

BEDFORD PLANNING BOARD
Selectmen's Meeting Room
Minutes
March 20, 2018

MEMBERS PRESENT: Jeff Cohen, Acting Chair; Jacinda Barbehenn; Timothy Gray.

STAFF PRESENT: Tony Fields, Planning Director; Catherine Perry, Assistant Planner; Kim Siebert, Recording Secretary.

MEMBERS ABSENT: Shawn Hanegan, Amy Lloyd.

ALSO PRESENT: Taissir Alani, Director of Facilities; Pam Brown, Attorney, Brown & Brown PC; Richard and Winnie Callahan, 5 Springs Road/20 North Road; Lauren Ennis, The Bedford Citizen; Linda and Scott Finley, 90 Sweetwater Avenue; Justin Humphreys, TBA Architects; Bob Jeffries, TBA Architects; Doug Miller, civil engineer, Goldsmith, Prest & Ringwall (GPR); Bill Proia, Attorney, Riemer & Braunstein; Joe and Dave Venuti, Bedford Farms, 18 North Road; Cliff Washer, 2 Great Road; Alicja Zukowski, Samiotes Consultants.

Note: All meeting submittals are available for review in the Planning Office.

Mr. Cohen called the meeting to order in the Selectmen's Meeting Room at 7:32 p.m.

The Emergency Evacuation notice was read by Mr. Cohen.

DEVELOPMENT/PERMITTING SESSION

- Lane and Davis Schools--discuss site plans

Justin Humphreys and Bob Jeffries, TBA Architects; Alicja Zukowski, Civil Engineer, Samiotes Consultants; and Taissir Alani, Director of Bedford Facilities Department, presented site plans and details for the Lane School parking lot and the Davis School building expansion and parking lot.

Lane School: the parking lot expansion is an outgrowth of the Lane School building expansion, completed last year. The parking lot expansion includes 30 additional parking spaces, improved traffic flow, enlargement of the bus loop so that all 14 buses can queue/load simultaneously, a retaining wall along Sweetwater Avenue, plus added trees and landscaping. Mr. Humphreys said there are currently not quite enough parking spaces (99) for existing Lane School staff (101). The building expansion added six more classrooms and there are no spaces for educational specialists or visitors. The project will also provide better access to the rail trail near the school.

Mr. Gray asked if the parking lot expansion could be located further away from abutters' homes. Mr. Humphreys noted that the Lane School has a large site but the building and access are located near this side. Also, moving the parking lot would encroach on the playground, ropes course, and/or athletic field space. Sloping ground behind the school would also have to be leveled and the fire lane must be retained. Mr. Humphreys reported that three neighborhood

meetings were held and, in response to concerns, the parking lot was pulled further away from homes.

Ms. Barbehenn asked how abutters' requests for additional trees and landscape buffers are being resolved. Mr. Humphreys said trees will be added on both sides of a meandering fence and existing vegetation will be retained wherever possible.

Ms. Zukowski said a stone dust handicap accessible path would be created from the parking lot to the rail trail, keeping as many trees as possible. Mr. Humphreys said that a shorter, direct path would also cut through, creating bench and sculpture sites at the intersections. The short, direct path would not be handicap accessible.

Mr. Gray asked if the Planning Board has the authority to make changes to the plan. Mr. Fields noted in his memo that the Zoning Bylaw is somewhat internally conflicting on the application of site plan review to public schools. At the meeting, Mr. Fields said that Planning Board feedback could influence the final designs but the presentation was mostly informational since the Lane School building was complete. The remaining work involves only the parking lot and surrounding landscape amenities. Mr. Alani said the team is open to considering Board recommendations which would then be brought back to the Building Committee. He emphasized that changes had been made due to previous feedback, such as reducing the number of parking spaces and adding a charging station for electric cars. The only abutter request the team was unable to fulfill was turning off the gym lights, due to the fact that the facility is often in use.

Mr. Cohen opened the floor to public comment; no one rose to speak on the matter.

Mr. Cohen, a member of the Lane School and Davis School building committees, reported that the team worked hard to address neighborhood concerns. He views the new design as an improvement over the existing parking lot and bus and parent car drop-off areas.

Davis School: Mr. Humphreys said the project has three components: a building expansion of approximately 19,500 SF; building renovation of about 9,500 SF; and a parking lot expansion that adds another 30 parking spaces to accommodate at least 20 additional staff for the relocated integrated pre-school program plus parents/students for early intervention services.

