



City of Westfield

William Carellas, Chair
Cheryl Crowe, Vice Chair
John Bowen
Robert Goyette, Jr.
Jane Magarian
Philip McEwan
Raymond St. Hilaire
Bernard Puza, Associate
Richard Salois, Associate

January 2, 2024
City Council Chambers

PB MEMBER PARTICIPANTS
 MEMBERS ABSENT

STAFF

William Carellas, Chair
 Cheryl Crowe, Vice-Chair
 Robert Goyette, Jr.
 Jane Magarian
 Philip McEwan
 Raymond St. Hilaire
 John Bowen
 Bernard Puza (Associate)
 Richard Salois (Associate)

Jay Vinskey, City Planner
 Christine Fedora, Secretary

Chair Carellas called the meeting to order at 7:00. Chair Carellas reviewed the agenda and stated there are quite a few public hearings scheduled for this evening so he would like to limit the hearings so they will all be done by 10:00.

- A. Public Participation (on any matter not subject to a public hearing)
Chair Carellas asked if anyone would like to address the Board. None.
- B. Review and approval of previous meeting minutes. Not available; no action taken.
- C. Review of plans not requiring approval under Subdivision Control Law. None.
- D. Public Hearings

Member Crowe MOTIONED, seconded by Member St. Hilaire to allow the Chair to alter the agenda order. All in favor. Chair Carellas stated he would be taking up the sign for City Hall first.

- (Continuation) City of Westfield for a Special Permit per 8-10.7(1c) to allow a ground sign at Westfield City Hall (59 Court St.) zoned Court St. Mixed

Carissa Lisee, Building Commissioner, addressed the Board on behalf of Mayor McCabe. She will be asking to withdraw the application without prejudice, but first would like to get a feel from the Board as far as the sign goes. She realizes the concerns of the Board related to setting precedent in the district if this were allowed. She asked if there was any way they could make

this more appealing to the Board. The Mayor wants to install the sign at City Hall he considers City Hall to be the "Gem of the City." She asked if scaling the sign down would help, reading board or LED display is a hard, no?

Member Goyette felt a ¾ downscale version would help as well as nonmoving letters, just static is palatable. He suggested changing the sign to 9 feet overall. Planner Vinsky stated the message display was proposed 3 x 7. Member Magarian concurred.

Member Salois also agreed, a message board would be nice but based on the district it is in and the approach the Board has taken of other signs, he felt by allowing scrolling would be setting a precedence by allowing a moving sign. He further felt the prior sign as submitted was massive as he felt it overpowered City Hall. He felt by bringing the size of the sign down would work; he also preferred the rounded top design style.

Member Puza felt an electronic sign like that would be better in the green, he is personally against a lit sign in front of city hall. Member McEwan also felt another location should be considered. He suggested a park or possibly on East Main Street, somewhere with a higher traffic area where the greater population drives by it.

Superintendent Lisee stated the city currently uses the DPW sign when needed. The mayor wants something aesthetically pleasing and fits the character of the structure and identifies City Hall. Chair Carellas asked what the intention of the sign was. Is it for events or to identify City Hall? He felt that having no number on City Hall can be solved easily; he understands one of the intentions of the sign is to advertise what is going on in the city, he felt there are areas that are much better suited than here. If the intention is to say this is City Hall, he is all for that, he felt there should be something identifying City Hall.

Superintendent Lisee then asked to withdraw the application without prejudice. Member Crowe MOTIONED, seconded by Member Salois to allow the petitioner to withdraw the application without prejudice. All in favor.

- (Continuation) Andrey Korchevskiy for a Special Permit/ Site Plan/ Stormwater Permit per Zoning Ord. Sec. 3-170.7, 6-10/4-140 & 4-110 to allow a new religious/educational building and site improvements at 866 North Rd. and 137 Lapointe St., zoned Bus. A Res. and Water Resource.

The alternate on this project is Richard Salois.

Rebecca Li of R Levesque Associates presented the Board with proposed changes at the existing Russian Evangelical Church at 866 North Road. At the last meeting she presented the site plan set, comments were received, and she proceeded to review the comments, the correspondence from the Fire Department and then summarized the revised plans.

Ms. Li reached out to Deputy Fire Chief Benjamin Warren following the Board's previous hearing regarding the proposed hybrid solution that eliminated access path but gave option to travel north side of the building using geogrid/grass system. She read the letter from the fire department regarding that solution. According to the Fire Department they felt their recommendation would not work and there should be an access road at the full 24-foot width, and a gate could be placed at Lapointe Street with a lock box to allow Fire Department access.

