

Apr 11 2022 11:35 am

**FITCHBURG PLANNING BOARD MEETING MINUTES
TUESDAY, JANUARY 25, 2022**

NOTE: *This was a Virtual meeting on GoToWebinar due to the pandemic.*

MEMBERS PRESENT: Paula Caron, Chair, Paul Fontaine, Jr., Vice-Chair
Alyne Butland Peter Capodagli
Alex Lopez Laura O'Kane
Tracey McGrath (associate member)

STAFF: Herlin Jaime, Tom Skwierawski, Liz Murphy, Cindy Dalton, Mike O'Hara

CALL TO ORDER

Meeting called to order at 6:02 p.m.

BOARD REORGANIZATION

Motion made (Mr. Fontaine) & seconded (Ms. O'Kane) to nominate Ms. Caron to serve as Planning Board Chair for the upcoming year. Roll call vote:

Capodagli: Yes. Fontaine: Yes. Butland: Yes. Lopez: Yes. O'Kane: Yes. Caron: Yes.
Vote 6-0 in favor.

Motion made (Ms. O'Kane) & seconded (Mr. Capodagli) to nominate Mr. Fontaine to serve as Planning Board Vice-Chair for the upcoming year. . Roll call vote:

Capodagli: Yes. Fontaine: Yes. Butland: Yes. Lopez: Yes. O'Kane: Yes. Caron: Yes.
Vote 6-0 in favor.

ANR PLANS

Church of the Harvest, 805 River St.

No one present for this item. A .48 ac. parcel at the NW corner of River St. & Mayland St. is proposed to be split into a 12,353 Lot 1 and an 8,572 sq. ft. Parcel A which is to be conveyed to and incorporated into the abutting parcel at 25 Mayland St. (2-family) to form an undivided lot. The boundary between Lot 1 (parking lot) and Parcel "A" is an existing retaining wall.

Motion made (Mr. Fontaine) & seconded (Mr. Capodagli) to authorize Mike O'Hara to endorse the ANR plan on the Board's behalf. Vote 6-0 in favor.

City Storage, Inc., 0 Lancaster St.

No one present for this item. This .76 acre parcel was the subject of Special Permit #2021-10 approved last year by the Board for three single-family dwellings in the Commercial district. Per condition of the Special Permit the parcel is being split into three lots, .24 ac., .21 ac. & .32 ac. The ANR plan matches the property lines on the approved site plan. No minimum lot size in the Neighborhood Business zoning district. The lots meet the 20' frontage requirement.

Motion made (Mr. Fontaine) & seconded (Ms. Butland) to authorize Mike O'Hara to endorse the ANR plan on the Board's behalf. Vote 6-0 in favor.

Ms. Caron recused herself from the following item due to a conflict of interest.

MINOR SITE PLAN/SPECIAL PERMIT MODIFICATIONS / EXTENSIONS

Special Permit Extension #2019-8, ACT Labs, Independent Testing Lab, 131 John Fitch Hwy.

No one present for this item. Original Special Permit issued in 2019. In 2020 the Board had approved an Extension to 6/20/2021, but the Automatic Covid Extension on land use permits extends that date out to 3/13/22.

Motion made (Mr. Fontaine) & seconded (Ms. O'Kane) to Grant an Extension of the Special Permit to the date of the January 2023 Planning Board meeting (*January 24, 2023*). Roll call vote:

Capodagli: Yes. Fontaine: Yes. Butland: Yes. Lopez: Yes. O'Kane: Yes. McGrath: Yes.
Vote 6-0 in favor.

Ms. Caron returned to the meeting.

Minor Site Plan - 21 Pacific St. Realty Trust, parking plan for reinstated 3-family (cont'd from 12/8/21)

Present: Josh Naughton. Chris DeRosa had difficulties getting on the meeting.

Revised plan dated 12/14/21 reviewed – four parking spaces on left side of bldg., two on the right.

Mr. Fontaine: But can the parking arrangement meet the 3-foot property line setback?

Josh suggested they could plant trees in the front yard to prevent tenants from parking there, as long as tenants don't try to park in between trees.

Ms. Caron: Resubmit plan (to scale) with landscaping and update to southern driveway, single width stacked parking (2 cars deep) to building setback.