The parent pick-up/drop off area, separate from the bus loop, will be expanded to accommodate 20 queueing cars. This, plus an improved bus loop for the 14 school buses, will enable the school to release the students in a more streamlined way, reclaiming 20 minutes of instructional time. Stormwater management on the site is being designed to alleviate flooding experienced by abutting properties. A fire access lane will encircle the building and a retaining wall will be added along the 25-foot wetland buffer. A notice of intent will be submitted to the Conservation Commission.

Ms. Barbehenn asked whether there has been feedback from the neighborhood, particularly from residents on Candlewick Lane. Mr. Humphreys said no one from Candlewick submitted comments but the team received other abutter requests for fencing to block car headlights. The streetlights will include full cut-off luminaires to minimize light pollution. A continuous sidewalk from Davis Road will be constructed. Catherine Perry asked if there are other path

connections. Mr. Humphreys said pathways exist into the site but no pathway improvements are included in the plan at present.

Mr. Humphreys displayed building renderings that included a new entry plaza and an expanded cafeteria. The first floor will house the pre-K program; a 9 classroom second story will be added on the existing one-story section that was designed to accommodate an upper floor. Two outdoor courtyards will be added within the building.

Mr. Cohen asked if the public had questions about the site plan; no one rose to speak.

The project is now out to bid; general contractor bids are due on Friday, March 23, 2018. Mr. Cohen, who serves on the Davis School Building Committee, noted that the project has been extremely well vetted.

- 36 North Road: Continued Public Hearing from 2/27/18—
Review a Special Permit application to redevelop property for a bakery and café with a residential apartment, and associated parking and landscaping, under the North Road Mixed Use Overlay District provision, Section 17 of the Zoning Bylaws

Mr. Cohen re-opened the Public Hearing at 8:20 p.m.

Materials in hand:

- Cover letter and application packet from Pamela Brown, Brown & Brown, PC, dated January 18, 2018
- Email comments dated February 5, 2018 from Heidi Porter, Board of Health Director;
- DPW comment letter dated February 14, 2018;
- Email comments dated February 21, 2018 from Christopher Laskey, Code Enforcement Director;
- Email comments dated February 6, 2018 from Elizabeth Bagdonas, Conservation Director;
- Comments contained in briefing memo dated March 13, 2018 from Tony Fields, Planning Director;
- Letter from Brown & Brown dated March 20, 2018 introducing an alternate conceptual plan that coordinates with the Bedford Motel property and requires cross-easements;
- Preliminary Layout Plan, dated March 7, 2018, prepared by GSA, Inc.

Pam Brown, Brown & Brown, LLC, explained that the applicant, Dana Strayton, owner of Ungion LLC, dba Prince Street Café, intends to demolish the existing building, formerly Fitzzy's Package Store, and erect a 1 ½ story building. She described it as having approximately the same footprint, although somewhat adjusted on the site. Taking advantage of the North Road Overlay mixed-use bylaw, the upstairs half story will be used as an apartment. Updates to the original site plan were based on preliminary comments by the Board and "in the spirit of good planning" and would require cross easements in coordination with the Bedford Motel property, also undergoing re-development. Ms. Brown noted that the existing pavement at Fitzzy's currently runs over the motel property line. The applicant is working on drainage but stormwater would be directed to the back of the site toward the wetlands, away from the street.

Ms. Brown stated that the Historic District Commission has approved both the demolition of the current building and the concept for the new use. The details of the building design and materials remain to be discussed.

Parking became a focal point for discussion. All agreed that shared parking based on daytime/nighttime uses and district-wide needs is a possibility that bears discussion with adjacent property and business owners. Based on parking ratios, Prince Street café would need 13 parking spaces for a 36-seat café/seasonal patio and the second-floor apartment; Ms. Brown believes she can make the argument that 12 spaces are sufficient for building use. Two or three additional employee parking spaces would be needed but Ms. Brown said that Ms. Strayton has been talking to Sullivan Tire across the street about providing these spaces. Ms. Perry pointed out that the application mentions the café as having 30 seats; the number will need to be clarified.

Mr. Gray questioned parking space #12 since it is too short. Ms. Brown said the aisle could be narrowed.

