

HOPKINTON PLANNING BOARD

Monday, July 25, 2005 7:15 PM  
Hopkinton Town Hall

MINUTES

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PRESENT: Mark Abate, Chairman, Brian Herr, Vice Chairman, Scott Aghababian, Sandy K. Altamura, John H. Coolidge, R.J. Dourney, Claire Wright

.....Elaine C. Lazarus, Planning Director

**1. Site Plan Review – 71 Frankland Road – Liberty Mutual Insurance Co.**

Rick Barry, representing Liberty Mutual Insurance, described the plan to modify the exterior of Building E at the Liberty Mutual Research Center. He stated that this section of the facility is a metal Butler style building constructed in 1972. He stated they want to add a full brick facade to blend with the new construction. He stated that new windows would match the ones on the rest of the building.

Ms. Wright noted that the Design Review Board had spent a lot of time on the project a few years ago, and this was the piece that was to come later. She noted that this building would have been done along with the rest of it, but was not because of financial reasons. She stated that the Design Review Board had no problem with this proposal. She noted that an abutter has a concern with lighting. She noted that the Board has used the Liberty Mutual facility as an example of good lighting design for others to follow. Ms. Altamura referred to a letter received from Mr. Koeller on Frankland Rd.

Jonathan Koeller, 72 Frankland Rd., stated the site is now much better than it was before the major project a few years ago, and applauded Liberty Mutual's efforts in this regard. He stated there are a few items that he would like addressed, such as screening in the front, where there is a gap in the trees.

Mr. Barry stated he is prepared to address the items in Mr. Koeller's letter which are related to this project, items 1, 2, and 6. He noted that item #1 relates to light from a particular fixture on the building, noting that the fixture that the architect had selected was not a full cutoff one, and they propose to replace that with a full cutoff fixture. He noted that this fixture is only used in two places, over emergency egress doors. Ms. Wright asked if the lights will illuminate the building. Mr. Barry stated that because they are mounted on the side of the building and they need to illuminate the ground and walkway, one will notice some lighted up area on the building, which can't be avoided.

Mr. Coolidge stated he drove by the site a few nights ago, and noticed that some nearby residents have lights out front that are more offensive/brighter than the ones on this site. He stated that the facility lighting is mild compared to those. He stated there needs to be some security around the

building. Ms. Altamura asked if the lights are turned down at night as required. Mr. Barry replied yes. He noted that he visited the site on Friday and discovered that there had been a lightning strike within the last year or so and someone had replaced 3 time clocks, but all were set for dusk to 7 AM but one was supposed to be set for dusk to 10 PM. He stated that was changed.

Ms. Wright asked if there will be lights on Building E. Mr. Barry stated they would be the same as the rest of the building, which were approved by the Board.

Mr. Abate noted that a clump of birch trees would be cut adjacent to Building E and asked if it could be replaced. Mr. Barry noted that the birch trees don't screen anything because the branches are all above the roofline.

Mr. Aghababian arrived at this time.

Mr. Barry stated that an arborist has said the tree can't be saved.

Mr. Koeller stated he is concerned about noise from the HVAC units. Mr. Abate noted that just because the minor project is proposed, it isn't an opportunity to open it up to a long list of items having nothing to do with it. Mr. Koeller stated the building HVAC is noisier than it was before and when the birch tree is removed it will be worse. Ms. Altamura asked if the building maintenance people could look at the units to see if they can do anything. Mr. Barry stated it is the compressors that make the noise, and he does not think that anything can be done.

Ms. Lazarus noted that the tree could be replaced in another location that would fill the gap in the screening in front.

Ms. Wright asked about other items in Mr. Koeller's letter regarding night lighting inside the building. Mr. Barry stated it is office space, and that area, the second floor of building F, has the same lighting as the rest of the building. Mr. Koeller stated that Building F is lit inside at night and the lights aren't blocked.

Mr. Herr arrived at this time.

Mr. Barry stated there could be people working or cleaning crews there. He stated that the lights are shut off at 10:00 PM unless someone is there. Mr. Abate asked if the people in the building could be asked to be sensitive and shut off the lights earlier if no one is there. Mr. Koeller stated that if light levels at night could decrease in the second floor of Building F, that would be good.

Ms. Wright asked if the bollards can be turned off at night. Mr. Barry stated they are tied in with other light circuits that are on for security.

