

**FITCHBURG PLANNING BOARD MEETING MINUTES  
TUESDAY, JANUARY 9, 2018**

**MEMBERS PRESENT:** Paula Caron, Chair      Peter Capodagli  
John DiPasquale                  Paul Fontaine, Jr.  
Laura O’Kane                          Andrew Van Hazinga  
Amanda Koeck (Assoc. Member)

**STAFF:**                                  Mike O’Hara, Tom Skwierawski

**Call to Order**

Meeting called to order at 6:05 p.m. in the Community Room, Fitchburg Fire Headquarters, 33 North St.

**Board Reorganization**

Motion made & seconded to nominate Ms. Caron to serve as Chair for the upcoming year.  
Vote unanimous in favor.

Motion made & seconded to nominate Mr. Fontaine to serve as Vice-Chair for the upcoming year.  
Vote unanimous in favor.

**MINOR SITE PLAN REVIEW**

Christian Congregation in the U.S., 132 Woodland St, change of use: funeral home to church

Richard Santos and Ronaldo Silva present.

Church is buying the Aubuchon-Moorecroft funeral home & the parking plan across the street at the NE corner of Pratt St. & Woodland St. Just 2 parking spaces (1 H/C) on the 132 Woodland St. site. Services will be Friday 8:00 p.m. & Sundays 10:30 a.m. & 6:30 p.m. They plan to close on property w/in 30 days.

The Board suggested that the parking be aligned in rows in order to fit more cars and keep cars off the street.

Since parishioners will be leaving at about the same time, shouldn’t be problem.

Q: Is fence on this property or abutters? Needs repair. Mr. Santos: A survey is being prepared.

Board asked for modifications to plan:

Maximize parking spaces on plan in rows, in a stacked manner, show site circulation & signage.

Jay Ferrara, Architect on project, will revise parking plan to show lanes of stacked spaces, perhaps entrance from Woodland and exit on Pratt.

Board agreed to continue discussion to the Jan 25<sup>th</sup> meeting. It will be on 1<sup>st</sup>, ahead of the CDBG public hearing.

**PUBLIC HEARINGS**

Fitchburg Renewables, LLC, 239 Fisher Rd. - proposed 4.5 MW ground-mounted solar array

*(request postpone to Feb.)*

NexAmp has requested another signed request for an extension of the time for the Board to make a decision one more month, to February 28, 2018.

Motion made & seconded to grant an extension of time for the Site Plan decision to February 28, 2018.  
Vote in favor

Special Permits - S & O Realty, LLC, 46 & 52-54 Myrtle Ave. - two 3-families *(continued from 12/12/17)*

Nothing heard from applicant since last meeting as to whether he wants to continue or withdraw application. Motion made & seconded to continue the hearing to the February 13<sup>th</sup> meeting.

Vote 6-0 in favor.

Special Permit - Lan, convert 3-family to 4-family, 51-53 Wachusett St.

Ms. Caron questioned whether this matter should be before the Planning Board since the proposed 4-units (multifamily) did not comply with maximum of 6 units per acre in the Ordinance’s definition of “multifamily”, or does would need a variance from the ZBA? Will seeking clarification from the Bldg. Commissioner.

Hearing opened.

Sam Lan, owner presented plan to convert the first floor of a 3-family building into an additional 400 sq. ft. unit. Unit will have 2 egresses. The other 3 units have 2 BRs each. Parking plan reviewed – 7 paved spaces at the rear on impervious area. Incorrect note on plan: 2 spaces req'd per unit, not 1 for additional BR.

Public Comment:

Rene Snow, 49 Wachusett St. (neighbor on Left side): Currently, there's 9 vehicles on lot, 4 are first floor's tenants. She is sometimes blocked from access on the Common Driveway she shares with this parcel. There are too many cars on site, difficult to maneuver around in winter.

Michael Bursch: The area is mostly single and two-families, no 4-unit buildings in area.

Dept. comments reviewed. Sprinklers may be needed. Sam will research costs.

Mr. Fontaine: Applicant needs to show that proposed density is not out of character with the neighborhood, and solve the parking issue.

Motion made & seconded to continue hearing to Feb. 13<sup>th</sup> meeting. .

Vote in favor.

