

Planning Board –Regular Meeting

Longmeadow Adult Center’s Multipurpose Room – 211 Maple Road, Longmeadow MA 01106

Wednesday March 1st, 2023 7:00 p.m.

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

Members Absent: None.

Others Present: Director of Planning Corrin Meise-Munns, Selectman Dan Zwirko, Steve Walker, Melissa Pevey, Dave Marinelli, Patty Gambarini, Richard Foster, Harry Auerbach, Betsy and Al McKee, Carla Gunn.

The *Planning Board In-person Regular Meeting* was called to order at 8:12pm by Chair Cheryl Thibodeau.

Sign Application – Longmeadow Cemetery, 60 Williams St., – Case #20230301-1:

Chair Cheryl Thibodeau made a motion, and was seconded by Bruce Colton, accept the 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.

The Longmeadow Cemetery and First Church share an easement for the driveway that provides access for both properties from Williams Street. First Church tenant, the Longmeadow Montessori preschool, has a student drop-off and pick-up procedure where a one-way carline is formed at the start of this driveway and exits onto Longmeadow Street. While the driveway was originally designed as a two-way corridor, its width can no longer sustain this function, therefore the Longmeadow Cemetery has proposed a plan to reroute the cemetery’s vehicular traffic to the Parkside Drive access point, thus separating vehicles visiting the cemetery from vehicles involved in the preschool’s carline and avoiding traffic congestion as well as potential hazards.

The applicant is proposing the installation of three new directional signs:

- a) Shop drawings “A” and “B”: two foam signs to be installed on Williams Street entrance pillar, each to be 3 sq. ft. with white background, black lettering and beveled edges to match the existing greeting sign nearby.
- b) Shop drawing “C”: one foam sign to be installed on Parkside Drive fence, size to be 4.5 sq. ft. and with the same characteristics as described above.

It was noted that the shop drawing “C” sign exceeds the maximum allowable size of 4 sq. ft. for a directional sign but the applicant offered to reduce its size to attain compliance. Subsequently, Walter Gunn made a motion, and was seconded by Don Holland, to accept the sign application for Longmeadow Cemetery’s directional signs, case # 20230301-1 as amended to reflect shop drawing “C” sign’s size reduction and ensure its final size does not exceed the 4 sq. ft. cap. 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.

Documents presented: Sign Permit Application dated February 14, 2023

Site & Design Review Application, Request for Waiver – New Tenant, Longmeadow Shops, 732 Bliss Rd., – Case #20230301-2:

The application’s filing fee was submitted by the applicant this evening, therefore the application was deemed as complete by the board.

Mr. Walker presented a plan, elevation and renderings to describe the storefront upgrades that will be part of the new tenant’s space, which will be occupied within the next year by the owners of renowned restaurants The Federal and Posto for a new venue offering Mexican cuisine. Architectural elements found in other parts of the business complex are being incorporated in the design for aesthetic purposes and a portion of the storefront system will be composed of operable windows that, when open during the warmer months, will provide an indoor/outdoor experience for restaurant users as the creation of a patio isn’t feasible due to the sidewalk’s width. The exhaust for the ventilation system for this space currently exists on the roof and is anticipated to remain; a standpipe for Fire Department connection found on the front elevation will be relocated but will remain within the storefront’s overall area.

Director of Planning Corrin Meise-Munns added that Police, Fire, Building and Engineering Departments have all reviewed the materials supplied by the applicant and of them has confirmed that they have no concerns regarding the proposed alterations.

Bruce Colton made a motion, and was seconded by Don Holland, to approve the Waiver of Site and Design Review decision for the new project to be located at 732 Bliss Road, case # 202303-1-2, as presented. 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.

Documents presented: Complete Site & Design Review (Waiver) application with renderings dated 02-16-2023.

Meeting Minutes Review:

1. **Regular Meeting February 6th, 2023:** Walter Gunn made a motion, and was seconded by Bruce Colton, to accept the minutes as presented. 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.
2. **Special Joint Meeting with Select Board February 6th, 2023:** while the document had been prepared, it was not properly listed on the meeting agenda, therefore Walter Gunn made a motion, and was seconded by Bruce Colton, to postpone the review of these minutes to the next available meeting. 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.

Public Hearing – Proposed Revisions to Longmeadow Zoning Bylaw and Subdivision Rules and Regulations re: MS4 Permit Compliance and Stormwater Management Standards

Walter Gunn made a motion, and was seconded by Bruce Colton, to open the public hearing to discuss the MS4 permit-related recommended amendments to the Subdivision Rules & Regulations as well as Zoning Bylaws; legal notices for this hearing were advertised in two local paper on February 15th and February 23rd as well as on the town's website. 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. Meise-Munns indicated that this hearing follows the presentation provided by the Pioneer Valley Planning Commission (PVPC) at the special joint meeting with the Select Board on February 6th where it was explained how these proposed amendments to the General Bylaws, Zoning Bylaws and Subdivision Rules & Regulations are a response to the 2016 edition of the Municipal Separate Stormwater Sewer System (MS4) permit, which increased the stringency of the regulations that aim to reduce the amount of stormwater pollutants that eventually make their way to U.S. waters. The Town has been unable to update their regulations in a timely matter and as such remains out of compliance with the requirement and may be subject to enforcement action from MassDEP and EPA at any given time; these recommended amendments attempt to rectify this status.

