

Town of Franklin



Planning Board

**July 13, 2020
Meeting Minutes**

Chair Anthony Padula called the above-captioned **Remote Access Virtual Zoom Meeting** to order this date at 7:00 PM. Members in attendance: Joseph Halligan, William David, Gregory Rondeau, Rick Power. Members absent: None. Also present: Amy Love, Planner; Matthew Crowley, BETA Group, Inc.

*As stated on the agenda, due to the growing concerns regarding the COVID-19 virus, the Planning Board will conduct a **Remote Access Virtual Zoom Meeting**. The Massachusetts State of Emergency and the associated state legislation allows towns to hold remote access virtual meetings during the COVID-19 pandemic crisis. In an effort to ensure citizen engagement and comply with open meeting law regulations, citizens will be able to dial into the meeting using the provided phone number, or citizens can participate by using the Zoom link also provided on the agenda.*

7:00 PM Commencement/General Business

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

A. Final Form H: 300 Financial Way (formerly 100 Financial Way)

Ms. Love stated a Partial Form H was completed in January for the site work; the applicant is currently before the Planning Board for the Final Form H. She stated there was concern about the signal at the intersection of Washington Street and King Street; however, Town Engineer Michael Maglio stated the signal was complete. She stated that BETA has been to the site and provided a report.

Mr. Crowley, BETA Group, stated he conducted a site visit on July 7, 2020; the site primarily conforms to the plans. He reviewed some exceptions which were reported in detail in his Site Observation Report dated July 7, 2020. Chair Padula discussed the pictures submitted with Mr. Crowley's report. He expressed concern about the curbing and asked about a sidewalk for the children who may walk to school. Mr. Crowley stated he did not recall a sidewalk being required. Ms. Love discussed requirements for walking distance to school. She stated that as it is a Charter School, most children do not walk to school. Chair Padula stated he would like to see the final draft; he does not recall that the Planning Board approved the school without requiring a sidewalk. He stated there are issues that need to be addressed before the Planning Board can issue a Final Form H. Mr. Rondeau and Mr. Halligan stated they recollected discussions about sidewalks. Chair Padula requested the documentation/decision on what was voted on regarding the sidewalk.

Mr. Doug Hartnett of Highpoint Engineering stated that he recalled the discussion about sidewalks; as the Charter School is basically a drop-off school, it was agreed a sidewalk was impractical. Therefore, there was nothing in the Special Conditions for a sidewalk. Discussion commenced regarding required sidewalks, gate, and signage. Chair Padula asked what is proposed for the islands. Mr. Hartnett stated that functionally the islands are not needed; it was just part of the design. He stated the contractor missed installing the islands. Mr. Crowley stated that without the islands the impervious area will increase but at a miniscule amount for the site. He stated if there were plantings designated on the islands, the plantings should be placed elsewhere and the parking area should be striped. Chair Padula stated this agenda item would be continued. He stated

the islands should be taken out, the spaces striped, and the fence finished. Mr. Gene Sullivan, contractor, stated the fence is completed. Mr. Hartnett stated that since BETA did the walk-through, items have continuously been completed. Chair Padula stated the Planning Board could sign the release if the islands could be striped this week. Mr. Sullivan stated that could be done. Mr. Rondeau asked what tenant was going into the site and what would be the traffic. Mr. Hartnett stated that he recalled the building was approved for a warehouse distribution center and any changes to that would facilitate returning to the Planning Board. He stated the 28,000 sq. ft. addition has been postponed indefinitely; they do not own that piece.

Motion to Accept Final Form H: 300 Financial Way (formerly 100 Financial Way), but not to be released until BETA Group verifies all concerns noted from this meeting. Halligan. No Second provided. Vote: 5-0-0 (5-Yes; 0-No).

B. Partial Form H: Residents at Dean Ave.

Mr. Brian McCarthy, RJ O'Connell & Associates; Mr. John Shipe, Shipe Consulting; and Mr. Sean Regan, Fairfield Residential addressed the Planning Board. Mr. McCarthy reviewed the completed areas and buildings. He stated that the landscaping is mostly complete in those areas. Temporary fencing separating the construction areas from the general public areas will be installed. They have submitted this partial submission certificate to the Planning Board so the building inspector can issue temporary occupancy.

