

**MINUTES OF THE PROCEEDINGS OF THE
PLANNING BOARD OF THE CITY OF WORCESTER**

Decemeber 9th, 2020

Pursuant to Governor Baker’s March 12, 2020 Order Suspending Certain Provisions of the Open Meeting Law, M.G.L. c. 30A, §18, and the Governor’s March 23, 2020 Order, as amended, imposing strict limitation on the number of people that may gather in one place, this meeting was conducted through remote participation. The meeting was livestreamed from the City of Worcester website and via the local cable access channel and is available for streaming online. Public participation was facilitated through a call-in number, 415-655-0001 (Access Code: 1601714991), which was publicized on the posted meeting agenda and during the video broadcast.

Planning Board Members Participating: Albert LaValley, Chair
Paul DePalo, Vice-Chair
Eleanor Gilmore, Clerk
Toni Molinari
Edward Moynihan

Planning Board Members Not Participating: None

Staff present: Stephen Rolle, Division of Planning & Regulatory Services
Michelle Smith, Division of Planning & Regulatory Services
Jody Kennedy Valade, Inspectional Services Division
Alexandra Kalkounis, Legal Department

Call to Order – Mr. LaValley called the meeting to order at 5:30pm.

Approval of Minutes-

Requests for Continuances, Extensions, Postponements, and Withdrawals

2. 11 & 22 (AKA 24) CANTERBURY STREET – DEFINITIVE SITE PLAN

Requests to Postpone the Public Meetings to December 30, 2020
Extend the Constructive Grant Deadlines to January 21, 2021

3. 0 (AKA 50-60 RICHARDS STREET) –MORE THAN ONE BUILDING ON A LOT & DEFINITIVE SITE PLAN

Requests to Postpone the Public Meetings to December 30, 2020
Extend the Constructive Grant Deadlines to January 21, 2021

10A: 857 MAIN STREET & 19 RIPLEY STREET – ANR PLAN

Requests to Postpone the Public Meetings to December 30, 2020
Extend the Constructive Grant Deadlines to January 21, 2021

10D: 25 WESTWOOD DRIVE & JEFFREY ROAD – ANR PLAN

Request to Leave to Withdraw Without Prejudice

Ms. Gilmore made a motion to grant postponements and leave to withdraw for items 2, 3, 10A & 10D as noted; Mr. DePalo seconds; 4-0

New Business

5. 51, 53 & 55 Windsor Street (PB-2020-074)

a. Public Hearing – More than one Building on a Lot

b. Public Meeting – Definitive Site Plan

Mr. LaValley explained that Board had heard of this site before and expressed concerns about available open space and space for family gathering.

Zachary Couture with HS&T is present for applicant.

Ms. Smith gave an overview of the project and proposed revisions; noted that applicant is requesting waiver of the application fee; explained that proposed building had been shrunk since last time it came before the Board, created space for picnic table and shade trees; doubled open space area.

Mr. Couture highlights the major changes compared to last meeting; explained that there are no proposed common areas; requests three waivers for site plan and one waiver for More Than One Building on a Lot.

Law Department had no comment.

Zoning had no comment.

DPW made note that water department would like more information about water service at time of permitting, e.g. size and material.

Public had no comment.

Board Discussion

Ms. Gilmore expressed appreciate that applicant had considered Board comments from last time; had no further questions.

Mr. DePalo had no comments

Ms. Molinari asked for clarification on whether it will be same number of total units and whether they will be affordable or market rate.

Ms. Smith confirmed it will be same number of total units and that they will be affordable.

Mr. Couture confirmed it will be low-income housing.

Mr. LaValley made note of additional area freed up by making housing smaller, asked applicant to explain how additional space will be used.

Mr. Couture says applicant would like it to be recreational space, limited by liability of a playground or grills.

Mr. LaValley asked for clarification of low-income housing and intention of client to provide this housing to people using Section 8 housing vouchers.

Mr. Couture confirms; applicant is not using LIHTC (Low-Income Housing Tax Credit)

Ms. Gilmore rejoins meeting and had no further questions.

Mr. LeValley stated that he remains concerned that it is too much building on a small site in an already dense neighborhood, without enough amenities, asked if other members of the Board have similar concerns.

Ms. Molinari supports because Green Hill Park is nearby as an amenity.

Mr. DePalo expressed his support.

Mr. LaValley asked to clarify that Board can grant fee waiver seeing that applicant re-filed within a timely manner.

Ms. Smith stated that staff generally is not in favor of fee waivers but that Board could reduce fee to \$660 or waive entirely, the application was approximately 1 month overdue. Mr. Rolle indicates that staff supports the waiver.

Mr. LaValley suggested that they proceed with full fee waiver given timely re-filing.