Ms. Brown said she has been meeting with the motel property owners, as she represents them and Ms. Strayton. Due to cost analysis delays, the motel property redevelopment is not as advanced as the Fitzzy's/Prince Street Café plan. However, Ms. Brown expressed a degree of confidence that the café could be built independently of finalized cross easements if there is an understanding that future agreements will be reached. Both projects are proceeding as though they will reach an agreement, but there are as yet no legal guarantees. Ms. Brown noted that the motel site has more parking capacity than it requires for its future mixed use as residential condominiums and retail businesses. She added that the revised conceptual plan is preferable because it has 2-way circulation.

Mr. Gray asked if there will be room in front of the Cafe for the streetscape amenities that are envisioned for the North Road area. Ms. Brown said that the distance from the building to the frontage property line is 16.7 feet and another 10 feet to the curb line/street; the front of the patio could be lined with plantings and there could be more landscaping within the Town's right of way.

Ms. Barbehenn said she is aware that there are different plans in play in the North Road district, including "gentlemen's agreements" under which required parking pars are met by cooperation between properties. She asked Ms. Brown if an informal survey of property/business owners could be conducted to determine if there is an appetite for developing a district-wide parking plan to benefit all parties. Ms. Brown said there are many complications inherent in reaching a larger agreement, although a property across the street coming up for sale could provide an area for parking. Shared parking already exists between Bedford Farms, Holi, Callahan's Karate and the other businesses in the 18 and 20 North Road buildings. Ms. Brown believes formalizing the gentlemen's agreements would not present as much of a problem as laying out and marking all the spaces to make sure there are enough to meet the needs of all. Ms. Barbehenn said, in order to yield more park-able areas, there would need to be modifications to the current parking lot traffic patterns.

Ms. Brown said she has met with the owners of Doyon's Appliances to see if shared parking or lot circulation could be improved by easement connections. However, she noted that Doyon's has "intense use" in the rear of the property, which would complicate full-access circulation.

Mr. Cohen asked if the dumpster pad for Prince Street Café could be moved within the site. Ms. Brown agreed the dumpster could be moved as long as a refuse truck can reach it.

Ms. Barbehenn wants to ensure that the upstairs apartment will be fully equipped as a living unit. Ms. Brown confirmed that it would be and that the stairs will be internal rather than external.

Ms. Barbehenn asked Mr. Fields if the Board could approve the building use portion of the plan tabling the parking approval until a comprehensive agreement can be reached with the multiple interested parties. Mr. Fields said a potential course of action would be to set up the approval with the flexibility to establish the details of the parking portion after other pieces of the Overlay District puzzle have been solved. The edge of pavement along North Road, for example, might be widened or narrowed in the Town plan. Ms. Brown said Ms. Strayton's urgency to get approval for the project is so lenders are assured the Town supports it.

Mr. Gray asked if Ms. Brown is aware of any other properties changing hands in the district. Ms. Brown said that the Wolcott family might be interested in selling the appliance store property at 40 North Road but the Doyon's company would have first refusal. Mr. Gray said he does not want to hold Ms. Strayton's project hostage until the larger parking questions are resolved. The Board discussed whether it might be possible to issue a Special Permit with some flexibility such as allowing for an amendment or providing for fewer seats in the cafe if, ultimately, there was inadequate parking.

Mr. Cohen said he could support splitting the building use and parking approval. Ms. Perry said the Board needs to be satisfied that parking will be adequate for the uses, but there could be a Plan A and Plan B, approved at separate times. Ms. Brown said final Special Permit approval is often contingent on one or more factors being completed or resolved, and suggested that the Board could permit the building use as a cafe with upstairs apartment with not more than 36 seats, which can be later amended for more or less seats. Mr. Gray expressed concern that, without a resolution about parking, there is no buildable plan. Ms. Brown noted there are some parking spaces on the site, even without the larger agreement.

Joe Venuti, Bedford Farms Ice Cream owner, said he is happy to see Prince Street moving adjacent to his shop and he thinks the revised plan is an improvement. However, the building site appears to be close to the Bedford Motel property line, leaving no room there for parking. Mr. Venuti said he has leased 12 parking spaces from the motel for 33 years and pays a considerable price for them. He would lose them if the Café goes forward as presented but without them, the Café would only have about 5 spaces. Alternately, if the motel property redevelopment is delayed, Ms. Strayton will struggle to accommodate her patrons without encroaching on Bedford Farms' parking.