Mr. Crowley stated that BETA completed a site walk and review of the approved plans. He confirmed the reviewed area of the site to be constructed in general conformance with the approved plans with the exceptions/notations as listed in his Observation Report dated July 7, 2020.

Chair Padula asked about the guardrail that was not installed and the parking near the dog park area. He stated that there is no concrete curb to stop the cars. Mr. McCarthy stated this was designed with a low-impact stormwater design so there is sheet flow rather than curbing.

Ms. Love stated the applicant has a temporary occupancy for building 2. They are before the Planning Board for buildings 1, 3, and 4. She stated there has been some ongoing issues which should be addressed regarding building 6 with the light filtering off to abutting properties. Mr. McCarthy said the landscaping must be installed in that area. They have adjusted some of the lighting in that area. He is fairly sure they can keep the lights off in that general area for the time being while they install the screening. Mr. Crowley stated shielding should be provided if there is light spillage. Mr. McCarthy stated adjustments can be made. Mr. Rondeau confirmed the barricade to the pool was installed. Mr. McCarthy explained the runoff and drainage system in the area; adjustments were made as it was running into the pool.

Chair Padula stated that he was embarrassed for the Town that the DPW Director and the Town Administrator allowed asphalt to be used on the curb and on the sidewalks in front of the development to save money.

Motion to Approve Partial Form H: Residents at Dean Ave., to release buildings 1, 3, and 4. David. Second: Rondeau. Vote: 4-0-1 (4-Yes; 0-No; 1-Abstain). (Mr. Halligan abstained.)

7:05 PM **PUBLIC HEARING** – *Continued*
 122 Chestnut Street
 Site Plan
 Documents presented to the Planning Board are on file.

Mr. Michael O'Brien, applicant, stated comment information from BETA Group requesting changes was received; therefore, revisions are being made.

Ms. Love stated the applicant has the Design Review Commission's recommendation. The landscaping plan did not match with the civil site plan. The Planning Board did not require a traffic study. She stated that some special recommendations are suggested.

Chair Padula stated that the Planning Board can also request changes to the plans. He stated the first parking spot on the plan is too close to the street; it should be eliminated. Ms. Love stated if it were eliminated, the applicant would not be able to meet the required parking. Mr. McCarthy confirmed he should reduce the number of parking spaces by the one closest to the street and the Planning Board would approve it with a waiver. Chair Padula noted that the driveway opening showed the curbing, but the roundings are not shown in the detail which should be the same height with a 7' reveal. Mr. Crowley discussed the inconsistency with the curb line and suggested a transition stone curb area to be consistent with what is currently in the area. Mr. McCarthy reviewed the requested changes he received. Ms. Love reviewed the changes that were needed including the turning radius for the dumpster. Mr. Crowley stated that it looks like BETA's comments have been addressed in the plan that the Planning Board has not seen yet. Ms. Love discussed the differences in the landscape plan that must be adjusted, including the proposed patios at the site.

Mr. Halligan noted that Mr. Maglio is not in attendance at this meeting; he noted that Mr. Maglio provided three comments in his letter to the Planning Board. Mr. Crowley stated they have been addressed.

Mr. McCarthy reviewed the three adjustments requested by the Planning Board: adjust the landscape plan, remove the parking space closet to the street and the Planning Board will approve a parking waiver for the loss of the space, and make sure the existing test pit the location is shown on the plan. Chair Padula confirmed the applicant was going to stay consistent with what is already on the street in regard to the roundings.

Motion to Continue the public hearing for 122 Chestnut Street, Site Plan, to July 27, 2020. Halligan. Second: Rondeau. Vote: 5-0-0 (5-Yes; 0-No).

7:05 PM **PUBLIC HEARING** – *Continued*
160 Grove Street
Special Permit & Site Plan
Documents presented to the Planning Board are on file.

Mr. Adam Braillard, representing the applicant; Mr. Jim Stukel of Stukel Group; Mr. Bill Halsing of Land Planning, Inc.; and Mr. Nate Seward, odor consultant, addressed the Planning Board for the development of a recreational cannabis cultivation facility. Mr. Brailard reviewed the applicant's history with the Planning Board and with the Town starting in June 2019 for this project. He stated that they have also worked with the Conservation Commission, filed an NOI, and received an Order of Conditions. He stated a request for a provisional license with the Cannabis Control Commission was filed and a provisional license was received. He noted their last Planning Board hearing was on June 1, 2020.