Motion made (Mr. Fontaine) & seconded (Mr. Lopez) to continue to next month. Roll call vote:

Capodagli: Yes. Fontaine: Yes. Butland: Yes. Lopez: Yes. O'Kane: Yes. Caron: Yes.

Vote 6-0 in favor.

137 Green St.

This is another one of Chris's projects (reinstating a 2-family) that had rec'd Site Plan Approval in June 2019 showing a driveway off Green St. Recently, a driveway permit was applied for showing the driveway off Myrtle Ave. The plan on record should agree with what Chris intends to do.

Josh: DPW had suggested moving the driveway to get further away from the intersection.

Board comment: Need dimensions on plan, width of curb cut, suggest eliminate two spaces on the Green St. side, and provide a buffer from Green St.

Josh: The building has been rehabbed & is occupied

Motion made (Mr. Fontaine) & seconded (Ms. O'Kane) to continue to next meeting. Roll call:

Butland: Yes. Lopez: Yes. Koeck: Yes. Capodagli: Yes. Fontaine: Yes. O'Kane: Yes. Vote 6-0 in favor.

PUBLIC HEARINGS

Site Plan Review - KCMC Management, Inc. 580, John Fitch Hwy - construct new Dunkin' Donuts (request continuance to 1/25/22)

No one present for this item. On behalf of the applicant, Hannigan Engineering had requested that the application be Withdrawn Without Prejudice. The applicant will look at a potential renovation of the existing store at some point. They are also working on a potential new store location at 105 John Fitch Hwy. & will be submitting an application for that site soon.

Motion made (Mr. Fontaine) & seconded (Ms. O'Kane) to accept the applicant's request to Withdrawn Without Prejudice.

Roll call vote: Capodagli: Yes. Fontaine: Yes. Butland: Yes. Lopez: Yes. O'Kane: Yes. Caron: Yes. Vote 6-0 in favor.

Special Permit & Site Plan Review - Pristine Choice Realty, LLC, 4-unit residential, 147 Daniels St. (cont'd from 12/8/21)

The applicant had requested a continuance to the next meeting. Their engineer is working on a revised plan to also show finished grades, the slope of the proposed driveway and a stormwater management plan for the additional impervious area.

Motion made (Mr. Fontaine) & seconded (Mr. Capodagli) to continue this item to next month.

Roll call vote: Capodagli: Yes. Fontaine: Yes. Butland: Yes. Lopez: Yes. O'Kane: Yes. Caron: Yes. McGrath: Yes. Vote 7-0 in favor.

Special Permit & Site Plan Review - Next Generation Elite Fitness, 44 Princeton Rd., Commercial Recreation

Hearing opened. Present: Jim Bennett, applicant & Dan Nigrosh, Can-Am Machinery, property owner. Jim & his partner propose to convert a 6,000 sq. ft. portion of the former Crocker Burbank Mill #1 into a facility for strength & conditioning, speed & agility training for athletes of all sports and levels. The area is noted as "S-1" on the plan of the former mill provided by Dan. They will provide sport-specific instruction, adult private and group training. Planned hours of operation are Mon. - Fri. 6:00 a.m. to 10 p.m., Sat. & Sun. 8:00 a.m. - 8:00 p.m.

Board comments:

What are the parking arrangements?

Dan: There are 48 striped spaces, including 3 handicap spaces. There's also room for 25 more spaces on the discontinued portion of Old Princeton Rd.

Jim: 90% of his clients are dropped-off; they're mostly middle & high school athletes.

Public comment: Mary Jo Bohart, Economic Development Director: It's great to see that Mill # 1 is developing into a hub of recreational activities in West Fitchburg with Mully's Indoor Golf and now these indoor recreational businesses.

Motion made (Mr. Fontaine) & seconded (Mr. Capodagli) to close the hearing. Vote 7-0.

Motion made (Mr. Fontaine) & seconded (Mr. Capodagli) to Approve the Special Permit. Roll call vote: Capodagli: Yes. Fontaine: Yes. Butland: Yes. Lopez: Yes. O'Kane: Yes. Caron: Yes. McGrath: Yes. Vote 7-0 in favor.

Ms. Caron cautioned that in the future as more businesses move into the Mill the Board will need to see an overall parking plan to make sure there is enough parking for the intended uses.

Special Permit & Site Plan Review - Supernatural All Stars, LLC, 44 Princeton Rd., Commercial Recr.

