

Town of Franklin

355 East Central Street
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PLANNING BOARD

February 5, 2024 Meeting Minutes

Chair Gregory Rondeau called the above-captioned meeting held in the Town Council Chambers at 355 East Central Street, Franklin, MA, to order this date at 7:00 PM. The public had the option of dialing into the meeting using the provided phone number or participating by copying the provided link. Members in attendance: Gregory Rondeau, Chair; Beth Wierling, Vice Chair; Jennifer Williams, Clerk (via Zoom); Jay Mello; Christopher Stickney; Mark Mucciarone, associate member. Members absent: None. Also present: Amy Love, Planner; Matthew Crowley, BETA Group (via Zoom).

7:00 PM **Commencement**

Chair Rondeau reviewed the Zoom platform call-in phone number and the Zoom link which were provided on the meeting agenda. The meeting was audio and video recorded.

7:00 PM **PUBLIC HEARING** – *Continued*
15 Liberty Way
Site Plan Application
Documents presented to the Planning Board are on file.

Ms. Love suggested a continuance to February 26, 2024.

Motion to Continue 15 Liberty Way, Site Plan Application, to February 26, 2024. Rondeau. Second: Wierling. Roll Call Vote: Rondeau-YES; Wierling-YES; Williams-YES. Vote: 3-0-0 (3-Yes; 0-No).

7:00 PM **PUBLIC HEARING** – *Initial*
100-110 East Central Street
Site Plan Application & Special Permit
Documents presented to the Planning Board are on file.

Motion to Waive the reading. Wierling. Second: Mello. Roll Call Vote: Rondeau-YES; Wierling-YES; Williams-YES; Mello-YES; Stickney-YES. Vote: 5-0-0 (5-Yes; 0-No).

Mr. Rick Goodreau of United Consultants and Mr. Brad Chaffee, owner/applicant, addressed the Planning Board to construct a mixed-use three-story building with 20 residential units and 1 commercial unit. He stated that Mr. Chaffee's 94 East Central Street project is underway, the 70/72 East Central Street projects have been completed in the past few years, and the 122/138 East Central Street properties are under development at this time. He said that the current properties have a brick 10-unit apartment building at 100 East Central Street and a single-family residence at 110 East Central Street. The proposal is to continue to have the brick apartment building at 100 East Central Street and then a demolition and reconstruction of approximately 5,500 sq. ft. at 110 East Central Street for 20-unit apartment building with some commercial space on the first floor. He explained the plans included utilities and grading, town water and sewer, proposed stormwater system, tree planting plan, erosion control plan, construction details for the site, stormwater report, and photometric plan. He explained the two waivers that have been requested: use of PVC and HDPE pipe and some minimal light spillage. He said two review letters have

been received, and they will meet with the Conservation Commission this week. He said the two lots together are 56,329 sq. ft. He said they are two separately deeded properties that comprise this project. He said they hope to do cross-easement agreements for utilities and parking configuration. He explained that with this property there are density requirements. He said the lots have approximately 33,000 sq. ft. for the 100 East Central Street. There are 10 units which would require 22,500 sq. ft. by right. So, there is about 10,000 sq. ft. additional land. The 110 East Central Street property has approximately 22,000 sq. ft., and they are proposing 20 units there which could be allowed with a special permit from the Planning Board to increase that density. That would allow for approximately 10 units by right; we are requesting 20 units. He said we have 10,000 sq. ft. to transfer from 100 East Central Street to 110 East Central Street which would allow the density to go up from 10 units to 15 units by right on the newly proposed building. He said they did not do that because the 110 property is registered in Land Court and the 100 property is not. He said they looked at this at the global level for the entirety of the property.

Ms. Love said Mr. Goodreau gave a good overview of the site. She said the applicant requested two waivers. She said the Planning Board should note that the Town changed the zoning so that it is one unit per 2,250 sq. ft.; the lot they are proposing to add the 20 units currently allows for 10 units. The zoning says that by special permit the applicant can have additional units, and there is not a limit. She said the applicant will need to do cross easements. She said the applicant's attorney has reached out to her regarding the shared parking. She said the Planning Board must consider if 20 units is feasible under special permit.

