

Planning Board –Regular Meeting

Longmeadow Public Schools' Central Office, Room A15 – 535 Bliss Road, Longmeadow MA 01106
Zoom Virtual Platform – www.zoom.us, P: 646-558-8656, Meeting ID: 891 4499 8157, Password: 907997
Wednesday June 7th, 2023 7:00 p.m.

Members Present: Cheryl Thibodeau, Chair; Walter Gunn, Clerk; Bruce Colton, Don Holland, Chris Legiadre.

Members Absent: None

Others Present: Director of Planning Corrin Meise-Munns, Rachael Kraez, Jeff & Kathleen Kraez, Bari Jarvis, Jason Tsitso.

The *Planning Board Hybrid Regular Meeting* was called to order at 7:00pm by Chair Cheryl Thibodeau.

Meeting Minutes Review:

1. **Regular Meeting May 3rd, 2023:** Walter Gunn made a motion, and was seconded by Cheryl Thibodeau, to accept the minutes as amended. All in favor 5-0, motion passed.

Sign Application – The Latest Kraez, 473 Longmeadow St., Case #20230530-5:

Walter Gunn made a motion, and was seconded by Chris Legiadre, to accept the aforementioned application as complete. Roll call vote – Ms. Thibodeau: yes; Mr. Gunn: yes, Mr. Colton: yes; Mr. Holland: yes; Mr. Legiadre: yes. All in favor 5-0, motion passed.

Ms. Kraez provided the following highlights:

- a) The rectangular sign is to be 40 sq. ft. and will match in size, proportions and technology the other signs found in the business complex.
- b) It was clarified that, contrary to the initial application filing, the sign is to be internally illuminated.
- c) In addition to the lit sign, four sets of vinyl window decals will be installed in the storefront and main entrance door, each of them individually design and reflecting a size of 2.3 sq. ft., 4.55 sq. ft., 5.8 sq. ft. and 2.55 sq. ft. The window decals will cover less than 20% of the storefront and entrance door surface.

Walter Gunn made a motion, and was seconded by Bruce Colton, to approve the sign application as presented and amended (to reflect the illumination feature) for The Latest Kraez at 473 Longmeadow Street. Roll call vote – Ms. Thibodeau: yes; Mr. Gunn: yes, Mr. Colton: yes; Mr. Holland: yes; Mr. Legiadre: yes. All in favor 5-0, motion passed.

Site & Design Review Application, Request for Amendment to Waiver – The Latest Kraez, 473 Longmeadow St., – Case #20230427-3:

Walter Gunn made a motion, and was seconded by Bruce Colton, to accept the aforementioned application as complete. Roll call vote – Ms. Thibodeau: yes; Mr. Gunn: yes, Mr. Colton: yes; Mr. Holland: yes; Mr. Legiadre: yes. All in favor 5-0, motion passed.

Ms. Kraez provided the following highlights:

- a) The applicant seeks a change of use from “retail” to “food service” to open a bakery on the aforementioned property to sell baked goods and coffee; the space’s layout displays up to six (6) stools for customers waiting for their order and the business is expected to have a maximum of four (4) employees at once during its busiest shift.
- b) Hours of operation haven’t been defined but a possible schedule would be from 7am to 5pm. Opening date is expected to be mid Fall to allow for the completion of interior renovations.
- c) A finding of adequate off-street parking was issued by the Zoning Board of Appeal at their April 25th, 2023 hearing.
- d) While there are no plans to provide outdoor seating, the applicant is open to exploring this possibility with the landlord but noted that, due to spatial constraints, outdoor seating wouldn’t exceed four seats. The Zoning Board of Appeals’ parking finding determined that with this future food service use the business complex would still provide a surplus of nine parking spaces.

Bruce Colton made a motion, and was seconded by Don Holland, to waive the requirements for a Site & design Review Application for The Latest Kraez at 473 Longmeadow Street, case #20230427-03. Roll call vote – Ms. Thibodeau: yes; Mr. Gunn: yes, Mr. Colton: yes; Mr. Holland: yes; Mr. Legiadre: yes. All in favor 5-0, motion passed.

Site & Design Review Application, Request for Waiver – One Way Brewing, 807 Maple Rd., – Case #20230525-4:

Walter Gunn made a motion, and was seconded by Bruce Colton, to accept the aforementioned application as complete. Roll call vote – Ms. Thibodeau: yes; Mr. Gunn: yes, Mr. Colton: yes; Mr. Holland: yes; Mr. Legiadre: yes. All in favor 5-0, motion passed.

Mr. Tsitso indicated that the state’s Alcoholic Beverage Control Commission (ABCC) denied his recent permitting request for liquor sale and consumption on the outdoor patio approved by the Planning Board back in 2022 due to the fact that the outdoor seating area wouldn’t be contiguous to the brewery’s indoor space. This required a redesign of this outdoor concept with the following features:

- a) The new small patio (approximately 15’ x 22’) will be located directly in front of the brewery’s retail space and its boundaries will be defined with clearly defined water-filled traffic barriers on the south boundary as well as fencing on the eastern and western boundaries. All elements of the patio are to be removed during the colder months.
- b) The two parking spaces that are to be occupied by the seasonal patio are to be relocated within the site.
- c) A small gate will be installed in the pedestrian walkway to control access to the space.
- d) With the patio being clearly visible from the brewery’s interior, state regulations do not require the presence of a server at the outdoor area but monitoring of the space will continue in the form of fencing and a security camera, with a server eventually being assigned to the area during busier times.