Mr. DePalo made a motion to approve Definitive Site Plan and More Than One Building on a Lot, and to grant a waiver of the filing fee, and grant waivers to plan requirements on staff memorandum and that this approval be subject to conditions outlined in the staff memo; Seconded by Ms. Gilmore; motion passed 3-1 (Ms. Gilmore, Ms. Molinari, and Mr. DePalo in favor; Mr. LaValley against; with Mr. Moynihan recused).

1. 115 Northeast Cutoff (PB-2020-011)

a. Public Hearings –

- i. Special Permit to allow expansion, alteration, change of pre-existing non-conforming uses within the Water Resource Protection Overlay District**
- ii. Special Permit to allow more than 20% impervious surface within the Water Resource Protection Overlay District**

b. Public Meeting – Definitive Site Plan

Mr. LaValley opened the hearing

Mr. Rolle gave a brief overview of the project. He stated that site resides within WRPOD. Staff recommends that applicant withdraw the second special permit request for “more than 20% impervious surface” as a Special Permit is no longer necessary under most recent iteration of the plan.

Mr. Rolle explained that this is former Allegro site off of NE Cutoff. Applicant is proposing to rehabilitate and expand the site for multiple tenants.

Mr. Madaus of Mirick O’Connell, on behalf of applicant, explained that applicant proposing to make improvements to site for purpose of leasing portions for of property to Worcester Public Schools (WPS) for housing WPS transportation services. They are seeking site plan approval along with waiver for the interior landscaping, and seeking a special permit to allow for re-use of building number 4 (not visible

from the public way), a building had been used for non-conforming (to water resources protection overlay district) use prior. The building would be available for maintenance of the school bus fleet, reducing the number of trips buses would make to and from the site.

Since initial plans, applicant had reduced the percentage of the site which would be impervious surface, such that there no need for a special permit in that regard. The applicant asked for leave to withdraw for that special permit as they removed the proposal for fuel dispensing station for the buses.

He indicated that the City had expressed concern over the proximity of the project to Poor Farm Brook, and the owner has partnered with Greater Worcester Land Trust (GWLT) to convey a conservation restriction to GWLT to protect that resource and a total of 10.6 acres.

The applicant sought site plan approval with a waiver of interior landscaping requirement—as it is not practical for bus parking--and also seeking a special permit for a change of non-conforming use relative to building number 4.

Ms. Beaton (law department) had no comment.

Zoning had no comment.

Mr. Lyford (DPW) supports waives driveway openings requirements given large vehicle usage.

Mr. Rolle concurred with Mr. Lyford on supporting larger driveway openings. Applicant also is widening driveway slightly to accommodate turning movements of larger vehicles.

Mr. Rolle also noted that staff had suggest conservation restriction as a condition, protecting 10.6 acres in the vicinity of Poor Farm Brook.

Mr. Rolle also noted that a traffic study had found minimal impact on Northeast Cutoff; staff Suggested an updated traffic study be conducted before the second phase of the project is constructed, to confirm that no traffic mitigation is required.

Mr. Rolle noted that due to concerns of being located in overlay protection district, the applicant is removing some existing impervious surface to bring total impervious of the site from 25% to below 20%.

Mr. Rolle noted that some of the property is within a floodplain, and that there are some wetland on the southern end of the site.

Patrick Healey, Thompson & Liston, explained where water detention areas are located, and that site had been through review with Conservation Commission and received approval.

Public Comment

Colin Novick on behalf of the Greater Worcester Land Trust, stated that interest in site is that the site is in 1987 City of Worcester Open Space Top 10 Priority Plan —they would like to connect Clementi Playground with Clark St Recreational Fields; the project will improve habitat and water quality.

Board Discussion:

Mr. Moynihan stated that he is encouraged that a poor situation had been made better. Expressed concern about Poor Farm Brook and asks, how much tree cover will be eliminated with expansion of

parking lot in Phase 2 and how are you mitigating disruption of vegetation providing shade to the Brook?

Patrick Healey stated that they are working with GWLT and that in the revisions the buffer along the brook was expanded with no direct runoff from parking lot directed into brook, noting that additional stormwater will not be infiltrated.

Mr. Moynihan asked to confirm that all buildings are existing. (Mr. Healey confirms.)

Mr. Moynihan asked to confirm that man-made pond on site will continue to be maintained under current plan (Mr. Healey confirms).

Mr. Moynihan expressed that he is still worried about discharge and contamination, but appreciates that there had been effort to protect “blueways” and that this could be a net positive for the area.

Ms. Molinari had no comments.

Ms. Gilmore asked to confirm that applicant will be requesting waiver for interior tree requirements. (Mr. Healey confirms.)

Ms. Gilmore asked applicant to comment on EV charging infrastructure (or lack thereof):

Mr. Healey explained that they had initially proposed six stations in front of building 2, but had been moved into existing lot to serve more tenants; it can be expanded in the future to meet demand of tenants.

Ms. Gilmore emphasizes that applicant should think futuristically and consider that Worcester is aspiring to a more sustainable future.