Mr. Fields said, a comprehensive parking plan would benefit Bedford Farms and other businesses as well. But, if the motel proposal does not come to be, the circulation pattern would remain what it is today; the café could have some parallel parking spaces along the Doyon's

property line. The motel redevelopers have not yet filed an official application; Mr. Fields believes they have been revising the preliminary plans to align with HDC and Town goals for the district. Mr. Fields hopes the redevelopers, in the spirit of cooperation, would be willing to come to an agreement about parking.

Ms. Brown said the motel redevelopers have twice backed away from the project but, after conducting value management analyses, have returned to the project. Based on Planning Board and HDC feedback, they have made changes to the original designs. Ms. Brown believes they will be open to a discussion on parking but will need to become confident that any interim plan will protect their options.

Cliff Washer, 2 The Great Road, said he wants to see the Prince Street Café project come through but believes the only viable parking plan is one in which the motel redevelopers are willing to give up open space they now control. He asked if Ms. Strayton would have to buy the land and who would maintain a shared parking lot.

Ms. Brown said, with the current plan, the Café access from North Road is also the motel/condo/retail access, meaning that some collaboration would be required. The plan as presented will yield an overall better-looking streetscape, which is in everyone's best interest. Ms. Brown said, the way the condo/retail building is now envisioned, there would be no pavement between Bedford Farms and the condos; the area would be green space. She said, if necessary, adding a couple of parking spaces on that property line is possible.

Ms. Brown added that the condo/retail project might ask the Planning Board for height restriction relief for the portion of the building that is set back behind Bedford Farms. Joe Venuti said this request would not bother him. Ms. Cohen said, given the fact that building is in the Historic District, it will need to be pass muster with the HDC for aesthetics.

Dave Venuti, also of Bedford Farms Ice Cream, said he completely supports Ms. Barbehenn's comprehensive parking plan concept. He asked, however, if there is any precedent for approving a Special Permit that relies on another property to make the plan viable, particularly in an Historic District.

Mr. Gray said Ms. Brown is offering two plans, in case the preferred scenario does not come to pass. Mr. Cohen said, while the Board has, to his knowledge, never approved a Special Permit quite like this, there is a way to add conditions to make the overall plan work. The Board would approve the requested property use and allow the site to be developed with a building of a specified dimension. The worst-case scenario is that there might not be as many seats as originally requested.

Ms. Barbehenn asked if the Board has leeway to waive the parking requirement under special permitting rules. Ms. Brown said that the ratio could be waived but there would be a domino effect if the Board allowed the Cafe to go forward with inadequate parking; patrons would encroach on other business' parking spaces. Winnie Callahan, Callahan's Karate, agreed that people will park wherever they can, no matter which business "owns" particular spaces. All agreed it would be far preferable to address the larger parking issues of the district.

Mr. Cohen noted that the location of the Café freestanding sign on the site plan would not be allowed. Ms. Brown made note of this and said that, with the building as close to the street as the new one will be, a wall sign might be appropriate. Ms. Brown and Planning staff will discuss whether a sandwich board could be permitted and by what process.

Mr. Fields said the revised plan, which has only just been received, will be sent to Police, Fire, and DPW for comment.

Motion: Ms. Barbehenn moved that the Planning Board continue the Public Hearing to April 10, 2018. Mr. Gray seconded. The motion passed, 3-0-0.

- Carleton-Willard Village: Expansion of Independent Living Units—
Planning Board recommendation to Zoning Board of Appeals for a Special Permit

Doug Miller, civil engineer with Goldsmith, Prest & Ringwall, presented details of the proposed Carleton-Willard Village expansion that includes construction of 12 additional independent living units. Mr. Miller thanked Ms. Perry for writing up an accurate and detailed description of the project in a memo for the Board's review; he now asked the Board to make recommendations to the Zoning Board of Appeals in advance of an upcoming Public Hearing to be held on April 12, 2018. Mr. Miller noted he will also be meeting with the Fire Chief and Fire Prevention Officer on Friday, March 23, 2018 to receive their comments, and he will be meeting with the DPW engineers to discuss details of the stormwater system design and calculations. He noted that there will be no overflow from the 100 year storm.