Mr. Chaffee passed out pictures of the buildings.

Mr. Stickney asked about the three-story height and how it compares to the four-story building regarding the grade of the street. Mr. Chaffee explained the road has a bend, and the actual building steps down with the grade. He said he can bring pictures for the next meeting. He said he thinks height-wise it will fit in with what is there. He said the commercial space will be under 500 sq. ft.

Mr. Stickney asked about the tree replacement plan and noted abutters. Mr. Chaffee explained the back is a lot of rock with a big drop off. He said they can look at that further. Mr. Stickney said he would be okay with the five bonus units if they put a deed restriction or a covenant on the lot that it is not going to be improved and that it cannot be improved further beyond the existing density. Mr. Chaffee said he would be okay with that.

Mr. Mello said the retaining wall is too close to the infiltration unit. He said he understands the site is challenging because of the rock there. He discussed the drainage system and said they may need to look at just retaining and slowly releasing offsite instead of putting it back into the ground. Mr. Goodreau said the soils are not really conducive to retention. He said the stormwater regulations require them to infiltrate 1 in. of the runoff. Mr. Mello asked if the sidewalk will be ADA compliant and with wheelchair ramp. Mr. Chaffee said yes. Mr. Mello asked about the light spillage. Mr. Chaffee said it is along the sidewalk in the front, but they shield the abutters. Mr. Mello said he supports the density. He confirmed the parking density is 1.5.

Ms. Wierling said she appreciated the change of pace from the large square buildings that have no character. She said she appreciates this in the downtown. She reviewed the complexity of the lot and the request for the special permit for 10 additional units to increase the density to a total of 20 units. She confirmed they have two affordable units. She asked that the outlines of the abutting houses be shown on the site plans. She noted a typographical error on the plans regarding the address. She said she thinks it is a good project and a good area of town for it. She asked if the applicant was going to provide anything traffic related. Mr. Chaffee said he would provide that.

Ms. Williams said she thinks it looks great. She would like to see site sections latitude and longitude to understand the relationship of the proposed combined buildings in relationship to abutters and existing apartment building on the site. She asked about the curb cuts on the plans as to what is existing and what is new. Mr. Chaffee reviewed the curb cuts. Ms. Williams asked for the parking information on the existing apartment. Mr. Chaffee said about 12 or 14 depending on what they count. He explained that they want to clean up that parking. Ms. Williams confirmed there would be two affordable units. She said that overall, she echoes everything everyone else has said.

Chair Rondeau asked for the reference of the peak of the existing white house at 100 East Central Street. He asked about snow storage. He confirmed the proposed building is a footprint of just over 5,500 sq. ft. and three floors. He asked about the retaining walls and said he could not find top of walls on the renderings. He said they want the retaining walls built to design and overseen by BETA and the applicant's structural engineer. Mr. Chaffee said there would be 11 two-bedroom units, 6 one-bedroom units, and 3 three-bedroom units.

Chair Rondeau asked if there could be more commercial space than 500 sq. ft. to help the downtown. He asked about the retention basin and said that is where people are parking right now.

Mr. Stickney said that 1.5 ratio is great for multi-family only, but because there is a commercial unit, he thinks having a touch over 1.5 is important.

Mr. Mucciarone said he sees six spaces in one area on the plan, but the number seven is circled. Mr. Goodreau said he will look at that. He said they are looking at 50 spaces on both parcels.

Ms. Wierling asked where the retail space would be going. Mr. Chaffee said the front right would be glass. Ms. Wierling asked if they could accommodate an outside seating area. Mr. Chaffee said they can look at that.

Mr. Mark Minnichelli, 31 Longfellow Drive, said he strongly supports this request for proposed work and the special permit request.

Mr. Shawn O'Neill, 70 East Central Street, said he supports this project.

Motion to Continue 100-110 East Central Street, Site Plan Application & Special Permit, to March 11, 2024. Wierling. Second: Mello. Roll Call Vote: Rondeau-YES; Wierling-YES; Williams-YES; Mello-YES; Stickney-YES. Vote: 5-0-0 (5-Yes; 0-No).

Ms. Williams left the meeting.

