



Town of Ashland

MASSACHUSETTS

Planning Board Meeting Minutes

Remote via Zoom Video Conferencing

May 12, 2022, at 7:15 PM

1 Present: Tricia Kendall, Chair
2 Lakshmi Krishnan, Clerk
3 Anna Tesmenitsky
4 Deepa Venkat
5 Marcelo Arjona
6 Kevin McClean
7
8 Others: Peter Matchak, Town Planner
9 Emma Snelling, Asst. Town Planner
10
11

Call to Order

12 Tricia Kendall called the meeting to order.
13
14

225 Pond Street Special Permit and Site Plan Review

15 Ms. Kendall reopened the 225 Pond St. public hearing.
16
17

18 Mr. Matchak noted that the location is the McDonalds along Pond St., and the applicant is seeking
19 approval for a double lane drive-through, which was approved by the Zoning Board of Appeals
20 (ZBA). He explained that the requested Special Permit would be for two digital menu boards.
21

22 Eric Debrule, with Bohler Engineering, provided an overview of the site plan and described the
23 circulation around the building, and the location of the menu boards. He explained that the second
24 lane and order point will help to make the order points more efficient and lessen the vehicle
25 stacking. Regarding the menu boards, he said their brightness and speaker volume levels will
26 adjust based on the time of day and are meant to be only visible for the ordering vehicle. Mr.
27 Debrule mentioned that onsite parking will be reduced and landscaped curbed islands with
28 plantings will be added. He explained that as a result of the ZBA process they are also required to
29 go before the Conservation Commission, due to the plan to relocate the accessible stalls to the
30 opposite side of the site within the resource buffer area.
31

32 Mr. Debrule noted that there is 18 feet of clearance between the ordering point entrances and the
33 diagonal parking spaces to the right that meets the Fire Dept. code. Painted pavement stripes will
34 delineate the drive-through lanes and the new ADA parking spaces.
35

36 The board asked the applicant to ensure that the Fire Dept. approves the circulation next to the
37 drive-through lanes and the turning radius delineation in the parking area. Mr. Matchak offered to
38 work with Mr. Debrule to consult the Fire Dept. The members noted the Police Chief's comment
39 about deterring patrons from turning left onto Pond St. when exiting the frontage, and asked the
40 applicant to ensure the recommendation is addressed with signage so patrons are directed to exit
41 from Nickerson Rd. They asked that the arborvitae plantings to buffer and screen the site from the
42 adjacent residential property are substantial and full year-round, and to consider reducing the
43 parking spaces in that are in favor of additional plantings. The members also asked to confirm the
44 hours of operation and whether both signs will be illuminated late at night.
45

46 Mr. Matchak said the application is currently under review by GCG Associates, the town's third-
47 party consultants.
48

49 Ms. Kendall opened the meeting for public comment.

50
51 Mark Dassoni, 49 Hawthorn Rd., commented on the placement of the handicap parking and
52 walkway, the drive-through traffic flow, and the parking lot circulation.

53
54 Ms. Kendall made a motion to continue the 225 Pond St. Special Permit and Site Plan Review public
55 hearing until June 9, 2022. The motion was seconded by Ms. Tesmenitsky; Krishnan-aye, Venkat-
56 aye, Tesmenitsky-aye, Arjona-aye, and Kendall-aye; with a vote of 5-0-0.

57
58 **100 Chestnut Street Special Permit and Site Plan Review – Continued from April 14, 2022,**
59 **meeting**

60 Ms. Kendall reopened the hearing. Mr. Matchak provided an update on the project's status and
61 reported that based on the previous meeting discussion the applicant submitted revised renderings,
62 updated landscaping, and site planting plans. Mr. Matchak also noted that Jeff Roloff, the attorney
63 representing the Fafard Co., submitted an email and memo concerning the site plot size. Lisa Mead,
64 Town Counsel will attend the May 26, 2022, meeting to address the memo.

65
66 Roy MacDowell, from Baystone Development, reviewed the current proposal and updated
67 renderings that showed an aerial view of the development and the surrounding condominiums, and
68 the site layout.

69
70 Matt Marotta, from ICON Architecture, reviewed the floor plan, the current landscape plan, the roof
71 plan, the elevation, and the site sections. He noted that at the rear of the building the roof areas
72 were cut back, and the decks inset an additional few feet to improve the depth of the backside and
73 to break up the massing. Mr. Marotta displayed several renderings with views of the site from the
74 perspective of the Village of Americas, and the plantings that will serve as a buffer and screen
75 between the developments. He also reviewed the updated exterior building color options. Mr.
76 Marotta talked about the development's smart growth and sustainable design strategies.