Mr. Miller stated that the size of the residential units is around 1600 square feet, compared to existing units of around 1200 square feet, noting that there is a higher proportion of couples than in the past. He confirmed that the design is still for one story buildings (as in the previously presented concept). He also reported that Carleton-Willard held a meeting for abutters and seven attended. He noted that the 100 foot perimeter buffer still applies and stated that the project complies with the zoning, as recently amended.

Mr. Gray reported that, over the course of this project, Carleton-Willard has made enormous efforts to work with the Conservation Commission on clarifying public access to adjacent Conservation land. He believes the overall project will provide improved trail connectivity. Mr. Miller confirmed that the perimeter trail will have access from Old Billerica Road and Old Stagecoach Road. Mr. Gray also supports the increases to Bedford's senior housing inventory that the expansion will yield. Mr. Cohen agreed and said he likes that the plan does not create more impact than it has to. He asked that these comments be included in the Planning Board's recommendation to the ZBA.

Ms. Barbehenn asked if the pending Conservation Restriction (CR) makes allowances for an easement near the road intersection. Mr. Miller said that Carleton-Willard is amenable to whatever the DPW says is necessary to accomplish the potential improvement project. He noted, however, that Conservation has not yet heard back from Town Counsel on the proposed CR.

Mr. Miller added that, if the Town prefers the new sidewalk to be on the Carlton-Willard side of the stone wall along Old Billerica Road, Carleton-Willard is agreeable to providing an easement, similar to the existing sidewalk on the campus frontage.

Ms. Barbehenn asked whether there will be additional paths within the expanded area of development. Mr. Miller said, when the expansion was first discussed, there was feedback from Carleton-Willard residents that they did not want the new units to have amenities not enjoyed by existing units. Therefore, pathways or sidewalks were not added to the expansion site. Residents currently use the drives to circumnavigate the campus on foot. Ms. Perry pointed out that there is a sidewalk along the main driveway and it could beneficially be connected to the interior of the new court.

Members of the public did not comment on the Carleton-Willard project.

Motion: Mr. Gray moved to recommend approval for the reasons discussed of the Carleton-Willard expansion project to the Zoning Board of Appeals. Ms. Barbehenn seconded. The motion passed, 3-0.

BUSINESS SESSION

Preparation for Annual Town Meeting

The Board discussed logistics and strategies:

- The Great Road Zoning:

Ms. Barbehenn said she planned to record a voice over at Bedford TV about the Great Road Zoning amendments with which she would do a social media blast. Mr. Cohen asked Planning Staff to provide Ms. Barbehenn with the most recent updates to the Marketplace subdistrict map.

Ms. Barbehenn said her editorial on the Great Road articles will be coming out in The Bedford Minuteman this week. She will also be at the Vertical Band Concert this Thursday, at Mr. Donelley's high school Economics classes on Friday, and at the Community Table at Starbucks on Friday and Bruegger's Bagels Saturday morning. She will provide handouts. Mr. Cohen said he would join Ms. Barbehenn at the Vertical Band Concert, and Bruegger's for a short while.

Board members will also be in the lobby at the high school before Town Meeting with storyboards about the Great Road zoning articles. Ms. Lloyd will make the presentation at Town Meeting. Ms. Barbehenn noted the number of Town boards and committees that have endorsed the Great Road zoning articles.

Mr. Cohen will send the FAQs to the Planning Office; Mr. Fields will winnow the FAQs down for a handouts. A graphic was chosen to accompany it, and a map could be added. Mr. Cohen has also prepared some potential slides on the relation to the Comprehensive Plan.

Mr. Pierce suggested that the handout be posted on the Planning Board website in case hardcopies run out.

- Pine Hill Zoning:

Staff reported they have worked with Mr. Hanegan on his presentation. Copies were distributed.

Liaison Reports etc.

Ms. Barbehenn reported attending the Citizen Planners Training Collaborative Conference in Worcester.

The Board noted that the MAGIC legislative breakfast with Nicky Tsongas is coming up on April 10.

The Board also expressed their appreciation for Kim Siebert, Recording Secretary, diligent service.

ADJOURNMENT

Motion: Mr. Gray moved to adjourn the meeting at 10:10 p.m. Ms. Barbehenn seconded. The motion passed, 3-0.

Respectfully submitted,
Kim Siebert, Recording Secretary