Hearing opened. Present: Jill Markley, applicant & Dan Nigrosh. Jill & her partners are leasing a 3,000 sq. ft. portion of Mill #1 (noted as Room S-3 on the plan, next to Mully's) and converting it into a facility for cheerleading instruction and training for competitive teams. Planned hours of operation are Mon. - Fri. 3-10 p.m., Sat. & Sun. 8 - 10 p.m. Her clients range in age from 3 to 41. Her business was formerly at Fliptastics on Summer St. near St. Bernard's but she's currently leasing space in Clinton. This space at Mill #1 will give them more room.

Board comments: None.

Public comment: Mary Jo also supports this Indoor Recreational Use.

Motion made (Mr. Fontaine) & seconded (Mr. Capodagli) to close the hearing. Vote 7-0.

Motion made (Mr. Fontaine) & seconded (Mr. Capodagli) to Approve the Special Permit. Roll call vote: Capodagli: Yes. Fontaine: Yes. Butland: Yes. Lopez: Yes. O'Kane: Yes. Caron: Yes. McGrath: Yes. Vote 7-0 in favor.

Special Permit & Site Plan Review - We Grow MA, LLC, 149 Industrial Rd., Cannabis Cultivation & Processing

Hearing opened. No one present: Board reviewed submitted plan & application materials.

Board comments: More information is needed on the site plan & materials. They should be keyed to the checklist for Cannabis Special Permit applications

Nick Erickson, DPW: The site plan doesn't reflect existing conditions; the parking lot appears to be larger than existing. If there will be additional impervious area there needs to be more details on stormwater management.

Public comment: Capt. Lemay, Fitchburg P.D. has scheduled a walk-thru with the applicant tomorrow morning. The submitted plans appear to be adequate, but he reserves further comment until after a site walk.

Motion made (Mr. Fontaine) & seconded (Ms. Butland) to continue the hearing to next month.

Roll call vote: Capodagli: Yes. Fontaine: Yes. Butland: Yes. Lopez: Yes. O'Kane: Yes. Caron: Yes. McGrath: Yes. Vote 7-0 in favor.

Ms. O'Kane left the meeting due to potential conflicts of interest on the remaining agenda items.

OTHER BUSINESS

Woodland Estates, Rindge Rd. - update

Present: Joanne Hamburg, Woodland Ests. & Jamie Rheault, Whitman & Bingham Assocs.

Jamie & Joanne wanted to give the Board an update on the progress of the project, as he has done recently with the Conservation Commission. Last year nine new homes have been installed, including replacing two existing older units. In all, 34 new manufactured homes have been installed, 20 more units

remain to finish the project. The access drive also needs to be finished all the way to the end. Since 2020 supply chain issues have been a problem; the wait time for units is 8 month to a year. Seven units have already been pre-ordered for 2022. At the rate of installing 7 units per year she should be done in 3 years. They have agreed with Fire Prevention on no blasting or hammering on weekends.

Board comment: Looking for a written phasing plan, # of units to be built per year, etc.

Public Comment: Mark Christian, Bennett Rd.: He now owns the abutting parcel to the NW (former site of Fanelli condo development. Site work has caused ponding on his property which has killed trees.

If the ponding is supposed to be periodically pumped down who will be monitoring that?

Jamie will add that to his written timetable.

Board is looking for a monthly update on this project for the time being.

Draft Fitchburg Downtown Urban Revitalization & Development Plan, Redevelopment Authority

Present: Meagen Donohue, Executive Director, FRA, Laura Bayless, FRA Board member, Heather Gould, BSC Group.

Meagen: As part of the process of adopting the 2040 Urban Renewal Plan, the Planning Board is being asked to make a determination that the new plan “. . . is based upon a local survey and conforms to any existing planning documents covering the urban renewal area as a whole, including, but not limited to, a comprehensive plan for the locality.”

The URP is a roadmap for future development in the Urban Renewal Area (URA). The 2040 plan represents a major plan change from the 2020 URP. Meagen & Laura presented a powerpoint presentation describing the requirements for an URP, the history of the previous plan, elements of the new plan & how it compares to the 2020 plan. The Urban Renewal Area (URA) has been extended to the west along River St., to the SE along Water St. just beyond the Fifth St. Bridge, and expanded north of the old Courthouse. An area between Mt. Vernon St. and Highland Ave north to Pearl St. has been deleted from the URA.