77
78 Todd MacDowell, from Baystone Development, reviewed the potential bus shelter which is a 9 ft. x
79 11 ft. x 9 ft. open structure with a 13 ft. x 11 ft. pitched roof. Todd explained that they are interested
80 in considering solar panels, due to solar tax incentives, but the incentives might change over time.
81 The members asked the applicant to provide renderings that show where the panels would be placed
82 on the roofs.

83
84 Tom Miner, from Hawk Design, displayed the preliminary landscape plan and described the plantings
85 planned throughout the site, and the external lighting.

86
87 Roy MacDowell said the bus shelter plans have been circulated to the condominium boards, and a
88 meeting will be held in the next few weeks with the condominium residents to ensure they support
89 the proposed design.

90
91 The members reviewed the sustainable features of the project, including that the project will now be
92 all-electric. Ms. Tesmenitsky encouraged the applicant to explore tax incentives and/or lease
93 agreements for solar panels, and the board requested a roof plan and section that showed the future
94 location of solar panels.

95
96 Ms. Kendall noted that the bus shelter should better blend with the proposed building and should
97 take into account feedback from the neighbors.

98
99 Mr. Arjona noted that the red on the exterior color options does not work, and the members
100 discussed the strengths of various color options and materials.

101
102 The members discussed the garage screening that must provide 50% airflow, and the best material
103 options that will meld well with the building design.

104
105 Ms. Kendall opened the meeting for public comments, however, there were none.

106

107 Ms. Kendall summarized that the general form of the buildings is no longer a point of conversation,
108 however, a list of items that the members will define, such as the landscaping plan, plantings, the
109 lighting plan, the bus shelter, and the garage screenings should be reviewed by the Design Review
110 Committee.

111
112 Ms. Kendall made a motion to continue the 100 Chestnut St. public hearing until May 26, 2022, at
113 7:15 pm. The motion was seconded by Ms. Tesmenitsky; Krishnan-aye, Venkat-aye, Tesmenitsky-
114 aye, Arjona-aye, and Kendall-aye; with a vote of 5-0-0.

115
116 **501 Pond Street Special Permit and Site Plan Review – Continued from March 17, 2022, meeting**

117 Ms. Kendall reopened the hearing and explained that Anna Tesmenitsky is an abutter, and
118 therefore has recused herself from the hearing. Kevin McClean, the associate Planning Board
119 member, will fill the fifth voting member seat.

120
121 Mr. Matchak provided an update on the application's status. He noted that the front entrance was
122 the focus of the last meeting that generated a number of questions from the members. The
123 applicant's responses included a memo dated May 5, 2022, that outlined those items, an updated
124 civil engineering plan, and a full Site Plan that Mr. Matchak said would be sent to the third-party
125 reviewer. The applicant also provided the development's updated landscaping plan drafted by
126 Copley Wolff Design Group, and a demographics report. Mr. Matchak explained that the
127 demographics report forecasts the population to be approximately 110 residents with 20 school-
128 aged children, based on metrics generated in 2021 for the Ashland Wood Apartment Complex. He
129 also reported on a memo that noted the proposed development would generate \$637,000.00 in
130 annual projected tax revenue, based on the town's current tax rate. Also, based on current budget
131 figures the town currently expends \$13,500.00 per pupil per school year, therefore the expenditure
132 for this development would be \$275,000.00 per year.

133
134 Matt Stevens and Ben Steven, from Trask Development, appeared. Regarding the number of
135 school-aged children that lived in Ashland Woods in 2021, Ben Steven's noted that the exact
136 number that attended Ashland schools is not fully known.

137
138 Ian Ramey, a landscape architect from Copley Wolff Design Group, reviewed the applicant's
139 responses from last week's meeting concerning expanding the evergreen screening, angling the
140 pedestrian crossing from the woonerf, expanding the parking lot travel lane widths, enhancing the
141 arbor structure in the plaza, and leveraging the landscape design for stormwater management and
142 sustainability using rainwater harvest tanks.

143
144 Robert Michaud, from MDM Transportation Consultants, reviewed the traffic impact assessment
145 for the location completed in August 2021. He reported that Pond St. traffic volumes and travel
146 speeds were assessed with respect to the proposed driveways. The proposed location exceeded all
147 of the minimum required elements of sight line, and the residential and small business components
148 that would generate traffic would represent about 54 to 68 total vehicle trips per hour which he
149 said are relatively moderate numbers and there would be ample capacity with little if any change
150 required as a result of this project.

151
152 Regarding fire apparatus circulation within the development, Mr. Michaud stated that access
153 points, aisles, and the woonerf would accommodate the Fire Dept's largest vehicle, but he would
154 confirm that the proposed tree canopies at the corners of the property would not interfere with
155 the ladder truck's turns. In summary, he reviewed his recommendations, which included ensuring
156 that the driveway sight lines are not impeded, but said he was comfortable with the plan as it
157 stands.