Don Holland made a motion, and was seconded by Walter Gunn, to waive the requirements for a Site & design Review Application for One Way Brewing at 807 Maple Road. Roll call vote – Ms. Thibodeau: yes; Mr. Gunn: yes, Mr. Colton: yes; Mr. Holland: yes; Mr. Legiadre: yes. All in favor 5-0, motion passed.

Sign Application – Wolf Swamp Athletic Fields, 700 Wolf Swamp Rd., Case #20230531-6:

Walter Gunn made a motion, and was seconded by Bruce Colton, accept the aforementioned application as complete. Roll call vote – Ms. Thibodeau: yes; Mr. Gunn: yes, Mr. Colton: yes; Mr. Holland: yes; Mr. Legiadre: yes. All in favor 5-0, motion passed. Additionally, Walter Gunn made a motion, and was seconded by Bruce Colton, to waive the application fee for the applicant, a town department.

Ms. Jarvis presented a package containing a main facility post sign (approximate size 8’ x 5’) as well as wayfinding and traffic signs to direct vehicular and pedestrian flow throughout the various fields offered by the facility. The sign materials are a combination of aluminum and vinyl to match the aesthetics of similar signs found throughout town.

Don Holland made a motion, and was seconded by Walter Gunn, to approve the sign application submitted by Longmeadow Parks & Recreation for signs to be installed at te Wolf Swamp Athletic Fields, case #20230531-6. Roll call vote – Ms. Thibodeau: yes; Mr. Gunn: yes, Mr. Colton: yes; Mr. Holland: yes; Mr. Legiadre: yes. All in favor 5-0, motion passed.

Discussion - Draft Town Manager’s Policy on Town Fields, Facilities and Gym Sponsorship Banners:

The board is in receipt of a copy of a draft dated January 6, 2023 for a banner policy to be implemented specifically at Wolf Swamp Athletic Fields, Turner and Bliss Parks as the Longmeadow Park & Recreation Department wants to ensure that the policy’s intent isn’t conflicting with current sign regulations. This proposal is different from a previous citizen-led effort that was proposed at the 2019 Town Meeting and is meant to allow only field-facing signage at specific locations in order to provide the department with a revenue mix to offset the impact of rising operational costs; the content was prepared based on abutting towns’ sign policies that have already been in place for some time and adapted to the needs and expectations of this town. Ms. Meise-Munns has reviewed the document and does not foresee a conflict between current this draft proposal and current sign regulations and there is a clear distinction that the latter focuses on public-facing signs. Chair Cheryl Thibodeau made a motion, and was seconded by Don Holland, to recommend to Town Manager the draft Policy Town Fields, Facilities and Gym Sponsorship Banners dated January 6, 2023. Roll call vote – Ms. Thibodeau: yes; Mr. Gunn: yes, Mr. Colton: yes; Mr. Holland: yes; Mr. Legiadre: yes. All in favor 5-0, motion passed.

Discussion – Planning Board Letter to MEPA in response to Eversource’s Gas Reliability Project Environmental Impact Report:

After the board submitted a letter to MEPA on July 2022 opposing the gas pipeline project, Eversource submitted a response that, in Bruce Colton’s view, do not address the specific inquiries he board raised in their original letter, such as the pipeline’s proximity to Longmeadow’s aging water supply infrastructure that has experience many breaks in recent times and the threat this poses to gas supply infrastructure. Therefore, Mr. Colton has presented a draft for a rebuttal correspondence that aims to press for answer to these and other unanswered concerns. Chair Cheryl Thibodeau offered some suggestions to enhance the content and intent of the letter and subsequently made a motion, which was seconded by Don Holland, to generate a final letter to Eversource’s response of the July 2022 Planning Board.

Discussion – Draft Revisions to Planning Board Rules and Regulations, Continuation:

The board is looking into the application filing process, specifically the aspect of when to consider an application as officially “received and deemed complete” by the board. With scarce guidance at the state level on how to develop Site & Design Review procedures, the board must thoughtfully navigate, per Ms. Meise-Munns’ recent conversations with Town Counsel, the legal weight of the concepts of “receiving and/or accepting an application” at the Town Clerk’s Office or a Planning Board meeting vs. “deeming an application as complete”. An additional issue is the distinction between the types of applications as not all applications trigger the preparation of a public hearing within 65 days of being received, per Mass General Law. The board discussed past experiences of what were deemed application mishandlings that resulted in legal issues for the Town and what are the lessons learned from those instances.

Ms. Meise-Munns has worked with town staff to review deadline requirements for legal notice publications and mailing of abutter notifications (two tasks associated with preparation of a public hearing) and as such, she recommends that the applicant files an application 20 days prior to a targeted meeting date; this would allow the Community Development Department sufficient time to set up public hearings if required by some applications and start the distribution of project documents among other town departments for their review and input. The board will consider this possible timeline along with other tasks as well as their benefits and challenges and continue the discussion at a subsequent meeting.

Other Business:

1. Aside from the May Longmeadow Long Range Plan Steering Committee, two other activities where successfully held recently: one was a “visioning workshop” where residents from various age groups participated and provided input and the other was an art exhibit and the presentation of the Arts Integrated Studio-produced film “Longmeadow Climate Change Perspectives: A Short Documentary Film” was presented.
2. The next LPR Steering Committee is scheduled for later in the summer; an additional community engagement event is also being considered.
3. Due to the 4th of July holiday, the board will move its July meeting from July 5th to July 12th.
4. Don Holland will not be seeking another term as Planning Board member. With this being is last meeting, his fellow members expressed deep gratitude for his many years of service to the town and wished him the best on this next phase of his life.

Don Holland made a motion, and was seconded by Cheryl Thibodeau, to adjourn the meeting. All in favor 5-0, motion passed, meeting adjourned at 9:16pm.

Respectfully submitted,

Bianca Damiano