Mr. DePalo inquires about western portion of property abutting residential property; Mr. Rolle confirmed that tree cover will be almost fully retained, and that thick canopy provide adequate screen for abutters.

Mr. DePalo noted that he appreciates applicant working with stakeholders.

Mr. LaValley noted that he is pleased that applicant had made effort to address concerns of area, and that it is a re-use of a formerly productive site and that it is a positive reuse.

Ms. Gilmore moves to close the public hearing; Mr. DePalo seconds. 5-0

Ms. Gilmore moves to approve 1) Definitive Site Plan subject to conditions of approval and grant waiver for interior tree requirements, 2) Special Permit to allow expansion, alteration, change of pre-existing, non-conforming uses within the WRPOD subject to conditions of approval and accept the findings of fact, and 3) grant Leave to Withdraw without Prejudice for Special Permit for greater than 20% impervious within the WRPOD; Mr. DePalo seconded the motion; motion passed with a vote of 5-0 (all members in favor).

4. 757 Salisbury Street (PB-2019-053 & PB-2020-073)

a. Public Hearing – Special Permit (Remanded by Court Order) – To allow a CCRC

b. Public Meeting – Definitive Site Plan

Mr. LaValley opened the public hearing.

Mr. Rolle provided background on the project noting that the Board had concluded a public hearing on this same petition one year ago and had denied special permit and site plan application. He explained that the owner/applicant appealed that denial, and with a mutual agreement between parties, the court remanded the application back to the Board to review revisions made by the owner to the proposed project.

Mr. Rolle summarized certain revisions to the plan, including a temporary access road to be installed until a permanent connection to adjacent parcel (Salisbury Hill) could be established, and a sidewalk along main entrance road connecting down to Salisbury.

The applicant's representative Paul Marchionda provided an overview of the project, aiming to be a CCRC (Continuing Care Retirement Community) development proposed with 123 units, the density possible using clustering of the buildings to minimize disturbance to the site and garages to minimize surface parking. He discussed that they exceed the open space requirements specified in the Ordinance and that the stormwater design complies with the state's stormwater standards. Mr. Marchionda explained that the applicant added new secondary emergency access road on the plans, connecting to Barrows Road; he explained that this would only be installed if the permanent interconnection proposed to the Salisbury Hill development were not yet available for practical use by the time this project was ready to be occupied. He noted that if the temporary access is used while the access to Salisbury Hill is constructed, then the temporary emergency access road would be decommissioned upon the Salisbury Hill connection becoming usable. He discussed that there was a desire previously expressed to see a sidewalk connecting to Salisbury Street, so they're showing that but that they will only be able to build it if it receives the appropriate exemption from ADA requirements, given it does not comply with those standards due to the steep slopes.

Fred Fahey of Premier Property Group the Applicant/Owner summarize the changes to the remand application, explained that when the special permit was denied the questions were related to if there were adequate healthcare and wellness services, so they added new services. He indicated that the services were outlined in the application, on the city's website, and that most were mostly related to wellness and strength training programs and noted that they would all be on-site. He added they're also now proposing to hire a fulltime resident engagement director to coordinate and schedule the services on a regular basis for the residents.

DPW, Law, and Zoning staff provided no comments.

Mr. Rolle described the staff-suggested conditions of approval as detailed in the staff review memo, particularly those pertinent to the special permit for a CCRC.

Public Comment

Eric Stratton, resident of Salisbury Street, Worcester, inquired about whether research was been done regarding traffic impacts on Salisbury Street, and voiced his support for a sidewalk to be added to main entrance road.

Mr. Marchionda explained that a traffic study was done, showed minimal impacts.

Mr. Rolle affirmed that the traffic study showed no issues of concern, and that senior housing typically generates less vehicle trips than normal housing.

Mr. Lyford (DPW) also confirmed that DPW was satisfied with the traffic study.

Mark Borenstein, 80 Barre Road, Worcester, expressed his opposition to the project on the grounds of traffic congestion on Barre Road and indicated that he believed that special permit criteria for a CCRC have still not been met.

Kelly Rawlston, 59 Barrows Road, Worcester, expressed her opposition to the project. In particular Ms. Rawlston cited the clear-cutting required for access road, which will be alongside her property as a concern. She additionally expressed that applicant was rude and threatening to abutters the last time this item came before the Board and was denied.

Mr. Marchionda clarifies that there will be no tree cutting on private property.

Kristofer Beckland, 62 Barrows Road, Worcester, expressed confusion about the temporary access road, particularly as to how it relates to adjacent Salisbury Hill project, given this was removed from that project design as approved by the Planning Board. He expressed concerns about how the temporary access to Barrows Road and the impact it will have to Barrows Road residents.

Mr. Fahey explained that the gravel access road would be entirely on the 757 Salisbury Street property, and that the road is necessary to ensure their ability to provide emergency access, regardless of whether adjacent Salisbury Hill project goes forward.