Ms. Love stated the applicant has been before the Planning Board numerous times. She reviewed her memo to the Planning Board dated July 8, 2020, specifically referencing her comments, suggested special conditions, and suggested odor mitigation conditions.

Chair Padula read aloud a letter to the Planning Board from Town Engineer Michael Maglio dated July 6, 2020. He stated the three comments listed on this letter will have to be added to the special conditions prior to endorsement.

Mr. Crowley stated that as of BETA's last letter, the applicant has satisfied all the outstanding issues; he has no further comment.

Mr. Halligan asked the Town Administrator if all agreements have been finalized with the Town regarding this growing facility. Town Administrator Jamie Hellen Town said the Town has all agreements in place.

Mr. Rondeau asked if there is a way to have BETA review this site and the other two projects on Grove Street for traffic to make sure they all work with each other and Grove Street will not be overloaded.

Chair Padula stated that with all the projects on Grove Street at this time, this project will probably have the least impact. Mr. Crowley stated that when a traffic study is done, it usually includes the surrounding sites.

Mr. Halligan asked about road improvements prior to occupancy. Chair Padula stated a left-hand turning light is being referred to. Ms. Love stated this can be specified in the special conditions.

Motion to Close the public hearing for 162 Grove Street, Special Permit & Site Plan. Halligan. Second: David. Vote: 5-0-0 (5-Yes; 0-No).

Chair Padula stated this item would be put on the next agenda under General Business for a vote and noted the special conditions that were discussed at tonight's meeting will be included.

Motion to Add this item to the July 27, 2020 Planning Board agenda under General Business for a vote. Rondeau. Second: David. Vote: 5-0-0 (5-Yes; 0-No).

7:05 PM **PUBLIC HEARING** – *Continued*

176-210 Grove Street

Site Plan

Documents presented to the Planning Board are on file.

Mr. Edward Cannon, attorney on behalf of Marcus Partners, developer of the project; Mr. Levi Reilly, Director of Development of Marcus Partners; and Mr. Giles Ham of VAI, traffic engineering, addressed the Planning Board. Mr. Cannon stated that at the last Planning Board meeting, they were asked to assume a 50 percent increase in traffic volume over the traffic study originally submitted, which they have done. He stated the Conservation Commission hearing was closed. He stated that Marcus Partners has worked with the Town regarding contribution dollars to improve Grove Street.

Mr. Reilly provided details about the traffic and contribution funds to the Town. He reviewed the increase in vehicle count on Grove Street. He discussed the proposed traffic counts and the impact of 50 more vehicle trips. In their opinion, this is a small overall proportion of the traffic on Grove Street.

Ms. Love reviewed her memo to the Planning Board dated July 8, 2020. She noted the applicant offered \$100,000 to the Town for road improvement. She discussed possible special conditions if the Planning Board were to approve this project. Chair Padula stated the main concern is traffic. He recommended all truck traffic go in the northerly direction.

Mr. Reilly explained the grant program. He stated that based on the comments received at the last Planning Board meeting, they looked to expand the \$100,000 contribution by the developer. He explained the State grant sponsored to fund infrastructure; the applications for next year must be submitted by August 28, 2020. He stated that instead of funding the \$100,000 contribution when the building is occupied, they would fund the money now with the hopes of securing the grant valued at \$2 million. He requested the Planning Board's feedback on the grant. Town Administrator Jamie Hellen stated that there are some residents who are very concerned about the condition of Grove Street. It has been an area of focus for the community and the Town has done utility improvements to lay the foundation for further improvements. He stated this State grant would be great for infrastructure improvements. He discussed that some of the \$100,000 from the developer would be used to hire a professional grant writer to apply for the grant. He noted it is a competitive grant program through the State's Department of Housing and Economic Development. Chair Padula asked if this would include a consideration for a set of lights. Mr. Reilly stated they feel like they would be most

competitive if they apply for funds for road improvements, not including the signal light. Chair Padula asked when DOT decides if an intersection needs a set of lights or who decides if a set of lights is needed.

Mr. Crowley stated BETA has no additional comments. He noted five conditions were recommended by BETA. Mr. Halligan asked about the updated traffic report using a 50 percent increase in traffic. Mr. Crowley stated he was not provided a copy of that traffic report to review; BETA reviewed the original report. He noted the original trip generation was not considered to be significant in the overall view of Grove Street. Ms. Love stated a decision had not been made as to whether BETA would review the revised traffic report.