Ms. Li reviewed the plan set revisions: the access road has been added with the gate, the sewer line to residential structure has been added, the septic will be eliminated, and they will tie into existing sanitary sewer in front of the church, the educational building will be tied into the system as well. The new building will have a fire suppression system and a separate line will be added. Water will be tied into the existing church as well as the existing residence. No new hydrant.

Member Crowe voiced concerns regarding access from members of the church using Lapointe Street. Ms. Li stated there will be a gate and only the fire department will have access. Member Crowe proceeded to show the area of her concern, at the end of the road. Ms. Li stated it would be very difficult to get in there. Mr. Korchevskiy added the way it is graded it would be very difficult, he would not be opposed to adding fencing if that would resolve the concern. He further noted he will be adding arborvitaes, he added the concerns about the traffic or accessibility being caused by the driveway is for one reason only- at the request of the fire department, the gate will be locked.

Member Bowen asked if the purpose of the 24 feet is the ladder truck to the building? He asked if the fire truck would be able to get to the back side of the structure? Is the Lapointe piece necessary? Ms. Li replied from the fire department's concerns, yes. Chair Carellas also asked if this was only 1 story would it be necessary to use the ladder truck? Ms. Li replied, to Deputy Chief Warren was not aware the building was a 2 story.

Chair Carellas asked how are they planning on getting kids to and from building to church? A canopy? Mr. Korchevskiy replied eventually there will be a light canopy added, in the summertime there are sidewalks next to the parking lot.

Rob Levesque of R Levesque gave some history regarding this application. The applicant did go to the Zoning Board of Appeals seeking to allow the building a little bit wider into setbacks, that request was denied.

He further stated the specific programming on site, this building is a religious and educational use and cannot be prevented, they have no interest in any other designs, they have spent a lot of time on this. The plan meets height requirement, zoning requirements for proposed building, the stormwater has been reviewed and they have sign off on it, only question is driveway. They had no intention of going to Lapointe, but it is being done because of the Fire Department's concerns. If the Board still has concerns regarding access, they can put up a fence.

Member Puza inquired about the type building? Mr. Korchevskiy replied he would want it to look like part of the church, concrete, or wood frame. Member Salois would like to see plans for it anyway, to look like it belongs to the church.

Member Crowe voiced concerns regarding 2 stories in that neighborhood, lighting, noise. Mr. Levesque stated it meets all the zoning requirements, it is consistent with what is allowed, the proposed height is within the regulations. Member Crowe felt there should be a balance of the two, it will have an adverse effect on the neighborhood. Mr. Levesque further stated it cannot be prevented based on state law.

Chair Carellas invited public comment.

Susan McFarlin - 7 New Broadway - Over aquifer? Are they seeking a special permit? Planner Vinskey replied yes, they are. Ms. McFarlin asked if one of the standards for granting a special permit is that one of the findings that no harm to the neighborhood? Planner Vinskey stated the aquifer review is relative to water quality, the reason for the special permit is because it is over 2500 square feet. Who has authority?

Planner Vinskey stated they can't deny a special permit based on use because it is exempted. Mr. Levesque stated they also submitted a stormwater report to the stormwater authority based on the requirements of the water resource ordinance; the engineer reviewed making sure it is within the requirements with stormwater. It has the met standards; the special permit can be regulated but it cannot be denied.

Stella Penney - Lapointe Street - Why 2 entries to the facility? Now proposing a second entrance into that area for emergency vehicles. Char Carellas replied the second entrance is being done per the Fire Department's recommendations.

Julie Diamond - 41 Pequot Point Road - Gravel driveway access, whether fencing to stop what is happening? Gravel driveway physical driveway. Physical barrier.

Beth Lapointe -Straight across street. Road mushy not solid, water runs to her yard, where will runoff go? She also felt arborvitaes will not distract from eye sore, noise, screaming kids all day, add another 200 children plus, basketball until 2:00 a.m., water issue, bright lights. Traffic, major concerns about this road? Hard surface? Sewer to everybody, and water?

Mr. Levesque replied the city does not allow cross country connections and there is no way to bring sewer lines through. The water will have to be handled on site. Mr. Korchevskiy addressed the noise, he apologized if this happened before and stated he cannot control the noise. Chair Carellas informed him this is private property you are responsible for controlling it. Mr. Korchevskiy felt the residents should call police if there are issues..

Mr. Korchevskiy stated there would be no pickup and drop off on Lapointe Street, he is in favor of putting a fence there. Member St. Hilaire also no pedestrian walks through, who is coming in to play basketball. Member Bowen asked if there would be fencing between the house and the new school? There will be bollards, and a perimeter fence.