Mr. Rolle confirmed that the temporary access road will be located on the 757 Salisbury Street property.

Doug Farmer, Worcester resident of Salisbury Hill, expressed concerns about sightlines and traffic creating dangerous conditions for vehicles pulling out from Salisbury Hill Boulevard on to Salisbury Street, noting that it is already difficult and noting that it is something that developers and eventual residents of new developments needs to be aware of.

Hall Schneider, of Salisbury Hill, Worcester, offered a correction to something that was said earlier—explaining that there will be 110 new units, not 200 new units, at the neighboring Salisbury Hill development. He requested clarification about the proposed emergency access gate and how it relates to Barrows Road.

Mr. LaValley clarified that temporary gravel emergency access road would be gated and only open to emergency vehicles, passing through 47 Barrows Road, which is the property that is being purchased by applicant.

Mr. Fahey confirmed Mr. LaValley's explanation.

Pat Jones, of Salisbury Hill Worcester, similarly expressed concerns that entrance to Salisbury Hill is already precarious to navigate with existing traffic, echoing Mr. Farmer's comments about exacerbating traffic and creating unsafe conditions.

Board Discussion

Mr. Moynihan asked the developer to clarify the type of units proposed specifically if the units are as he understood them to be proposed to be market-rate, rental units available to people over 55, with a mix

of one- and two-bedroom units and sought clarity related to whether or not Hills Properties remains involved.

Mr. Fahey confirmed these at least one member of the unit would have to be 55+ and that they are luxury rental apartments. Mr. Marchionda clarified there were 27 1-bedroom units and 96 2-bedrooms units proposed. Mr. Fahey explained that Hills Properties was still involved, but that they had not extended their contracts after the denial but that they are still interested in the project build out. He indicated that his company could also build it out or that it may be a joint venture, but that they haven't made a final decision.

Mr. Moynihan asked staff if Fire has signed off on vehicle access/turning radii.

Mr. Rolle explained that he does not have definitive answer yet. Ms. Smith explained that some of the Fire Departments concerns had been addressed related to building access but that the Fire Department had not responded to most recent set of plans provided by the developer regarding the suitability of the temporary emergency access road.

Mr. Moynihan expressed concern about traffic safety, specifically turning on the Salisbury Street. He noted that the existing conditions are not the developers' problem but that an issue of design and the need for traffic calming interventions along the road, noting the proximity to Holden. Mr. Moynihan expressed that he liked the compact design of the buildings, efficient utilization of space, and stated that the development meets a need that the City has, being – housing for people over age 55. He stated that although it is luxury housing, it can be more financially feasible for people who are seeking to rent rather than own. Mr. Moynihan expressed that changing standards of CCRC compliance is unfair to developer and explained that he would like to see these standards improved and clarified. Mr. Moynihan expressed that in his opinion the development does not drastically change the neighborhood character and noted that he voted in favor of this project before and that he will again, provided that the Fire concerns are met. He appreciated and expressed desire to see the sidewalk to Salisbury Street be included.

Mr. DePalo asked for clarify around the emergency access to Barrows Road, specifically about and slope profile and if vegetation need to be cleared for the gravel access road to be installed.

Mr. Marchionda confirms that yes the slope is 2-4%, and there would be vegetation removal. He expressed that this road is proposed only in the case that this access road needs to be built, asserting that there remained an intent to interconnect with the Salisbury Hill development and thereby eliminate this if the project timing permits and that if the interconnection to Salisbury Hill were to be fully constructed before this project is ready for occupancy this access road would not need to be an installed.

Mr. DePalo expressed his concerns, including the same concerns he had about the project before, noting that it remarkably similar to what the board previously reviewed, specifically noting that this project does not comply with Article X (CCRC) of Worcester Zoning Ordinance and its intent. Mr. DePalo indicated that he will be voting no because the proposal does not meet purpose described in Section II of Article X. He reviewed the new resident services proposed to be added by the applicant and indicated that the list remains inadequate to assist individuals with an independent lifestyle and meet the needs of continuing care requirement community or the intent of the Ordinance. He noted concerns that the services were really just conveniences in some cases based on demand reiterating the proposal was nearly identical to what he previously voted no on.

Ms. Gilmore acknowledged that this item is very complex and that the Board spent a long time reviewing the project and whether it meets Ordinance definition of a CCRC. She agreed with Mr. Moynihan that the project would fill a need for housing, and similarly that she liked the compact design. She also agreed with Mr. DePalo that the proposal is relatively unchanged compared to what came before the Board previously. She did note that she would be in favor of the sidewalk to Salisbury Street, and she encouraged the City to look at Salisbury Street as a place that needs traffic improvements.

Ms. Gilmore asked staff to clarify that staff was recommending that the Site Plan be continued to allow for additional input.