Information needed for next meeting:

- Clarification on whether "6 units/ac. max." prevents the 4<sup>th</sup> unit
- Info on residential density in the area
- Terms of easement for the common driveway. Snow removal?
- Floor plan for the entire 1<sup>st</sup> floor.
- Dedicated area for trash, recycling totes
- No parking on sidewalk

*Ms. O'Kane recused herself for the following item due to a Conflict of Interest and left the room. Ms. Koeck (associate member) participated in her place.*

Special Permit & Site Plan Review - Geronimo Properties, convert former gas station to coffee/donut shop, 569 Electric Ave.

Present: Paul DiGeronimo, Geronimo Properties, Mika Lassila, S.J. Mullaney Engineering.

Hearing opened. Building was purchased last year. A 1,652 sq. ft. former gas station at the corner of Electric Ave. & Franklin Road into a fast food coffee and donut shop. Improvements to the property include the addition of a drive-thru window, grading, retaining wall, improvements to the existing façade, new pavement, landscaping islands, barriers for traffic control, re-alignment of parking spaces and sidewalk improvements. Four parking spaces needed, eight are proposed. Employees will be directed to park across the street. Brent Heinzer presented building elevations; they will be similar to IC Credit Union bank across the street Parking

Board comments: Need berm at the edge of the travelled way on the NE side of Franklin St., relocate dumpster further back into site, or relocate to other side, consider having separate curb cut for access to dumpster, when available, show signs & landscaping for Board review.

Hours: 7 days, 5:30 a.m. - 9:00 p.m.

Timetable: Paul estimates opening in May.

Public comment:

Michael Bursch: Traffic is dangerous in area, he sees a problem with entrance to site, snow removal and drainage.

Motion made & seconded to close hearing.

Motion made & seconded to Approve Special Permit with conditions:

- Review & approval of revised plan pursuant to conditions discussed at meeting, including parking, landscaping plan and signage.
- No parking allowed within the striped area on the easterly side of Franklin Road.

- Provide on-site signage & arrows to guiding traffic flow at site.
- Granite curb & bituminous sidewalk to be installed along Electric Ave. frontage
- Screen dumpster with vinyl/composite fence.
- Address DPW-Wastewater comments on sewer connection and external grease trap.
- Subject to Board of Health and Fire Prevention approval of the interior renovations.
- Snow storage not to interfere with sight distance at the Franklin/Clarendon intersection.

Vote 6-0 in favor of Special Permit (Ms. Koeck participating)  
Motion made & seconded to Approve Site Plan. Vote 5-0 in favor.

*Ms. O’Kane returned to the meeting.*

## **OTHER BUSINESS**

### 76 Summer St.

Sean Morrison in to discuss possible change in zoning for their property. Their medical office building & parking lot at 76 Summer St. has an adjacent vacant one acre lot. They’d like to market it as commercial property. The area is currently in the Residential C district

Discussion on options: Variance, or proposing a change in the zoning map on that (northern) side of Summer St. from the area just beyond Moran Sq. (Holt St.) to Bluff or Harvard Streets. At least half of the properties on that portion of Summer St. are already commercial properties even though they’re in a Residential District.

Sean will consider options and possibly speak to the Ward Councillor to initiate a change.

### Review window, façade elevations at 93 Nockege St.

Board had reviewed Paul Lieneck’s architectural elevations and photo of the same window that has been installed. The Board expressed disappointment with the style, it doesn’t fill the entire window frame, as had been done with the redevelopment of other nearby mill buildings. Also the transom above the window would not be glass. The Board’s concerns will be conveyed to the applicant.

### MRPC - 2018 District Local Technical Assistance program

Discussion about potential subjects which MRPC could help the city with. Deadline is end of January.  
(*This was later postponed to Feb. 27<sup>th</sup>*)

Agreed to submit two proposals for DLTA assistance: Researching best practices for addressing Student Housing in college towns, and a Downtown/College area parking study.

### City Council petitions

The Board has been invited to a special Council as a Whole meeting Thursday, Jan 11<sup>th</sup> regarding pending Orders for the renovation of City Hall. After discussion on the role of a City Hall campus in redevelopment efforts on Main St., Motion made & seconded to send comment to the City Council that that such a project could be an important anchor project to encourage redevelopment on upper Main Street. Vote 5-0 in favor.

### Meeting Minutes

Minutes of December 12<sup>th</sup> meeting approved w/ some corrections.

Motion made & seconded to adjourn. Vote in favor.

Meeting adjourned: 9:49 p.m.

Next meeting: Jan. 25, 2018 (CDBG public hearing)

Next regular meeting: February 13, 2018

Minutes approved: February 13, 2018