



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

May 16, 2023
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, Principal Planner
 Christine Fedora, Secretary

Chair Carellas opened the meeting at 7:00

- 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
Member Crowe MOTIONED, seconded by Member Goyette to approve the 4-18-23 minutes. All in favor. 5-2-23 minutes to on next agenda.
- C. Review of plans not requiring approval under Subdivision Control Law. None
- D. Public hearings (and possible deliberations and decision)
 - Special Permit/Site Plan/Stormwater Permit - new workshop buildings-627 Southampton Road

Chair Carellas stated Associate Salois would be serving as a voting member. Presenting the proposal for Hometown Structures was Terry Reynolds of T Reynolds Engineering. They are proposing to build 2 workshop buildings, there will be 9 additional parking spaces. The project involves a slight shift towards the grassed area which will now be used for parking and a maneuvering area. There will be a stormwater system that will have 2 sub-surface systems.

Additionally, they will lose one light that will be moved to the grass area. The new lighting will be dark sky compliant, stooped lighting, and there will not be any additional pole lighting. He also showed the water supply, the grading, sewer, and the bathroom which are tied to septic system, no additional capacity is proposed.

Member Salois asked if they were removing the stone/gravel area? Yes, Mr. Reynolds continued the building currently on the pad will be removed as well as the driveway, there are also temporary buildings that will be removed.

Member Magarian asked about the lighting on the building and the hours of operation. Mr. Andrew Kurtz, owner, stated the hours of operation would be from 6 a.m. to 6p.m. As far as the lighting goes he was not sure if it would be automatic. Planner Vinskey informed him by ordinance the lighting has to be off by 11pm, unless still in active use, or can be dimmed.

Member Goyette asked if the light they are moving is located on a post? Will they be compliant with the new ordinance? Yes, they are aware of the light ordinance and there will be no light trespass, also noting they are residential-style lights (not cut-off/downcast). Following further discussion regarding the lights the Board felt they should be made compliant. The applicant asked if they could just remove the light instead. The Board agreed.

Chair Carellas asked about landscaping. Mr. Reynolds replied there is none proposed, the property is open and has fresh stone and grass, there is landscaping grassed areas around the building, no shrubs or tree plantings are proposed; it was also noted there are no residential abutters. Member St Hilaire asked about production? Where is the finished product? There is a lot of space behind the exiting building with trailers.

Chair Carellas asked if anyone in the audience had any questions, comments? None.
The staff comments were reviewed by Mr. Reynolds:

Chair Carellas asked about the common driveway through Dollar General's Lot. Still being used.
(*Parking not delineated*) Response: The spaces not delineated are the spaces in the gravel.
(*Grading/263 contour missing*) Response: the grade was reviewed
(*Mass DOT has plans for a multi-use path*). Response: aware.
(*Stormwater review*) Planner Vinskey stated we received the sign off on the Stormwater.

The Board reviewed the draft decision. Planner Vinskey noted the Board is not interested in issuing a light waiver, to revise drafted finding #6 to comply with ordinance standards.

Member Crowe MOTIONED, seconded by Member Salois to close the hearing. All in favor.
Member Magarian then MOTOINED, seconded by Member Goyette to approve the 627 Southampton Road application.

Member Salois	-	yes
Member Goyette	-	yes
Member Magarian	-	yes
Member Crowe	-	yes
Member St. Hilaire	-	yes
Chair Carellas	-	yes
Member McEwan	-	yes

E. Other Business

- Review of proposed changes at Grief Way warehouse/mfg. site (approved 7/20/21)

Planner Vinskey informed the Board we received a sketch regarding Grief Way change. The applicant has put a binder pavement course down before completing the work they would like to get a determination from the Planning Board as to whether they can eliminate the island and the parking along the front to keep it the way it is built.

Member Crowe inquired as to why? They would like to use part of it as a loading area, and say they currently have ample parking. The sketch was reviewed and showed the elimination of the island and trees along street, there was discussion about striping the parking area so it would not be a free-for-all. They will be retaining trees to south and north which technically would comply with the 10 % landscaping requirement. Planner Vinskey noted it would be unusual to have a big paved area on a normal street, but Grief Way here works like part of their parking area. Member Magarian inquired why they wanted to do this? Planner Vinskey stated they want to create a loading area for their trucks to pull off the street, creating a queuing area. Member Crowe asked if there was any other space? Planner Vinskey felt there is space for maneuvering trucks but at the time they were not anticipating having that area. Member Magarian felt the left hand side of building could handle the queuing. Member Goyette felt it is a minor adjustment.

Planner Vinskey stated the Board's concerns should be landscaping, circulation and safety issues; on a normal street this would not be an appropriate way to treat an entrance. Member Salois felt this is more like a driveway than a street. Member Goyette felt the change they are requesting makes sense. Member Salois felt it makes it a safer operation.

Planner Vinskey noted another component is the Stormwater, by eliminating the curbs it will be running into the street instead of being contained into the site. He suggested the board might want to defer to make sure the changes being proposed don't impact the stormwater design, make sure still complies with the stormwater ordinance. If the Board is ok with the layout change it can be blessed as a minor change provided he Stormwater component is worked out with the city engineer. He also mentioned that he also noticed the lights on building were not cut-off type.

Chair Carellas felt it is a minor change and agreed deferring the stormwater to city engineer, he further noted the lights have to be compliant. Planner Vinskey added the lights have to be in compliance regardless.