The Plan also contains proposed public improvements, 36 parcel acquisitions, a relocation plan, objectives of the URP, and how the Plan conforms to the Vision 2020 plan and the 2019 Economic Development strategy were discussed.

Board comment:

Mr. Fontaine: Is there time for more Planning Board input? As a whole he is fine with it, but when the 2020 URP was adopted it was a longer process, more time to digest it. Why the compressed timeframe?

Meagen: The previous Urban Renewal Plan has been extended out to March 2022.

Mr. Capodagli: Is there time to suggest adding more properties for acquisition such as the Littlehale & Fisher bldg. 962 Main St.? Laura said they'll take a look at it.

Mr. Capodagli & Ms. Caron agreed: The elements of the plan are spot on what's needed.

Motion made (Mr. Fontaine) & seconded (Ms. Butland) to make a determination per MGL ch. 121B that the Draft 2040 Fitchburg Downtown Urban Revitalization & Development Plan is based upon a local survey and conforms to any existing planning documents covering the urban renewal area as a whole, including, but not limited to, a comprehensive plan for the locality.

Roll call vote: Capodagli: Yes. Fontaine: Yes. Butland: Yes. Lopez: Yes. Caron: Yes.

Vote 5-0 in favor.

Year 48 (2022-23) Community Development Block Grant program - Recommendations

Present: Tom Skwierawski, Liz Murphy, Cindy Dalton.

The Board reviewed the Department's spreadsheet and recommendations (attached)

Est Year 48 entitlement: \$1,688,356.00

Total Available

(Entitlement + Reprogrammed/P.I.) \$1,029,067.00

Public facilities: Boutelle & Goodrich Sts. Improvements were determined to be a priority.

Q: What if FSC were to fund half of the proposed North St. improvements? That would change the recommendation.

Public Services: Board agreed: CDBG funds should support existing relationships with applicants rather than taking on additional services.

Ms. Caron: Supports continued FPD initiatives but observed that while Fitchburg P.D. is always fully funded other applicants generally receive less than their full request in this category. As the funding in this category is capped, and the City traditionally receives less CDBG funds each year, consider awarding proportional amounts.

Mr. Fontaine disagreed. Drug Enforcement is the only activity funded by CDBG that brings revenue to the City from seizure of property during drug busts.

Tom: The Board can make a recommendation to cut, but the Mayor has the final say.

Economic Development: Q: Will CDBG be funding the Downtown Coordinator after Year 2?

Tom: The goal is to create Downtown Improvement District and fund the position from revenues gained thru that.

Mr. Fontaine: Why is Program Income lower than in the past?

Cindy/Liz: The Dept. is not currently requesting repayment on business loans.

Motion made (Mr. Fontaine) & seconded (Mr. Capodagli) to adopt the Community Development Dept.'s CDBG recommendations. Roll call vote:

Capodagli: Yes. Fontaine: Yes. Butland: Yes. Lopez: Yes. Caron: Yes. Vote 5-0 in favor.

Game On Fitchburg

Mr. Fontaine stressed that Alpha Rho needs to have their own spot on the entrance sign. He shared his screen and showed a proposed sign that's taller than what's currently installed, which had been discussed by the Board during the November 2021 meeting. He requested that the Board formally approve the sign with 14 slots (7 full panels in addition to Game On), as long as there is room for every business and property owner.

Motion made & seconded to this effect. Vote 5-0 in favor.

Mr. Fontaine left the meeting at 9:45.

Mr. Capodagli asked if the townhouse development recently built and the corner of Blossom & Mt. Vernon has had a historical plaque installed commemorating the site of the former Hotel Crescent, etc. Staff will check.

Meeting Minutes

Motion made (Ms. Butland) & seconded (Mr. Capodagli) to approve minutes of the November 9, 2021 meeting, with one amendment suggested by Ms. Caron. Vote 4-0 in favor.

Motion made (Ms. Caron) & seconded (Mr. Capodagli) to approve minutes of the January 13, 2022 CDBG public hearing. Vote 4-0 in favor.

Action on the December 14th minutes deferred to next meeting.

Motion made (Mr. Lopez) & seconded (Mr. Capodagli) to Adjourn. Vote 4-0 in favor.

Meeting adjourned: 9:53 p.m.

Next meeting: February 22, 2022

Minutes approved: February 22, 2022