



# BELLINGHAM PLANNING BOARD

10 MECHANIC STREET BELLINGHAM, MASSACHUSETTS 02019

## MEETING MINUTES

Thursday, January 11, 2024, at 7:00 pm

Bellingham Municipal Center

Arcand Meeting Room and Via Zoom

### **MEMBERS PRESENT:**

William F. O'Connell, Jr.	Chairman
Brian T. Salisbury	Vice Chairman
Philip M. Devine	Member
Dennis J. Trebino	Member
Nick Mobilia	Member
Robert Lussier	Alternate Member

### **ADDITIONAL OFFICIALS PRESENT:**

Amy Sutherland, Assistant Town Planner  
Tim Aicardi, Building Commissioner  
Tina Griffin, Recording Secretary – via Zoom

The Chairman called the meeting to order at 7:00 pm.

### **PUBLIC HEARING**

#### **306 Maple Street:**

The applicant, 306 Maple Street LLC, and owner, Andrew Sacher, said the project will consist of a single-story warehouse building containing 59,400 sq. ft. which includes approximately 4,950 sq. ft. of accessory office space at 306 Maple Street in Bellingham, approximately 11.5 acres of land, shown on Assessors Map 37, Parcel 6B Zoned Industrial.

The applicant let Board Members know that the peer review hasn't come in yet, but they still wanted to come into tonight's meeting to discuss additional details of the project and answer question that the Board may have. Mr. O'Connell let the applicant know that they would need to have the peer review back at least a week prior to the meeting in order to continue further discussion about this proposed project.

**Mr. Devine made a motion to continue this Public Hearing until Thursday, January 25, 2024. Motion was seconded by Mr. Salisbury and the voice vote passes unanimously.**

### **PUBLIC HEARING**

#### **85 Mendon Street:**

The applicant, MZHM, LLC, c/o Julie and Paul Rogers, 85 Mendon Street (formerly Pete's Bluebird) is seeking permits in accordance with the Town of Bellingham's Zoning By-Laws §240-16, the applicant seeks a Development Plan Approval, By-Laws §240-54, Special Permit, and Stormwater Management Permit for the project which is for a restaurant which is partially developed with building, parking and

utility infrastructure Street in Bellingham, shown on Assessor's Map 39, Parcel 1 & 1A, book 41400, Page 433, Zoned Business 1. The applicant is seeking a special permit for a reduction of parking.

Mr. Trebino made a motion to open the Hearing for 85 Mendon Street. Motion was seconded by Mr. Salisbury and the Hearing was opened at 7:25 pm.

Project Manager, Michael Dryden from Allen Engineering was present at tonight's meeting to provide information on the request for the reduction of parking at 85 Mendon Street.

This is a 2-acre site that is located within the Business Zoning District. A plan was shared with the Board to show the site and proposed building construction, as well as the parking area request. The majority of this site has been previously disturbed, and the plan shows a large slope at the rear of the property, and an open meadow that is actively mowed and maintained. There are already two curb cuts that provide access to, and from the property. This is a DOT jurisdictional road that is maintained by DOT and the applicant will have a filing into them for the curb cuts, sidewalks, and ramping, which is not expected to have any issues.

The existing building would be razed, and the proposed building would be a single-story 5,000 sf. building with a partial basement and an open patio area of roughly 850 sf. in the back of the building.

The item wanting to be brought forward to the Board tonight is for the parking. In accordance with the Zoning bylaw, based on the total square footage of the first floor of the restaurant and back patio, they would be required to have 138 parking spaces, which is far more than this facility needs. What is being proposed to the Planning Board tonight as part of the development plan approval is a special permit to reduce the number of parking spaces from 138 to 92 spaces, which would be about a 33% reduction. Based on his client's experience in the restaurant business, and the nature of this facility, that would be more than adequate to satisfy the needs of this facility.

As far as utilities, the electricity, water, and gas are all readily available on Mendon Street. There isn't sewer available, so there are currently two small septic systems servicing the prior use of the property. The applicant is proposing a Presby subsurface sewer system that will need to be approved by the Board of Health. A traffic study was also provided to the Board tonight, which didn't identify any issues.