158
159 Concerning the left turn from the development, Mr. Michaud explained that the development's
160 driveways will not be high-volume, and therefore he did not see the need to provide an exclusive
161 left-turn lane leaving the driveway.

162

163 There was a brief discussion about the planned parking space size, and Mr. Michaud agreed that a
164 slightly wider space would be more appropriate. Also, the members suggested that the design of
165 the arbor structure is a bit more subtle than the examples that were presented.

166
167 Ben Stevens indicated that for the next meeting Matt Marotta would provide a full architectural
168 presentation, and they will also report on the bus stop, prepare the sustainable features list, how
169 the site development relates to the revised building façade, and how it relates to the neighboring
170 care facility.

171
172 Ms. Kendall opened the meeting for public comments, however, there were none.

173
174 Ms. Kendall made a motion to continue the 501 Pond St. public hearing until May 26, 2022. The
175 motion was seconded by Mr. Arjona; Krishnan-aye, Venkat-aye, McClean-aye, Arjona-aye, and
176 Kendall-aye; with a vote of 5-0-0.

177
178 ***Administrative Matters: future meetings, public hearings***

179
180 Mr. Matchak reported on the following items.

181
182 **Applications Received**

183 There are three public hearings scheduled for the next meeting, the Village of the Americas, 501
184 Pond St., a new application from Mazi Restaurant regarding outside seating, and an application for
185 tree removals.

186
187 **Future Retreat Date**

188 A survey will be sent to the members to determine the best date and time to schedule the next
189 Planning Board Retreat.

190
191 **Downtown Zoning Information Session Scheduling**

192 The date for the Downtown Zoning informational discussion via a public Zoom meeting will be
193 determined via a survey.

194
195 **CTPS: Creating Master Plans, Monday, May 23rd, 2022, at 6:00 PM**

196 The Citizens Training Planning Collaborative will take place via Zoom on May 23, 2022, at 6:00, and
197 the fee would be reimbursed.

198
199 **Update on Comprehensive Plan Letter Sent to Select Board**

200 The Comprehensive Plan letter adopted by the Planning Board was sent to the Select Board and
201 will be on an upcoming Select Board agenda. Mr. Matchak will post a Planning Board meeting at
202 that time, so members can participate in the meeting.

203
204 **Discussion of Application Review and Design Review Committee Communication**

205 The members agreed that the suggested protocol will be to give the Design Review Committee
206 (DRC) a defined scope for them to provide recommendations on a project. The members
207 suggested that the DRC provide brief written responses by a specific deadline, and present their
208 findings at a Planning Board meeting.

209
210 Ms. Kendall said she sent Cathy Rooney, from the DRC, written feedback regarding their proposed
211 bylaw changes for the fall Town Meeting, and she is awaiting a response. The members
212 recommended requesting the DRC's feedback prior to the next board retreat.

213
214 The members recommended seeking the DRC's feedback at the next board meeting concerning
215 outdoor seating and the impact on stormwater runoff.

216
217 **Discussion of Inclusionary Zoning Bylaw Development and Next Steps.**

218 This effort continues to move forward, and the goal is to have a deeper conversation and review
219 the bylaw and determine the timing.

220

221 **Connections Between Planning Board and Other Boards**

222 The members discussed options to move the process forward, including cross-board discussions,
223 expanding the committee, or adding the topic to a retreat agenda. Regarding Sustainability
224 Committee goals and the Comprehensive Plan, the members discussed the need to obtain the
225 Select Board’s support, and determine the long term goals toward achieving the town’s NetZero
226 objectives.

227

228 **Return to In-person Meetings – July 15, 2022**

229 The legislation order regarding remote meetings expires and if there is no action from a legislative
230 level to extend the order the Planning Board will resume in-person meetings on July 15, 2022. The
231 possibility of hybrid meetings is still to be determined.

232

233 **Approval of Minutes**

234 Approval of the minutes was postponed until the next meeting.

235

236 The members thanked Lakshimi Krishnan for her time on the board. Ms. Krishnan said she enjoyed
237 her time serving. She reminded Mr. Matchak that a Planning Board replacement to fill her spot on
238 the MWRC will be needed.

239

240 **Adjournment**

241 Ms. Kendall made a motion to adjourn the meeting at 10:55 pm. The motion was seconded by Ms.
242 Krishnan; Krishnan-aye, Venkat-aye, McClean-aye, Arjona-aye, and Kendall–aye; with a vote of 5-0-
243 0.

244

245

246