence location. Planning Board members asked questions. Mr. Santora stated that they are requesting decorative crushed stone around the building instead of mulch. The outer perimeter would remain the same. He stated that the balance of the plantings would stay about the same. Mr. Maglio stated that he has been out to the site, but not recently. Mr. Santora stated they are very close to complete and would be bringing forward a Form H.

Chair Padula stated that he would like to see the report from BETA. He stated that he went to the site today and was disappointed. He reviewed his concerns which included, but were not limited to, the following. He stated that he does not have a problem with the proposed gate as long as it is monitored and goes through the Fire Department. He stated that there is no way he will go for a fence on the roadway that circles the building without the fire chief's approval. He said that the site is full of silt. There is silt in the detention basins, and there are no silt socks in the catch basins; it is a mess of clay. The sidewalk is supposed to be 5 ft.; it became 4 ft. on the approved plan which was a mistake, and today it is a 37" sidewalk. He explained that curbing is not included in the sidewalk measurement. And, the sidewalk is pitching the wrong way. The catch basin in the middle of the roadway is not on the print. The drainage swale on the roadway in to the site is non-existent. He stated that there is probably an acre of rip rap on the islands around the parking lot, and there is a stairway as the parking lots are at two different levels. There is supposed to be a concrete curb. The stairway detail is not on the plans. He does not think all

these items will be prepared for a Form H for the next meeting. Chair Padula stated they are going to wait for BETA's responses. He noted that there are other grow facilities in Franklin and none had a problem with landscaping or seeds. Chair Padula advised the Planning Board members to make a site visit.

Mr. Santora stated that the catch basin drawings have changed and he has been before the Planning Board to get the changes approved. Mr. Santora stated that Mr. Crowley is aware of the three-foot sidewalk; if it has to be added to, it will be. He stated that the catch basins and pond will be cleaned out; the silt socks were in until a few days ago. Mr. Halligan stated that he is okay with the changes being proposed tonight; however, BETA needs to review and check off what needs to be done. Chair Padula stated that he is going to wait for BETA's report. He stated that the applicant will need a letter from the Fire Chief regarding the modification presented tonight. Mr. Santora stated that he would be happy to meet Planning Board members at the site.

C. 105 Constitution Boulevard, Field Change

Item not discussed.

7:05 PM

PUBLIC HEARING – Initial

Bylaw Amendment 21-874

Parking Downtown Commercial and CI Zoning Districts

Documents presented to the Planning Board are on file.

Motion to Waive the reading. Halligan. Second: David. Vote: 4-0-0 (4-Yes; 0-No).

Ms. Love stated that the Town Council referred to the Planning Board a change in the parking for the Downtown Commercial (DC) and Commercial I (CI) zoning districts. DPCD has drafted a proposed Zoning Bylaw Amendment that if approved would reduce the required amount of parking spaces in the DC and CI zoning districts. Current parking regulations for the DC and CI zoning districts, contained in Section 185-21(B) of the Town's Zoning Bylaw, are as follows: 1.5 parking spaces per housing unit; 1 parking space per 500 sq. ft. of gross floor area of non-residential development. She stated that the recommendation is to reduce the parking space requirement from 1.5 spaces to .5 spaces. She stated that DPCD reviewed the most recent Site Plan and Special Permit applications before the Planning Board that are located within the DC and CI zoning districts and areas around these zones and have developed the table provided in the meeting packet summarizing the related parking requirements. She stated that the Planning Board should decide if they will recommend or not recommend the zoning amendment to the Town Council. Mr. Taberner outlined the proposed changes.

Planning Board members asked questions. Mr. Power asked what was the catalyst for this change. Chair Padula stated that at a Town Council meeting about 2.5 months ago one of the Town Councilors recommended this change. Chair Padula explained that this parking space recommendation of .5 is based on unit, not number of bedrooms. Ms. Williams noted that most likely even commuters who now work from home would require at least one car per unit; therefore, .5 spaces per unit would not cover what is needed. She asked if any research has been done on this or is it a best guess. She suggested at least one space per unit and adjust the verbiage of the need based on type of unit/number of bedrooms. Chair Padula stated that he is not for this particular bylaw.