Mr. Rolle and Ms. Smith confirmed that Site Plan had enough unresolved issues that this was the recommendation and that staff thought Board may want more time to review the site plan, but that Board could certainly move to vote if they wished to do so.

Ms. Gilmore asked other Board members about whether or not the Board would be inclined to approve the requested fee waivers.

Mr. LaValley expressed that he would be opposed to granting fee waiver. He noted that monetarily it was a new application as far as staff and Board was concerned. He explained that a Special Permit requires four favorable votes and explained that he voted in favor last time, but noted that he is now uneasy given the resident concerns expressed tonight at the meeting. Mr. LaValley stated that he would like a more detailed explanation of the constellation of services offered and indicated that it felt that what was currently proposed was insufficient to meet the requirements of the ordinance.

Mr. DePalo expressed concerns about setting precedents for making the requirements for the CCRC ordinance too low.

Ms. Gilmore agreed with Mr. DePalo's sentiments related to precedent and noted that board has more discretion with special permits. She stated that it was difficult to see how this project supports aging in place, noting that the proposal also required a Variance for the proposed height and residents have expressed concerns related to the density and height in the single-family neighborhood. She noted that while the applicant increased the number of services, the services do not go further than what was previously proposed. She indicated that she was not sure she could vote in favor of the application as is and would not support granting fee waiver.

Mr. Moynihan expressed that he is agrees with Mr. DePalo and Ms. Gilmore in that Article X is very permissive and needs to be tightened up. He indicated that he would still vote in favor of the proposal but that he would not vote in favor of granting the fee waiver.

Ms. Molinari echoed Mr. DePalo and Ms. Gilmore's statements with regards to the CCRC ordinance. She stated that the project seems closer to a luxury apartment development, similar to 145 Front Street, rather than a 55+ independent living facility. She added that she would also not support the fee waiver.

Additional Public Comment

Mr. Borenstein, Worcester resident, reminded the Board of the reasons that application was denied last time. Including that there was not a constellation of services meeting the requirements of the CCRC Special Permit criteria. He expressed that he felt that there this is still not a CCRC; he noted that there are only three accessible units proposed. He reiterated that the proposal does not qualify as a CCRC. He added

that traffic patterns have become more congested since the 2016 criteria in the traffic study, and that the 470 trips per day generated by the project would make existing challenges worse. He also highlighted the environmental impacts of the project.

Board Discussion

Mr. LaValley advises applicant that he does not appear to have the votes for grant of the Special Permit.

Mr. Fahey pointed out that Article X does not require medical services, and that the bylaw did not intend for every CCRC to be for assisted living. He noted that this facility provides another option and points out they addressed the reasons for the Board's denial at the previous meeting.

Mr. Rolle asked whether applicant wants to consider a continuation.

Mr. LaValley reiterated that applicant does not have the votes for Special Permit—lays out options: continue to the next meeting to provide additional information, leave to withdraw, or proceed to a vote.

Mr. Fahey asked to continue, but asks what can be added to meet the bylaw, feels that he meets the bylaw as written.

Mr. DePalo stated that his concerns are the same as one year ago, and he would support moving to a vote tonight as substantial staff and Board time has already gone into considering this matter.

Ms. Gilmore noted that she would like to see applicant explain how the constellation of services will be provided to tenants.

Mr. Moynihan echoed Ms. Gilmore's request for additional details.

Ms. Molinari expressed that she would be okay with either a continuance or a vote tonight.

Mr. Moynihan expressed that he would support a continuance.

Law Departments (Ms. Kalkounis) confirms that the parties can agree to extend any court deadlines to a later date by mutual agreement to allow for additional information.

Mr. LaValley stated that additional information would not sway his vote.

Ms. Gilmore agreed with Mr. LaValley and Mr. DePalo, and that she would support moving forward with a vote.

Upon a motion by Ms. Gilmore to continue the item to the Board's December 30th with a constructive grant deadline extension of January 20th, seconded by Mr. DePalo, the board voted 1-4, with Mr. Moynihan voting in favor and Mr. DePalo, Ms. Gilmore, Mr. LaValley, and Ms. Molinari voting against.

Ms. Smith reviewed the recommended conditions of approval on the Special Permit as detailed in the DPRS staff memo dated 12/9/2020.

Upon a motion by Ms. Gilmore to close the public hearing, seconded by Mr. DePalo, the board voted 5-0 (with all members voting in favor).

Upon a motion by Ms. Gilmore to approve the CCRC Special Permit, subject to staff recommended conditions of approval in the memo dated 12/9/2020 and to grant the waivers and accept the applicant's

findings of fact, seconded by Mr. DePalo, the board voted 2-3, Mr. LaValley and Mr. Moynihan voting in favor and Mr. DePalo, Ms. Gilmore, and Ms. Molinari voting against.

Mr. Rolle stated that staff would support a waiver for the site plan application fee, less the legal ad cost, related to the definitive site plan if the applicant were to withdraw the definitive site plan application.