The Board decided to request that the Zoning Enforcement Officer check the night light levels to see if they conform to the Board's 2002 Site Plan Review Decision.

Mary Pratt, 102 Fruit St., asked if shades could be put on the windows. Mr. Barry stated that the windows already have vertical blinds. He stated that he will look at the light levels.

Mr. Abate asked if the birch tree could be replaced by an evergreen in the gap in front of Mr. Koeller's house. Mr. Koeller asked if it would be put at the street or next to the others at the parking lot further back. Mr. Barry stated he would put it next to the parking lot, as the other location would block sight distance at the driveway entrance.

It was moved and seconded to find that the Site Plan Review criteria had been met and to approve the Site Plan with the following conditions:

1. The light fixtures to be replaced on the building shall be full cutoff fixtures.
2. The applicant shall review the level of lighting on the site at night and determine if the light levels can be lowered, while still providing sufficient light for safety and security. This shall include an evaluation of the lights inside the second floor of Building F.
3. The applicant shall replace the birch tree to be cut with at least one evergreen, to be planted in the screening gap across from 72 Frankland Rd. The applicant may plant additional evergreens in this location if desired. The applicant will work with the abutter at 72 Frankland Rd. to determine the exact location of the planting.

The Board voted six in favor of the motion with Mr. Aghababian abstaining.

## **2. Fay, Spofford & Thorndike, LLC**

Stephen Chapman and David Glenn of Fay, Spofford & Thorndike (FST) appeared before the Board. Mr. Chapman noted that he has been involved in working for the Town since the 1980's, and listed the areas of expertise of the firm's employees, such as traffic/transportation, and electrical/lighting. He stated that his background is in stormwater management and utilities, and Mr. Glenn's is in road construction, grading, and stormwater. He stated that the firm was founded in 1914 and has offices in several states. He stated they have over 200 employees in a variety of disciplines, and 90% of their work is in the public sector. He stated their largest clients are state and municipal governments. Mr. Glenn noted that they have done work for several town departments in addition to the Planning Board, including the ZBA, Board of Health, and the DPW. He stated they have a good feel for the Town, having worked for several departments over several years.

Ms. Altamura noted that Board members aren't experts in engineering. She stated it would be good of some things in FST's reviews could be emphasized or highlighted when there are serious concerns. She stated that the Hopkins School was an example where two busses passing would have hit mirrors, and that sometimes things like that get lost in the sea of material but they are very important. Mr. Chapman stated that they could prioritize items. Mr. Abate stated they could be bolded in the reports also.

Mr. Abate asked how they are paid. Mr. Chapman stated they have hourly rates and project review costs are estimated, provided to Ms. Lazarus, who makes sure there are sufficient funds deposited from the applicants which are placed in an escrow account. He noted that initial deposits with applications typically cover one review, but when revised plans are submitted, they use the same process. He noted that the site plan review deposit doesn't often cover the costs,

and this is more of a problem area. It was noted that the Board might want to look at raising the fee.

Mr. Herr asked who their chief competitors are. Mr. Chapman replied that some are VHB, EarthTech, and Coler & Colantonio. Mr. Herr asked if the Board's engineering services were bid out. Ms. Lazarus stated that the inspections are bid out but the review services are not. Mr. Glenn stated that their rates for the Town are low and competitive.

Mr. Aghababian asked if applicants approach them to resolve problems and if this works. Mr. Glenn stated they are happy to meet with anyone and there have been mixed results.

Mr. Coolidge asked if the Board should change its process and streamline anything. Mr. Glenn noted that the timelines are tied to the regulations. He noted that with more complex projects, there could be concentration on specific issues at designated meetings.

Mr. Herr noted there could be more review of lighting. Mr. Chapman noted there are national standards that could be used but the Town should look at those first. Mr. Glenn noted the Board could tighten up site plan review with respect to lighting. He noted that they could provide someone to come to a Board meeting and talk about lighting.

### **3. E. L. Harvey & Sons**

Jim Harvey and Doug Harvey, E. L. Harvey & Sons, and Steve Richmond, attorney, appeared before the Board. Mr. Abate stated that the Board is limiting this discussion to the process for site plan review hearings, and will not discuss the specifics of the project or its merits.