Chair Padula confirmed the center entrance would be for car traffic only; the side entrances for tractor trailers going north. Mr. Reilly confirmed that would be for the new building only; not the original two buildings. Chair Padula confirmed all Planning Board members were on board with the grant. Mr. Reilly stated that of the \$100,000, about 50 percent would be used for the grant writer to get the application done by August 28, 2020; about 50 percent would be used for design. Mr. Halligan confirmed there is no guarantee for the grant. Mr. Reilly stated if they were not successful with the grant this year, they could resubmit for the grant in coming years. Planning Board members agreed they liked the idea of applying for the grant.

Motion to Close the public hearing for 176-210 Grove Street, Site Plan with the following recommendations: the recommendations will be on the front page of the approved plan, no trucks in the center entrance from the new development, all truck traffic will be directed north, and the grant will be applied for. It was added by Mr. Halligan that if someday a light is installed, the truck traffic condition will be removed. Halligan. Second: David. Vote: 5-0-0 (5-Yes; 0-No).

7:05 PM **PUBLIC HEARING** – *Continued*
 Maple Hill
 Definitive Subdivision
 Documents presented to the Planning Board are on file.

Chair Padula stated this is a continuation of the public hearing regarding traffic.

Ms. Love stated that at the last Planning Board meeting there was a presentation by Mr. Jeffrey Dirk of Vanasse & Associates, Inc., and Ms. Jaklyn Centracchio, BETA Group Traffic Consultant. Some comments were made by residents. The meeting was continued to tonight to take additional comments from residents. She noted a list of questions from residents that is provided in her memo to the Planning Board dated July 8, 2020. She noted a comment letter from the Town Engineer dated July 6, 2020, regarding information provided at the last meeting.

Mr. Chris Peterson, 66 Bridle Path, stated that the traffic report does not discuss any traffic that is coming from the other side of Town including from Bellingham and Woonsocket that is cutting through Franklin. The reports are not focused on the true level of traffic that will be cutting through. There are many tools that people have to try to avoid traffic and they will use this cut through. Mr. Dirk stated the traffic study that was prepared addresses all traffic that goes through Franklin. The traffic study is based on actual measured traffic on the roadway. He noted that BETA confirmed correct standards were used to conduct the traffic study. He stated the traffic-calming measures would not encourage people to use these roadways to cut through. Mr. Peterson stated the studies do not take into account when the school is open and families take their children to school.

Mr. Stephen Higgins, 4 Phaeton Lane, confirmed Chair Padula stated he was not in favor of medians; Mr. Higgins agreed. Mr. Higgins stated Mr. Dirk spoke about speed humps; he asked for examples of where they were located in neighborhoods. Mr. Higgins asked if the development went through, would there be phasing. Chair Padula explained the typical process of phasing.

Mr. Chris Campbell and Ms. Patricia Campbell, 12 Kimberlee Avenue, stated they have submitted a letter. They spoke about medians, snow removal, drainage issues, on-street parking, and possible noise issues due to the medians. Chair Padula stated he would only go for an extended speed bump for a traffic slowing device as plows can plow over it without trouble, and it does not make a lot of noise. Ms. Campbell expressed concern about the location of the speed bumps.

Ms. Maegan Schlitzer, 59 Bridle Path, asked about Mr. Dirk's suggestion to reduce the Bridle Path roadway to 22 ft. Mr. Dirk explained that would be done with curb line bump outs to create for a section of the road being narrowed. Ms. Schlitzer asked if a second sidewalk could be installed. Mr. Dirk stated adding a sidewalk is an effective way to narrow the road. Ms. Schlitzer stated she was in favor of adding a second sidewalk.