As far as peer review, the Conservation Commission was met with last night and it was initially discussed to use BSC Group for the review because that is the Commission's peer review consultant. After some discussion, it was thought that the best way forward was to use the Planning Boards consultant for the technical aspects of the project and stormwater management.

Board members asked for additional information on how the applicant has decided on the number of parking spaces. Besides it being based on the number of seats, and patio area, etc., there still needs to be more information provided to the Board on the exact number of 92 parking spaces being requested. The applicant said that he could definitely provide the Board with more of a breakdown and information about the parking spaces and configuration at the next meeting.

Some residents were present at tonight's meeting to discuss concerns they had about tree removal, property screening, and lighting, which was all taken into consideration and the applicant will be working with concerns from the abutting neighbors.

The Chairman stated that the peer review will need to be done, so that the Board can continue forward with questions and more information about the proposed project. In addition, there will still need to be more information provided about how the requested number of parking spaces was determined. The applicant also stated that they will set up a meeting on-site with the abutters to discuss and answer some of their concerns.

**Mr. Salisbury made a motion to continue this Hearing until Thursday, February 22, 2024, and to extend the Decision deadline until March 29, 2024. Motion was seconded by Mr. Mobilia and the voice vote passes unanimously.**

### **CONTINUATION OF PUBLIC HEARING**

#### **North & Blackstone Street:**

The applicant, Ravens Homes, Inc, and owner, Raven Homes, propose to construct (12) 3-unit townhouses with associated improvements at North/Blackstone Street in Bellingham, approximately 20.8+/- acres of land, shown on Assessor's Map 59-Lot 60A, zoned Agriculture.

This application falls under the Town of Bellingham's Zoning By-Laws §240-101, Special Residential Use – Townhouse Dwellings, §240-16, Development Plan Approval, § 240-54 and Stormwater Management, and §240-60.

The applicant's representatives have requested a meeting extension until the January 25<sup>th</sup> meeting because the peer review has not been presented yet. They are still in process of working on that.

**Mr. Salisbury made a motion to continue this Public Hearing until Thursday, January 25, 2024. Motion was seconded by Mr. Devine and the voice vote passes unanimously.**

### **CONTINUATION OF PUBLIC HEARING**

#### **WS Development:**

The applicant, W/S Bellingham IV Associates LLC, and owner, Bellingham N Main Street II LLC, Hartford Av. Associates LTD, W/S Bellingham IV Associates LLC, & Varney Bros Sand & Gravel propose to construct a 700,000-sf industrial building for warehouse and distribution use with associated improvements on approximately 175.6 +/- acres of land in Bellingham, shown on Assessor's Map 24 Lot 12 and 10, Map 30 Lot 73-1, and Map 31 Lot 3, zoned Industrial. This application falls under the Zoning By- Laws §240-16, Development Plan Approval, §240-54, Stormwater Management, §240-138, Water Resource District Special Permit, §240-60, Flexible Parking Options Special Permit and §240-119, Major Business Complex Special Permit. The plans were prepared by Bohler Engineering.

Mr. Turner from Bohler Engineering was present at tonight's meeting to discuss some of the items that were questions of the Board at the November 16<sup>th</sup> meeting. Such as what is not expected to be seen from the 495 Corridor, what a winter condition might look like with trees, etc. Also, there was previous questions about the potential visibility from North Main Street that was taken into consideration.

Material was provided to the Board in regard to some of these questions. In addition, the Board's peer review, BSC Group, Inc., has provided a final letter acknowledging that all of the outstanding technical comments that were pending our discussions with the Commission have been resolved to their satisfaction.

Mr. Turner shared his screen to show current and proposed visuals of the area from Route 495, including visuals of what it would look like in the winter months. At the northern edge of the property there will be a number of coniferous trees added on the corner. These will most likely be Green Giant Arborvitae, which have a fast growth rate and wide canopy. They would be to fill in gaps where they start narrowing at the top. That screening will enhance the existing vegetation when it is fully leaved, as well as when the leaves are off the trees, as the Arborvitae's stay green year round. There will also be a similar planting configuration on the south side of the building and placed in a strategic location.