Mr. Levesque stated there should be no parking on Lapointe Street or access point. Should only be for fire access. Mr. Levesque also noted there will not be 200 new students, they currently have 200 students.

Ms. Pinney - If they own the former restaurant, why not try to add to that building? It has easy on and easy off. Mr. Levesque stated they use the existing kitchen for meal prep for food drives, and fundraisers.

Also, in the lot next to the house there are 20 cars parked there at times. Mr. Levesque stated he didn't dispute the driveway to the single-family home. Mr. Levesque didn't know the area she was referring to was there, he said that area would need to be fenced off as well and not be used for parking.

Member St. Hilaire asked if this is something willing to do? Mr. Korchevskiy stated there will be no traffic in there on the right side of the traffic. He has never seen cars there, he would put a fence to protect kids coming outside, other option would be fence in front and side and nobody can walk through, if concerns fence across property yes can do that, never saw any car parked there in the building.

Bill Onyski -Ward 6 Councilor - 37 Hillcrest Circle. Tough predicament, gate for fire department should have signs stating emergency entrance and exit only, do not enter signs on both sides clear to anyone only emergency exit. He also voiced concerns regarding possible turnaround for students being dropped off, that road cannot take more vehicles. He asked the Board if this does go through that no construction vehicles are allowed on LaPointe Road. He also said he did not believe the city can put no parking signs on private ways, he asked the Board to consider the neighbors' concerns.

Member Bowen asked if there are private ways, if the city can't put up no parking sign, what would happen if a resident does? Councilor Onyski replied he was not sure. Planner Vinskey stated he did not think the city could put up signs or enact legislation on private ways.

Ms. McFarlin - Ask fencing and landscaping have size restrictions on them, language fencing is security fencing and not access through it except fire department access, review whether the Board has authority to say no if in aquifer, her reading is it does and its clear. She asked the Board to relook at and felt they were mistaken regarding the aquifer.

Chair Carellas felt this should be continued to wait for plans for fencing and building design. Mr. Levesque stated there is no architectural review under site plan, can show concept will not be submitting any additional plans. Mr. Korchevskiy stated it will look like the church.

Member Crowe asked if the type of fence was determined? Mr. Levesque recommended split rail or vinyl split rail for vehicular issues, don't think can control pedestrian issue. St. Hilaire asked to consider LaPointe Road to reduce noise.

Member Puza asked if the school runs year-round? Not yet, it will. High school? Mr. Korchevskiy no high school. Member Crowe asked about the light fixture on back entrance and one on front entrance, fencing will shield some of the lighting and help with the noise. Member Crowe felt a fence at 6 feet? Yes.

Ms. Pinney stated there currently is a lot of light from the side of her house and with this it will also be in the front of her house causing more light and noise issues. She said she is in favor of sound and light blockage. Member Goyette asked if it meets the requirements of the light ordinance? Yes.

Planner Vinskey noted per ordinance you can only have a 3-foot solid fence in the front yard. Member Crowe voiced her frustration regarding the fence no higher than 3 feet, she felt a 3-foot fence would not do anything. Member Bowen stated we can't waive ordinance.

Ms. McFarlin asked about the frontage. Vinskey explained how the frontage/front yard is defined. Member St Hilaire asked if splitting the lot could solve that, Planner Vinskey noted that it is within the aquifer so it would require 2 acres that would not affect the frontage in any case.

Mr. Levesque felt the best way to help with the noise and light would be from arborvitae to have them wrap around.

The Board wanted to see elevations and fencing. Mr. Korchevskiy agreed for the elevations, and add arborvitae will be added, and have the plan review if in agreement. Stockade or split rail, only 3 feet in height along frontage (if stockade) anywhere can transition to a 6 foot would do that. Chair Carellas asked what type of screening/fence wanted. Ms. Pinney, arborvitae.

Member Goyette MOTIONED, duly seconded to continue to January 16th. All in favor.

- EPRO Lockhouse Road LLC for a Special Permit per Zoning Ord. Sec. 3-130.3(4) to allow expansion of a building in excess of 100,000 SF at 323 Lockhouse Rd., zoned Ind. A

Chair Carellas stated the applicant for this hearing is Member Puza.

Rebecca Li of R. Levesque Associates presented the application to the Board. The applicant Ahmet Kincak is seeking a warehouse addition to 323 Lockhouse road. The building footprint has changed since the plan was submitted so they are requesting a continuance to submit revised drawings.