7:00 PM **General Business**

A. Field Change: 515 West Central St – Retaining Wall

Ms. Love reviewed that the applicant was before the Planning Board on December 18, 2023, to allow for the installation of permeable pavement in place of the previously proposed Stormcrete pervious pavers north of the building and for changes to the retaining wall which plans are provided. She noted comments from the December 18, 2023, Planning Board meeting including that Chair Rondeau asked the applicant to have the Conservation Commission document with a letter the change of asphalts and make sure it is followed though, provide test reports and inspections for the back fill and back of wall, provide proof there are no sections that are higher than 8 ft., and add a fence on the top of the retaining wall and show it on the drawing. She said the Conservation Commission has agreed to the changes that the applicant made with the pavement. She said BETA has been working on the test reports and inspections needed. She said

the applicant said the retaining wall is not more than 8 ft., and they will be adding a fence on top of the retaining wall.

Mr. Crowley said that after the last meeting, the only remaining concerns were related to the permeable pavement. He said the designer has increased the thickness of the pavement as requested and provided requested infiltration. He said they are satisfied with that. He said BETA has a few things that the Planning Board can condition which he reviewed. He said there should also be a condition that if the pavement were to be replaced in the future, it cannot be replaced with conventional pavement unless it is permitted to do so.

Mr. Michael Hassett of Guerriere and Halnon said they have reviewed BETA's letter and have no objections to the conditions they recommended. He explained that regarding the dewatering issue, there is going to be an under drain behind the retaining wall that is lower than ordinarily seen.

Ms. Love said that Conservation Commission has already given a thumbs up. She said she can write up a letter to have the Planning Board chair sign with the recommendations and the conditions set in the field change.

Motion to Approve the Field Change for 515 West Central St – Retaining Wall, with any outstanding BETA items addressed or incorporated as part of the approval. Wierling. Second: Mello. Vote: 4-0 (4-Yes; 0-No).

Chair Rondeau asked where do they stand with the existing retaining wall and the abutter's retaining wall with the excavation. Mr. Hassett said his understanding is that they were beginning to do the installation of the wall and then they wanted to make sure the shoring was correct and are working with a shoring company to make sure the excavation is safe. Chair Rondeau asked for an update because the existing wall at Presidential Arms could have potentially been undermined on this excavation. Mr. Hassett said he will have Mr. Ben Stone, project manager for Stukel Group, get back to Chair Rondeau.

Ms. Love explained that it is up to the engineer and the owner to provide structural engineer reports to the Building Commissioner when they pull their permit for the retaining wall. Chair Rondeau explained that he has done many of these walls. He said this is a public safety thing, and he wants to make sure it is done correctly.

Chair and Member Comments

Chair Rondeau said whether we put it in our rules and regulations, he thinks that any retaining wall coming to the Planning Board moving forward, four feet or greater of exposed space, the Planning Board has its discretion whether we want to have BETA inspect it as it is going in per the design, not to say that it is right or wrong, but just to have them as an oversight and take this off of the Building Commissioner, because like I say, he is not a structural engineer and BETA has a structural engineer and then the applicants will pay for this. He said, unfortunately, we are two for two right now, and I do not want to go three for three. Planning Board members said they agreed with this.

Ms. Love said they could do that. She explained that when projects get approved, we put that in the conditions. She noted this can be discussed in the pre-construction meeting.

7:00 PM **PUBLIC HEARING** – *Continued*
0 Upper Union Street Solar Project
Site Plan Application
Documents presented to the Planning Board are on file.

Agenda item not taken.

7:00 PM **PUBLIC HEARING** – *Continued*
 25 Forge Parkway
 Site Plan Application
 Documents presented to the Planning Board are on file.

Agenda item not taken.

7:00 PM **PUBLIC HEARING** – *Continued*
 Uncas Avenue
 Special Permit & Site Plan Application
 Documents presented to the Planning Board are on file.

Agenda item not taken.

Motion to Adjourn the Planning Board Meeting. Wierling. Second: Mello. Vote: 4-0 (4-Yes; 0-No).

Meeting adjourned at 7:50 PM.

Respectfully submitted,

Judith Lizardi,
Recording Secretary
--Planning Board approved Minutes at April 22, 2024 meeting