Photos of the area from North Main Street were then shared with the Board. The pictures show that from the liquor store across the street from the plaza, the only thing you see is the back of Floor & Décor. From that point you can't even see Home Depot, and the floor of the new proposed building would be approximately 20' lower than the floor of Home Depot. Additional pictures were shown as you would move further down North Main Street, the topography, vegetation, and distance of the building from the road would obstruct the view from North Main Street as well.

Board members thanked Mr. Turner for the information and photos that were provided this evening. It was noted that anything the Board has asked for more information on has always been addressed in a timely manner and is appreciated by the Board.

Board Members agreed that for the next step in this process, they should start discussing the parameters of a Decision, either favorable, or unfavorable, and to be able to have Mr. Kupfer start drafting a Decision.

**Mr. Salisbury made a motion to continue this Public Hearing to Thursday, February 8, 2024, with an extension deadline to March 15, 2024. Motion was seconded by Mr. Mobilia and the voice vote passes unanimously.**

#### **GENERAL BUSINESS:**

##### **Fox Run Release of Covenant**

On behalf of the current homeowner, Robert Cole, there is an unreleased Covenant on Lot 5 Fox Run Road. The Covenant is from 1984. The homeowner is asking for it to be released, as he is an innocent party and is not the first homeowner, he is the third owner, and unfortunately this has caused a Cloud on Title.

**Mr. Devine made a motion to sign the Release of Covenant for Lot 5 Fox Run Road. Motion was seconded by Mr. Mobilia and the voice vote passes unanimously.**

**NextGrid Mescalbean, LLC. (Parcel 1) – Sign Document**

Attorney Peter Brown was present at tonight's meeting to confirm that all changes to the Decision draft have been made and agreed upon since the December 28<sup>th</sup> meeting. There were three small areas that had changes voted on and weren't included in the last draft. Those areas have been identified and provided back to Ms. Sutherland and Town Counsel. The Board had closed the Public Hearing on December 28<sup>th</sup> and Mr. Brown is present tonight for execution of the Decision. Mr. Brown read the revisions that were made since the last meeting and also read a copy of the donation letter that was provided to the Board for review.

**Mr. Salisbury made a motion to sign the approval for the Decision made on Parcel 1. Mr. Devine seconded, and the voice vote passed unanimously.**

**Approval of Minutes**

**Mr. Salisbury made a motion to approve the minutes from the November 9, 2023, Planning Board meeting, as submitted. Motion was seconded by Mr. Trebino and the voice vote passes unanimously.**

**Mr. Salisbury made a motion to approve the minutes from the December 16, 2023, Planning Board meeting, as submitted. Motion was seconded by Mr. Lussier and the voice vote passes unanimously.**

**186 Maple Street – Gate Installation**

The applicant's representatives were present to discuss the gate installation issue at 186 Maple Street. A couple items mentioned were the gate location and being able to keep it in line with the fence, other than where it was previously located closer to the road. Also, with the previous discussion about a white vinyl fence and gate being installed, that fence style doesn't do well on sites and doesn't last long. The request to put in a chain link fence and gate with vinyl privacy slats was presented instead due to the strength that it can withstand through high winds.

**Mr. Salisbury made a motion to allow the chain link gates of proper height, with white vinyl, or other non-translucent slats be installed, and for the gate to be moved further back from the roadway to the area discussed and agreed upon. Mr. Devine seconded, and the voice vote passes unanimously.**

**Next Meeting:**

The next Planning Board Meeting will be held on Thursday, January 25, 2024, at 7:00 pm. This meeting will take place both in-person and via Zoom.

**Mr. Salisbury made a motion to adjourn the meeting at 9:43 pm. Mr. Devine seconded, and the motion passes unanimously.**

**Meeting adjourned.**

Respectfully Submitted,

*Tina M. Griffin*

Recording Secretary

Approved 1/25/24