Mr. Fahey verbally requests to withdraw the Definitive Site Plan application.

Upon a motion by Ms. Gilmore to grant the site plan application fee waiver (less the legal ad cost) and authorize the applicant's request to leave to withdraw without prejudice, seconded by Mr. DePalo, the board voted 5-0, with all members voting in favor.

6. 92 Grand Street (PB-2020-077)

a. Public Meeting – Definitive Site Plan Amendment

Todd Rodman, Attorney for Applicant, is present.

Ms. Smith gave an overview of the project: Main South CDC submitted the Definitive Site Plan Amendment for a (prior approved) mixed-use development on a presently vacant property; in course of due diligence to facilitate closing on the property they discovered a transformer that was noted on the plan is actually a switchgear, which is more complicated to relocate; seeking to modify the approval such that the building is setback to accommodate the switchgear location; staff recommends that if this other option is chosen for the site plan, they would require revisions be submitted.

Mr. Rodman explained that applicant is before the Board to shift Building F 25ft further away from Illinois Street to get it away from easement area associated with the switchgear, rest of the project remains the same; project is for a low-income housing complex and is ready to go aside from this issue.

Legal Department had no comment.

Zoning had no comment.

DPW had no additional comment.

No public comment.

Board Discussion

Mr. DePalo supports and had no further comments.

Mr. Moynihan asks, if applicant goes with other option, would there be any Fire access issues.

Ms. Smith confirmed that there will not be.

Ms. Molinari had no comment.

Mr. LaValley supports.

Mr. DePalo moves to approve the amendment with staff recommended conditions of approval; Mr. Moynihan seconds; 4-0.

7. 7, 11, & 12 Neponset Street (PB-2020-075)

a. Public Meeting – Definitive Site Plan

Mr. LaValley asked call-ins to limit their comment to two-minutes and that the public comment portion will be limited to one hour; reminds public comments of the scope of the meeting, which does not pertain to the potential tenant of the site but rather the sixteen definitive site plan criteria; he reads aloud those sixteen criteria.

Dan Sullivan on behalf of ownership of Greendale Mall, the applicant proposing to demolish the mall and replace it with a distribution center; he gave overview of the presentation to come and noted the economic benefits and tax revenue; also says that traffic impacts will be less than from previous use

Stephen Madaus, attorney on behalf of applicant, explained that project team had met with IRT, City Manager, and District Councilors. He reviewed the project and explained that this and abutting properties are located within the BG-3.0 zone where a distribution center is an allowed use and does not require a Special Permit, noting that the proposal met all the dimensional requirements with no variances needed. He highlighted the surrounding uses in explaining that the use is appropriate and is allowed by-right.

Brittany Gessner, P.E. with VHB, reviewed the existing conditions of the site, giving overview of existing parking and traffic circulation. Ms. Gessner reviewed the proposal, including replacing 300,000+ square foot mall with a 121,212 square foot last-mile delivery station, with the office building of Reliant Medical Group to remain. Ms. Gessner discussed proposed parking for both the office building and warehouse, which cumulatively will be less than was on site previously but in excess of the requirements of the Ordinance. Ms. Gessner explained that they are proposing stormwater recharge infrastructure for the roof runoff and that existing utilities and connections will be sufficient as there will be less utility demand for proposed use.

Jessica Schumer, Economic Development Manager for Amazon, gave an overview of non-peak season operations at proposed site including approximately 18 tractor-trailers arriving on site during overnight hours. She explained that the deliveries were met by associates—at-least 70 full-time associates will be employed on site—who put packages into large bags, then van drivers pull up, load their van, and depart around 10am, packages do not leave until after morning rush and are staggered, with around 200 vans leaving each day.

Vinod Kallikiri, traffic engineer with VHB, gave an overview of traffic circulation and results of the traffic study, reviewing how vehicles will access the site, estimated hourly traffic flow, breakdown of vehicle types entering/exiting the site, directional distribution of employee traffic, delivery van traffic, and trailer truck traffic.

The Law Department, Zoning, and DPW representatives had no comment.

Ms. Smith explained that the site plan review was triggered by size and scale of development and disturbance of grades of 15% or more at a small portion of the site.

Public Comment

Alex Guardiola, Director of Public Affairs & Public Policy for Worcester Regional Chamber of Commerce, describes decline of Greendale Mall to foreclosure and changing of consumer spending habits, expressed

that it is an ideal location for the facility and would help the Worcester economy and create jobs; also expressed that proposed tenant is not asking for tax breaks.

David Shea, 464 Burncoat St, lifelong Worcester resident, expressed that a distribution center is not in the best interest of surrounding residents; describes existing traffic congestion and feels the site will further clog the roads and create traffic ripple effects; concerned about noise pollution tractor trailers will generate; would like to see more communication between developer and surrounding neighborhoods, and feels the developer was misleading.