Currently the building is 182,703 and they are proposing improvements and additions to the warehouse on the southern side and portion on another area. The water line will need to be rerouted, work will need to be done there, reconfiguring parking spaces to meet ADA parking compliance, addition to the roof leaders to storm drain system. A stormwater waiver is being requested; they are requesting to extend sewer main at which point several septic systems will be abandoned. The sewer currently ends in front of 287 lockhouse Road, they are asking to extend 400 feet to corner of the property and cut onto property and install new sanitary sewer connection, they have filed with Conservation Commission for the wetlands which are from the Old Canal and have received their approval, if any revisions are required they will work with Conservation Commission with any revisions .

Extending to the south by 30 feet and reducing to the east to provide better access to the back side, with extension there will need to be utility extensions. Planner Vinskey stated he would have to confirm, but felt for the new land disturbance is now over an acre, so not sure the Board would entertain a stormwater waiver if the EPA permit is triggered.

Mr. Levesque explained the reason for requesting the waiver is being requested because there already is drainage system in place, third generation on this project, Agway planned an expansion, the impervious will not change, wetland resource areas are adjacent to the site and it would be a great effort to do storm water. He was hoping to avoid a stormwater permit in this case, not adding impervious, talked about expanded the east side of the property which would have added to the impervious decided not to do that, the DEP stormwater will not be triggered. The EPA is acre of disturbance, they will endeavor to stay under that amount. Planner Vinskey informed him if they are filing for an EPA permit, the City should have a local permit on file.

Mr. Levesque stated the longest portion of the building will be the manufacturing area. Shipping area, reduction in overall traffic. Other tenants will remain on site.

Member Salois asked about equipment associated with the expansion. The electrical system will be upgraded, the gas system will be updated, compressors will be provided, noise areas, auxiliary equipment.

Member Crowe MOTIONED, seconded by Member St. Hilaire to continue to February 6. All in favor.

- Zoning Map Amendment – Rural Residential to Business B – portions of 137 Woodcliff Dr. & 254 Union St.

Representing the petitioner was Rob Levesque of R. Levesque Associates. Mr. Alex Colby of Jibber Enterprises owns the property, one of the properties is located mostly on a slope. And runs up to the back with a single family residential, that house since been demolished. Asking that part of 137 Woodcliff Drive and 254 Union Street near where Fuller Construction was located be changed from Rural Residential to Business B. Mr. Levesque proceeded to identify the area on the map. A portion of the land has quite a slope on it which would not be buildable. The applicant would like to build a 5,600 square foot contractor building used for his business Jibber Enterprises.

Member Goyette asked if this was near where the proposed cannabis operation was? Mr. Levesque replied yes.

Public comments were invited.

Mr. Aucella – 132 Woodcliff Drive - asked if they are trying to put together a few pieces? Chair Carellas informed him the goal is to have consistent zoning, the Board does not want spot zoning. Planner Vinskey displayed the area on the map.

Paul St. Sauveur – 128 Woodcliff Drive- asked what kind of structures can be there? Is he proposing something in a residential area? Mr. Levesque showed the area of the property. Mr. St Sauveur voiced concerns that the whole area would be taken over. Mr. Levesque showed him the proposed location of the zone change, as well as showing them the area where they intend to put the building.

Alex Colby showed the area where he would like to construct the building, he further showed him the portions of the site the ridge line showed what will be doing, purchasing some portion, other portions unusable, everything to be staying on Union Street. There is no site plan, this building will be 5-6,000 s.f. similar to adjacent buildings .

Chair Carellas read the Business B by right uses.

Gail Aucella - 132 Woodcliff Drive - The neighbor (137) wants a change too. Why is that parcel included in the proposal? Reasoning behind changing to BB?

Mr. Levesque - not including residential part, only requests BB for the lower portion of the property. Don't want to affect Woodcliff neighborhood at all. Mr. Levesque further added the plan is to separate 137's Union St portion from house lot. Won't change R.R. on Woodcliff.

Salois second piece Business B on bottom and Rural Residential on top, to stay as one contiguous piece? Levesque- can't land lock it; all to stay as one contiguous piece.

Member Goyette MOTIONED, seconded by Member Bowen to send a positive recommendation to City Council. All in favor.

E. Other Business

- Breighly Way Acceptance

Planner Vinskey informed the Board this has recently been closed out of subdivision control; this has been referred to the Board for street acceptance to be reported to the Council. Member Goyette asked if everything was OK with the Engineer? Planner Vinskey informed the Board of the City Engineer and DPW are going to take another look as part of the acceptance process.

Members felt it made sense to make a positive recommendation. Member Bowen MOTIONED, seconded by Member Crowe to make a positive recommendation to accept Breighly Way as a public way. All in Favor.

F. Announcements/Future Agenda Items. None

The meeting was adjourned at 9:25.