Mr. Harvey stated they agree with the earlier discussions they had with Mr. Coolidge about having the hearing organized by topics. Mr. Abate asked if they want the Board to give them the times and they will select the order, or would they rather that the Board select the order. Mr. Richmond stated they want to make sure that the consultants can be present for the relevant discussion. He stated they could start with an overview, then go to the traffic consultant, then stormwater/environmental, then lighting. He asked if the Board has a preference with respect to the order.

Ms. Altamura stated she would like to start with an overview. She asked if the Board will schedule a site walk. Mr. Richmond stated they would like Board members to contact the Harveys to walk the property individually or in small groups, noting they have had large groups there before. He stated that there has been vandalism recently and they don't want to show a lot of people around there again. Mr. Coolidge stated this makes him uncomfortable, because the Board might be accused of subverting the public process, which he wants to be clean, quick, and thorough. In response to a question, Ms. Lazarus suggested that the Board find the most effective way for it to see the site, noting that finding a time for group site walks when everyone can make it has been difficult.

Mr. Abate suggested that the first meeting be an overview, and that Board members contact the Harveys to set up a visit. He suggested one subject a meeting, with the following topics: lighting, traffic, stormwater, landscaping, and building design and placement. He recommended

that the Board meet at the High School Auditorium. Ms. Altamura stated that the Board should make sure there is enough time in the hearing for it to have discussion. Mr. Herr suggested a presentation of 30 minutes or less, then Board questions/discussion for 45 minutes to 1 hour, then 1 hour for public comment. He stated he did not want to have the meeting go more than 3 hours.

Mr. Harvey stated they would talk to their consultants and see how long they need for their presentations. Mr. Coolidge suggested that building design and placement be presented before internal traffic circulation, because changes to that could affect circulation. He stated he would like to resolve a topic at a meeting and not revisit it again. Mr. Aghababian stated that if someone makes a comment and it is in the record, it doesn't have to be repeated at every meeting, and the Board should make sure people don't do that.

Mr. Richmond stated they have seen that there is a big turnout at the beginning, then fewer people are in attendance as it goes along. He stated that Site Plan Review is more of a conversation and that could be lost in the auditorium. He suggested meeting at the beginning in the auditorium but then moving to another forum later that is more conducive to conversation. The Board agreed to move the meeting location once it appeared as though it could be accommodated in a more comfortable room. Mr. Abate stated he will limit discussion to the topic scheduled. Mr. Richmond stated they would be ready to submit the application in 2 or 3 weeks. Ms. Altamura stated she would like to start the hearings in September when people are back from vacation and there is a full Board.

#### **4. Administrative Business**

The Board set the following meeting dates: October 17, October 24, November 14, November 28, and December 12.

The Board voted unanimously to pay outstanding bills.

The Board voted unanimously to approve the Minutes of June 27, 2005. The Board voted 5 in favor with Mr. Herr and Mr. Dourney abstaining to approve the Minutes of July 11, 2005.

#### **5. 81-P Plan – Mayhew St. and Davis Road – Hopkinton Housing Authority**

Ms. Lazarus described the plan which would separate the parcel that will contain the new Senior Center from the remaining land of the Housing Authority. The Board voted unanimously to endorse the plan as not requiring approval under the subdivision control law.

#### **6. Zoning Advisory Committee**

The Board discussed whether to appoint a Zoning Advisory Committee this year. Ms. Altamura stated it is important to include other Boards in the process of looking at zoning bylaw amendments, and this would be lost if the Board did the work on its own. Mr. Abate asked Ms. Altamura if she would chair the ZAC, and Ms. Altamura replied no. Ms. Lazarus suggested choosing only a few items to look at this year, noting it already promised to look at the Garden Apartment bylaw. She added that in the last few years it has been difficult to get a quorum for ZAC meetings.

Mrs. Pratt stated the Board should look at a bylaw pertaining to Low Impact Development techniques for handling stormwater runoff.

Mr. Dourney suggested looking at commercial development issues in addition to the Garden Apartment bylaw.

It was noted that at the meeting on August 8, 2005 neither Mr. Abate nor Mr. Herr would be present. It was decided that Mr. Aghababian would run the meeting.

Adjourned: 9:30 PM

Elaine C. Lazarus, Planning Director

Approved: August 22, 2005