Elisabeth, Vernon Hill neighborhood, of Independent Socialist Group, describes the developer as “dangling” job which are exploitative and dangerous under COVID conditions; cites issues caused by Amazon facility in Milford; does not want to see Amazon in Worcester, emphasizes need for housing and public services instead.

Sam Capride expressed his concern that workers classified as 1099 independent contractors are abused by employers; feels that Amazon would be a terrible neighbor.

Gwen Weisinger resident of Leicester, voices opposition to development project; expressed concern over carbon emissions from construction and use of warehouse and that it will not allow Worcester to reach goals laid out in Green Worcester Plan; more money should go to housing and public services.

Eliana Stanislovsky, Worcester resident, urges Board to rule against the proposal; cites the unsafe treatment of workers at Amazon facilities; wants the Mall replaced by something that supports the community like housing.

Matthew Corey, Worcester resident, expressed concern over traffic that will be generated from the site; encourages viewers to look at experience in Milford; expressed that Amazon had a history of presenting facts that are not true to planning boards during development process; concerned by impacts to small local businesses.

Laura Matthew, Worcester resident, expressed that there had been no environmental impact study completed; expressed skepticism over traffic study; wants to see affordable housing instead.

John Nowiki, Worcester resident; represents owners of business on West Boylston Drive; felt that there had not been enough time to review information provided about the development.

Eric Stratton, Worcester resident, expressed that the proposal is not in the best interest of city residents; expressed skepticism over traffic study; would like to see affordable housing instead and expressed skepticism over developer’s and Amazon’s honesty.

Red French, Worcester resident, expressed concern about the way that Amazon exploits its workers.

Yenny Deroche highlighted that increasing automation at Amazon facilities will impact future jobs provided.

Casey Duggins expressed that distribution warehouse use will have negative impact on surrounding neighborhood, counter to applicant’s framing; expressed that roads around Neponset Street already have safety issues at current traffic volumes.

Joshua, Clark student, member of ISG, urges Board to consider the issue in terms of opportunity costs; also cites regret that Milford Planning Board expressed after bringing Amazon to the community; expressed that he would like to see housing instead.

Dan Ballard, Worcester resident, expressed skepticism over traffic study; takes issue with exploitation of Amazon workers; criticizes Mr. Sullivan for “dangling jobs” as a benefit of the development; expressed that money will leave the community rather than cycling back in.

Alex, Worcester resident, criticizes the process by which this development had gone forward and would like to see environmental impact study.

Elise Waxman expressed that she would like to see Board vote delayed to allow for more community input.

David Slakin, Worcester resident, expressed concern that traffic in site area is highly dangerous and that traffic congestion had increased in Worcester in recent years; would like to see traffic study include holiday season and consider future growth of Amazon; would like to see more opportunity for public input.

Etel Haxhiaj, Worcester resident, explained that she would like to see more neighborhood voices; highlights that Worcester had just passed a draft of the Green Worcester Plan and that land use and zoning can be tools used to achieve goals of the Plan; expressed that distribution facility does not align with climate goals; points out that electric vans and white roof on site do not mitigate emissions of 18-wheelers; would like to see delay on the vote until there can be more community input.

Derrick Major, Worcester ISG member, indicated that a better use would be affordable housing; cites Milford’s experience with Amazon distribution facility.

Justin Desmond, union member of Worcester, asked if development will be built with local workers and if employees will be Worcester residents.

Alex Tarr, resident of Worcester, expressed that traffic study is too narrow in scope, and skepticism over whether this is the highest and best use of the site; and whether the warehouse will be adaptable to other uses.

Vicky Cosinski, Tatnuck Square resident, echoing concerns already expressed, and expressed concern over environmental footprint of facility; expressed concern over difficulty driving through Neponset Street area and would like to see a more comprehensive traffic study.

Councilor Carlson expressed that traffic study uses “full capacity” of Mall as a benchmark, and Mall had not been at full capacity for some time; would like to see more transparency on this project and more community input; would like vote to be delayed and to see Amazon host a community meeting.

Board Discussion

Ms. Gilmore thanks all the members of the public who participated, and noted that it is rare to have such a volume of public participation and would like to see more of it.

Ms. Gilmore expressed that members of the public and Board members alike have not had enough time to review application materials; expressed that developments like this one impact everyone in the City,

not just immediate neighbors; this development underscores need for zoning reform and long-range comprehensive planning; regulatory framework right not is very restrictive; in favor of allowing for more time prior to a Board vote, as concerns over traffic study and environmental impacts are valid.

Mr. DePalo expressed concern about traffic and use of parking; communication prior to this meeting and public comments indicate that more communication with neighborhood is needed; in favor of a continuance to give more time for community.

Ms. Molinari requested clarity on full-time versus part-time jobs offered and traffic congestion during peak times in the area; expressed skepticism that this is highest and best use and feels that it is not in the interest of the city; would support a continuance or a vote this evening.