Comments from the public in favor or against the matter:

- Dr. Dave Marinelli (9 Overbrook Ln): inquired about the impact this more stringent language may have on older homes with longstanding systems that discharge into the stormwater systems.

While the scope of Dr. Marinelli's inquiry fall under the purview of recommended amendments to General Bylaws, which are not the subject of the evening's hearing, Ms. Meise-Munns did acknowledge a relation between all the regulator documents but emphasized that the amendments being proposed for the Zoning Bylaws and Subdivision Rules & Regulations will not impact homeowners: the Zoning Bylaws target specific design standards typically found in large scale developments that are subject to the Site and Design Review process, for which single-family homes are exempt— unless a single-family residential property may trigger a Land & Disturbance permit due to the disturbance of one acre or more of land as defined in the bylaws. However, any residential systems that, regardless of their age, currently discharge into the town's stormwater system are in violation of current regulations that have been in the Town's Bylaws for a number of years and are not part of the recommendations currently under review; any effort from town official to bring those homeowners to compliance would be an issue unrelated to MS4 permit-related recommended amendments. Furthermore, Mr. Gunn reiterated that the recommendations under review at the hearing impact commercial projects subject to the Site & Design Review process and any future development that subdivides land.

Walter Gunn made a motion, and was seconded by Bruce Colton, to close the public hearing for the MS4 permit-related recommended amendments to the Subdivision Rules & Regulations as well as Zoning Bylaws. 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.

Vote – Proposed Revisions to Longmeadow Zoning Bylaw and Subdivision Rules and Regulations re: MS4 Permit Compliance and Stormwater Management Standards

The Planning Board is cognizant of the importance of amending town bylaws in a timely manner to adequately reflect the 2016 MS4 Permit requirements and bring Longmeadow back to a compliant status. The board discussed the following items:

1. While some language may seem broad to applicants and designers, especially when it pertains to the definition of “low impact development” or the use of the term “impractical” to define certain scenarios, there are a number of standards that can be followed to help guide that conversation between reviewers from the Town and applicants, while still providing the Planning Board, as a judicial public body, authority to apply flexibility and discernment in unique situations.
2. Ms. Meise-Munns indicated that recommendations describing certain design standards (i.e., right-of-way, travel lanes) have been reviewed and accepted as presented by department heads in Emergency Management, Fire Department, DPW/Town Engineer.

On proposed revisions to Subdivision Rules and Regulations:

In general, the board agrees with most of the proposed changes for the Subdivision Rules and Regulations, with a note of caution made by Mr. Legiadre about the latest edition of the MA Energy Code, which goes into effect in June 2023 and aims to increase high-performance design criteria with language that is anticipated to be in conflict with Section 332-19 “Solar Energy”, therefore proactive efforts to review the new material should be considered.

Additionally, Chris Legiadre made a motion, and was seconded by Bruce Colton, to propose the following alteration: for Subdivision Rules & Regulations’ Section 332-16 “Protection of Natural Features”, replace “large trees” with “such as trees of a size defined in Section 332-20 “Trees and Plantings” of these rules and regulations”. 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.

Walter Gunn made a motion, and was seconded by Don Holland, to accept the proposed amendments Subdivision Rules & Regulations as presented by PVPC and with the incorporation of the aforementioned revisions made by the board this evening. 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.

On proposed revisions to Zoning Bylaws:

To address inconsistencies with the expression of numerical values across the document, Chair Cheryl Thibodeau made a motion, and was seconded by Bruce Colton, to edit the Zoning Bylaw recommendations in a matter that consistently spells out numeral values.

Chair Cheryl Thibodeau made a motion, and was seconded by Don Holland, to propose an alteration for Zoning Bylaw Section 315-53 “Mixed Use Facilities”, by adding the following language to what is already being proposed: “In mixed-use developments, applicants may propose a reduction in parking requirements based on an analysis of peak demands for non-competing uses. Up to seventy-five percent (75%) of the requirements for the predominant use may be waived by the Planning Board if the applicant can demonstrate that the peak demand analyses published by the Institute of Traffic Engineers (ITE) or other source acceptable to the Planning Board. At its discretion, the Planning Board may commission an independent parking demand study, to be paid for by the applicant.”

Walter Gunn made a motion, and was seconded by Don Holland, to accept the proposed amendments to the Zoning Bylaws as presented by PVPC and with the incorporation of the aforementioned revision to section 315-53 “Mixed Use Facilities” made by the board this evening. 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.

Other Business:

1. The Select Board’s approval of the final ATM warrant is tentatively scheduled for March 20th.
2. Cooley Brook’s Hydrologic & Hydraulic study, funded by CPC, is being finalized and its findings will be utilized by The Conway School to create a storyboard of ideas that will explore the enhancement of the portion of said brook that runs through Bliss and Laurel Parks.
3. The next Long Range Plan Steering committee meeting is scheduled for March 27th.

Walter Gunn made a motion, and was seconded by Don Holland, to adjourn the meeting. 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, meeting adjourned at 8:46pm.

Respectfully submitted,

Bianca Damiano