Planner Vinskey reviewed options the Board may want to consider. By eliminating the curb separation, the water runs into the street or entering the basin in a different way. Member Magarian asked if there was a compromise for that? Planner Vinskey suggested if the Board wants to see what the engineers come up with, it could defer this portion for now. Member Magarian asked if they can continue if the Board does not get the sign off for the stormwater? Planner Vinskey stated the Board could approve now and come back with the stormwater later. Member Magarian felt it was not necessary to see the stormwater solution as long as the city has approved it.

Member Goyette MOTIONED, to accept changes as minor change and defer stormwater for further review as determined by the City Engineer. Planner Vinskey also suggested the area should be striped in placed of the curbed islands. Member Magarian felt it made sense to add stripping to that motion, agreed. Magarian seconded. All in Favor.

- Master Plan draft

Planner Vinskey introduced the chair of the Master Plan Committee, Jay Ducharme. Last week, there was a meeting held at the High School where the Draft Master Plan was presented. A Master Plan is adopted by the Planning Board which is part of its duties under state law. It is being presented before the Board in this draft phrase, the public comment is open until the end of May, available on the City's web site. Board members or anyone who would like to review the plan can submit their comments through the end of the month.

Mr. Ducharme stated this plan is general guidance, it's not specific, its an overall view. The Master Plan's job is to give an overall view of where the city needs to head to achieve our goals, steer us in a direction.

Planner Vinskey displayed a slide presentation, listing policies from each chapter/topic. The plan has Goals, Actions, Polices. Goals are broad, actions more specific, policies in-between:

Land Use: development impacts on land, infill, impervious coverage, policies you may want to reference in future projects, truck issues in the city. Gives the Board something to reference when reviewing plans.

Housing: Expanding type of housing examples: tiny homes, in-law apartments, multi-family, affordability, aging in place. Some of these housing examples would require zoning changes.

Economic development: Activating downtown, making Westfield easy place to do business, promoting city, visitation, advantages, river, downtown, rail trail, branding. Actions will be more specific things such as a completeive tax rate.

Natural resources: Protecting blocks of land, rivers, restoring areas, regulations may better protect environmental, water quality, outreach/awareness. Jay Ducharme- many policies were developed because of input from public, important to what the people said.

Planner Vinskey noted the survey received over 600 responses. Other areas identified in natural resources were the rural landscape which was a highly valued, asset. Keeping character of the city was also important.

Art/culture historic resources: Capitalize on what we have, protect, promote, economic driver, preserve character, landscape to buildings, branding in economic section as well, using arts to drive economic growth.

Open space and recreation: A lot overlap with other sections, not easy to separate all these topics. The City currently has an open space and recreation plan, kind of reiterates that, highlights increasing access to the river – example: now trying to acquire the land on Russell road. Aquifer protection. Prioritizing significant properties, developing premier-level parks/sports facilities.

Services and facilities: Things the city controls, schools a big part of budget and city, maintain facilities, adequate staffing and budgeting, G&E, high quality utilities.

Transportation: Truck traffic- mitigating that as a policy, traffic congestion. Adequate budgeting and staffing to keep things in top condition. Mr. Ducharme mentioned a Cultural District would have traffic issues, these are things that would need to be addressed. Member Magarian asked about cultural resources. Museum, Athenaeum, Westfield State should be listed. Mr. Ducharme mentioned Westfield State was brought up different times in the Master Plan in the Arts & Cultural Section.

Agriculture: Farmland is threatened, economics of farming, protecting farmlands, adopting right to farm, agricultural commission- create lines of communication with farming community, community gardens.

Energy resources: Promoting renewable energy, solar, state-level to push towards net zero, sustainable balance, municipal buildings and vehicles. G&E could play a role in these actions.

Water supply: Recurring theme in protecting aquifer, make sure safe abundant water, take a look at policies how relates to zoning, and hazardous materials policies, green infrastructure.

Natural Hazards: Flooding, increased severe weather, droughts, how well-adapted is Westfield?

Planner Vinskey stated public comments will be accepted until the end of May.

Chair Carellas invited the public to forward their comments to Planner Vinskey. He asked how the Planning Board would use the Master Plan? Could these items be addressed? Say want to change subdivision law, or how utilize this? Truck traffic on North side? Should look at does this fit Master Plan? East Main Street strip? Art community to thrive?

Planner Vinskey felt the nice thing about a Master Plan is it is being done without pressure of a big project looming. The Master Plan doesn't mean much by itself, the intent is to spell out in the actions/issues to be addressed. Actions tell you specific things. The plan gives you rationale, support in making certain changes. Mr. Ducharme also mentioned each action will have a lead party and that would be the person in charge, he also mentioned there was discussion regarding having a Committee formed to oversee implementation.

Planner Vinskey stated, for example, many states can't change their zoning unless it matches the Master Plan, Massachusetts is not one of them.

Member Salois also mentioned the Master Plan gives direction, a consensus as to what to look for in things like open space. Member Crowe also suggested and open space and houses should be looked at. Planer Vinskey noted those are addressed in the actions items.

Mr. Ducharme thanked everyone who worked on this, it will be a great tool to have. Chair Carellas also thanked everyone who contributed.

F. Announcements

Vinskey stated there is no continued business for a June 6 meeting, but an application has come in; the Board agreed not to meet then. Summer schedule to be June 20, July 18 and August 15

Member Crowe MOTIONED, seconded by Member St. Hilaire to adjourn at 8:11. All in favor.