Mr. Moynihan expressed that a continuance is the most sensible option at this time; his concerns are related to the traffic as he feels that is within the Board's purview, as many of the other concerns raised are political issues; expressed concern over impacts to DCF near site; would like to hear from communities who have dealt with Amazon; wants to do everything they can to ensure that Amazon is a good neighbor; would like traffic study to be independently verified.

Mr. LaValley expressed that he would like to see more about traffic impacts during peak times, more about Milford's experience, and more about sustainability issues on site, and a peer-review of the traffic study; gave applicant an opportunity to address resident concerns. 50131

Ms. Schumer describes issues in Milford from Amazon's perspective, says that they have worked to improve situation in Milford and are on good terms with that town. She indicated that Amazon has pledged to be net zero with carbon emissions by 2040, and that they will be switching all vans to an electric fleet. She indicated that the safety of employees is a top priority. She described that they hope target local community members for employment when station launches in 2023. She indicated that they are happy to work with Councilor to determine best way to engage the community.

Mr. Madaus expressed concern that attention and passion of public comments may be setting a precedent for what is considered at Planning Board meetings; expressed that this facility should be treated the same as a UPS or FedEx facility.

Mr. Madaus says he is amenable to a continuance.

Mr. Sullivan expressed confusion as to why they are continuing.

Mr. LaValley explained that the continuance is to allow more time for staff and Board members to review application materials.

Mr. Sullivan says that December 30th is an acceptable date to which to continue.

Ms. Gilmore stated that December 30th should be enough time for the applicant to engage the community.

Mr. Moynihan would like verification of traffic number between now and December 30th.

Mr. Sullivan would like clarity on what will be discussed at public engagement event, implying that is unnecessary.

Ms. Gilmore tell him that it is an opportunity to be a good neighbor.

Mr. Sullivan says that Amazon representatives would need to be there if the questions asked will be regarding Amazon.

Ms. Schumer says that Amazon will do their best to reach out to community through the Councilor before the December 30th meeting.

Upon a motion by Ms. Gilmore seconded by Mr. DePalo; the board voted 5-0 (all in favor) to continue the item to December 30th with the constructive grant deadline continued to January 21, 2021.

8. 0 & 1451 Grafton Street (ZA-2020-011)

a. Public Hearing – Zoning Map Amendment

Ms. Smith gave an overview of the zoning map amendment, which proposes to rezone a 42,337 square foot portion of the property at 1451 Grafton Street from BL-1.0 to MG 0.5 to wholly encompass the parcel.

Todd Broder from Fletcher & Tilton representing applicant asked to take comments.

Law Department had no comment.

Zoning had no comment.

DPW had no comment.

Public had no comment.

Board Discussion

Mr. Moynihan asked if zoning had already approved this.

Mr. Rolle explained that Board will recommend this to City Council and they will make decision on the matter.

Upon a motion by Ms. Gilmore, seconded by Mr. DePalo the Board voted 5-0 (all in favor) to favorably recommend approval of this zoning map amendment to City Council

Other Business

9. Street Petitions

- a. Petition to Convert to Public – Forsberg Street & Steele Street (ST-2020-015)

The Board held the item to their next regularly scheduled meeting.

10. Approval Not Required (ANR) Plan(s)

- a. 857 Main Street & 19 Ripley Street (Public) (AN-2020-054) - Postponed
- b. 77 & 81 Amherst Street (Public) (AN-2020-069)
- c. 490 & 492 Hamilton Street (Public) (AN-2020-070)
- d. 25 Westwood Drive & Jeffery Road (Private) (AN-2020-071) – Leave to Withdraw
- e. 7, 11 & 12 Neponset Street (Public) (AN-2020-072)

Ms. Smith gave an overview of the ANR plans.

Upon a motion by Ms. Gilmore, seconded by Mr. DePalo, and the board voted 5-0 (all in favor) to endorse the ANR plans.

11. Communication(s)

- a. Mass DEP Chapter 91 License Application for a Dock & Boat Lift on Lake Quinsigamond at 219 Lake Avenue.
- b. Mass DEP Chapter 91 License Application for a Dock & Boat Lift on Lake Quinsigamond at 221 Lake Avenue.
- c. Notice of Community Outreach Meeting (12/16/2020) – Proposed Adult Use Marijuana Establishment at 241 Southbridge Street; from Afrikai, LLC.
- d. Notice of Community Outreach Meeting (12/16/2020) – Proposed Adult Use Marijuana Establishment at 241 Southbridge Street; from Core Technologies, Inc.

Mr. LaValley asked to take questions about MassDEP Chapter 91 application.

12. Discussion of Board Policies and Procedures

Adjournment

Upon a motion by Ms. Gilmore and seconded by Mr. DePalo, the Board voted 5-0 (all in favor) to adjourn the meeting.