Mr. Halligan stated that this amendment was put in place to get some excitement for development in the downtown. It opens up doors for developers to want to explore the area. He stated that it is very hard to keep quality tenants downtown. He stated that we need to attract excitement uptown. He agreed with Chair Padula that when it is a special permit, the Planning Board gets the power to determine how many spaces are required. He does not think .5 parking space works, but it can increase interest. Mr. Power agreed that something needs to be done for the downtown, but he does not think this is the catalyst to do

it. Making the parking requirement less is only going to exacerbate the parking issue. Chair Padula stated that he would rather have it in the bylaws; then, with a special permit they can reduce it if the project warrants. Ms. Williams asked if one parking spot could be proposed. Discussion commenced on the number of parking spaces that should be proposed. Mr. David questioned what other towns have for parking requirements. Chair Padula stated that he would be amenable to one space, but he believes it should be left at 1.5 spaces. Mr. Halligan stated that he had a conversation with Town Attorney Mark Cerel on this item; he would like Mr. Cerel to attend the next meeting to review this. Mr. Taberner stated that this public hearing can be continued to the next meeting. He stated that if the requirement is made to be .5 spaces, it would be difficult for the Planning Board under a special permit to increase that number. Discussion commenced regarding if the verbiage should be changed and the need for development in downtown.

Motion to Continue Bylaw Amendment 21-874, Parking Downtown Commercial and CI Zoning Districts, to August 23, 2021. Halligan. Second: David. Discussion: ► Ms. Jane Callaway-Tripp, 607 Maple Street, stated that reducing the parking requirement to .5 spaces does not make any sense as she does not know anyone with half a car. There are buildings that will have residential units and businesses at the bottom. There also has to be a certain number of handicap spots available. She stated that for every single and multi-family dwelling in Wrentham they have two parking spots, in Medway they have 1.5 parking spots, in Bellingham they have 2 spots and in Walpole they have 2 spots plus there is one space for every four units for guest parking. She stated the problem with downtown is that it does need some revitalization. The reason people do not go downtown is that currently there is not enough parking; and, there is nothing downtown that is family oriented. She stated that this will help to revitalize the downtown; but revitalize it for who? She stated that passing this as a .5 parking space requirement opens the floodgates for more people; having more people downtown is not going to bring life to downtown as there is no space. ► A resident who did not identify herself stated that she was in agreement with Chair Padula for keeping the requirement as it is currently at 1.5 spaces. ► Mr. Stephan Accad, 43 Alpine Place, stated agreement with Chair Padula regarding keeping the parking at 1.5 spaces. He noted that for instance, people will need at least one car per unit in order to go grocery shopping. ***Vote: 4-0-0 (4-Yes; 0-No).***

7:15 PM

PUBLIC HEARING – Continued***Site Plan – 27 Forge Parkway******Site Plan Modification****Documents presented to the Planning Board are on file.*

Chair Padula confirmed with Mr. Maglio that the Planning Board is going to vote on this Site Plan Modification contingent upon the drainage; so, we are not going to endorse it until the drainage is sufficient. Mr. Maglio confirmed this item regards the solar canopy. He stated that his last comment letter was from July 21, 2021, and his main concerns were the solar canopies covering the existing bioretention areas on the site. He stated that Matt Crowley of BETA provided a comment letter on July 27, 2021, asking for a planting plan for the shade tolerant species. A representative from Ecogy Energy discussed the downspout system. Mr. Maglio stated that regarding the stormwater basins, BETA's concerns were that there are no existing plants in the basins. He does not know what was originally approved on the site modification from years ago; he will have to go back to review that. Representative stated that they would like to keep it as is; it is currently rip rap and rocks. After discussion, Chair Padula asked if it was possible to do the perforated subdrain. Applicant stated that he supposed it was possible, but it would be a different scope. Discussion commenced on the canopies covering the bioretention areas. Chair Padula stated that he was leaving it up to Mr. Maglio and BETA. Mr. Maglio stated that he could look at the original approved plans of 12 years ago to see if any plantings were supposed to go in. Ideally, stormwater standards call to make some kind of stormwater improvements; so, it would be good to see some kind of benefit from this project. A representative stated they are not increasing runoff.

Motion to Approve Site Plan - 27 Forge Parkway, Site Plan Modification for Solar Canopies contingent upon the drainage plans. David. Second: Power. Vote: 4-0-0 (4-Yes; 0-No).

Motion to Adjourn the Planning Board Meeting. Halligan. Second: David. Vote: 4-0-0 (4-Yes; 0-No). Meeting adjourned at 8:32 PM.

Respectfully submitted,

Judith Lizardi,
Recording Secretary

******Approved at the October 4, 2021 Planning Board Meeting***