Ms. Lisa Brady, 36 Kimberlee Avenue, asked about the report indicating a 10-mile gap needing to reduce traffic from 40 mph to 30 mph. The mitigation was only going to close the gap 3 mph to 4 mph. Mr. Dirk explained the 3 mph to 4 mph speed reduction was to get to the speed needed for the available sight line. She asked how a police car would be able to sit on Maple Street to monitor traffic speed. Chair Padula stated that question would go to the traffic safety officer if people want the street patrolled. He confirmed the speed limit sign for the school starts at the corner of Brook Street and Lincoln Street. Mr. Dirk stated a radar speed feedback sign is something the developer was going to install and supply. Ms. Brady asked how the bump out would affect school buses and fire trucks. Mr. Dirk said the speed devices are typically set back 50 ft. from the intersection. Ms. Brady discussed the morning traffic on school days. Mr. Dirk stated that actual traffic volumes and counts are provided in the appendix of the traffic study. Ms. Brady asked about added costs to the Town if streets have to be narrowed. Mr. Dirk stated that anything to be done with the roadway would not affect the sewer system.

Mr. Steve Dunbar, 30 Madison Avenue, stated he sent the Planning Board a letter dated June 30, 2020, related to his traffic concerns. He reviewed his four points as outlined in his letter: stopping sight distance on Maple Street should be checked, adding 58 homes turns Kimberlee Avenue into a collector street, the two sharp radius on Kimberlee Avenue do not meet the requirements of a collector street, and the items proposed to control traffic will have to be maintained by the Town and he requested the Town and contractor to rethink the plan.

Pete asked why stop signs cannot be put at the intersections of these streets to slow the traffic. He stated he sent his concerns in a letter to the Planning Board. He suggested instead of shrinking the road, another sidewalk should be put on the other side.

Mr. John Cetrano, 64 Bridle Path, respectfully disagreed with Mr. Dirk's traffic study. He stated the traffic measurements did not take into effect someone driving down Pond Street and realizing that this is now a cut through. This additional traffic is not considered. Regarding traffic calming measures, when people are forced to slow down, as soon as the need to slow down is finished, they speed up to make up time and distance. He stated that bump outs and medians are not going to work.

Mr. Paul Irvine, 12 Bridle Path, said these mitigation factors are going to change the character of the neighborhood. He recommended a sidewalk on the odd side of Bridle Path, then the other mitigation factors would not be needed.

Ms. Laura Dombroski said she has done research on the traffic report. She noted that this new subdivision of 58 homes and the other two existing neighborhoods will be incorporated. She discussed the general rule of traffic peak hour volume. Based on that with the three neighborhoods together, they are at 150 average trips per day. This is more than Mr. Dirk's 60 vehicle trips per peak hour. She asked what level of involvement Mr. Dirk had with the coordination with MassDOT. Mr. Dirk explained his experience in preparing traffic studies. He reviewed the types of equations used to determine trip generation numbers. He explained this

traffic study complies with MassDOT standards. He stated MassDOT has no jurisdiction over this project; this project is subject to local review. Ms. Dombroski explained that there is such a disparity in the number; she requested Chair Padula review this. She is concerned that there will be more traffic than expressed in the 60 peak vehicle trips in the traffic study and that will affect the quality of life and safety. The disparity is three-fold.

Mr. Crowley stated he was taking notes during the meeting. He will issue a revised letter taking into consideration concerns the public expressed and Mr. Dirk's responses. Chair Padula stated it is unorthodox to change and narrow a road and eliminate sidewalks in a subdivision to save money years after it has been approved. The Planning Board tries to make the streets comply to rules and regulations, and the DPW then changes the roads.

Mr. Halligan stated Jeffrey Dirk is the traffic engineer hired by the developer. That is why the Town of Franklin hires BETA Group to review that report to find any flaws in the report. If something is not correct, Mr. Crowley and his group should find that. Mr. Crowley confirmed that BETA goes through the report and look for discrepancies.

Ms. Love stated there has only been one meeting to review the site itself. She recommended at the next Planning Board meeting, they move focus to site plan, subdivision plan, drainage, stormwater management, and any phasing. She suggested they may finalize traffic discussions in late August or a September meeting. She stated the applicant stated they will be filing an extension, as well.

Motion to Continue the public hearing for Maple Hill, Definitive Subdivision to August 10, 2020. Halligan. Second: Rondeau. Vote: 5-0-0 (5-Yes; 0-No).

Motion to Adjourn the Remote Access Virtual Zoom Planning Board Meeting. Power. Second: David. Vote: 5-0-0 (5-Yes; 0-No). Meeting adjourned at 9:41 PM.

Respectfully submitted,

Judith Lizardi, AL
Recording Secretary

******Approved by the Planning Board on August 17, 2020***