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Town of North Reading
Massachusetts

Community Planning

MINUTES

Tuesday, January 2, 2018

Mr. William Bellavance, Chairperson called the Tuesday, January 2, 2018 meeting of the Community Planning Commission to order at 7:35p.m. in Room 14 of the North Reading Town Hall, 235 North Street, North Reading, MA.

MEMBERS

PRESENT: William Bellavance, Chairperson
Warren Pearce, Vice Chairperson
Christopher Hayden
Joseph Veno

STAFF

PRESENT: Danielle McKnight, AICP
Town Planner/Community Planning Administrator
Debra Savarese, Administrative Assistant

Mr. Bellavance informed all present that the meeting was being recorded.

174 Park Street – Postal Facility – minor modification

Mr. William Dunn, Postmaster stated that he is trying to change the flow of traffic through the parking area at 174 Park Street. The Safe and Health committee for the U.S. Post informed him that there were safety concerns that need to be addressed. Every day there are vehicles that cut through from Haverhill Street to Park Street to avoid the light. Their postal workers are in and out of the parking lot, loading and unloading mail and there have been numerous near misses with these vehicles and they probably have double digit fender benders in the parking lot because of the way the parking is currently configured. They had one accident where the driver lost control of his vehicle and actually pushed one of the postal trucks into another parking lot. He is unsure how many of these fender benders were documented through the police department, because they are minimal accidents and it's possible that they work it out amongst themselves, but he feels that it is their responsibility to try to fix this problem.

Mr. Michael Doucette, postal employee was present.

Mr. Bellavance asked how they came up with this one way traffic flow.

Mr. Dunn stated that he contacted the property manager, Mr. Johnson of CBRE to let him know that they would be closing the entrance of the two-way, but leaving the exit to their site, at the rear left corner. Vehicles entering the post office parking would only be able to enter from Park Street, but would have the option of exiting back onto Park Street or through the rear left corner. Mr. Johnson told him that he spoke to his company and they had no issues with this change. He then notified the police chief, who contacted his safety officer. The safety officer looked at the changes and then went to the town administrator and was told that everyone thought it was a great idea. The changes were then made to the site.

Mr. Hayden stated that these changes should have been brought to this board, along with the other town departments, before they were made.

Mr. Dunn stated that he was not told to do this by anyone he spoke to.

Mr. Pearce stated that he does approve of these changes because the postal parking lot is very small.

Mr. Bellavance stated that he would like a traffic engineer review these changes because this affects other sites.

Mr. Hayden stated that this puts more traffic onto Bank of America, which could be a hazard. He also believes that a traffic review needs to be done.

Mr. Dunn asked about how to find a traffic engineer to do this work, and Mrs. McKnight stated that she could send Mr. Dunn a list of traffic engineers who have worked with the town but was not able to recommend one over another.

Mr. Pearce stated that they should leave the changes as they are at this time.

Mr. Hayden stated that the traffic engineer should be aware of the way the site was before it was changed.

Mr. Dunn stated that he would have a traffic engineer review the site and come back to the board with the findings.

Mrs. McKnight stated that the property manager for Bank of American should submit a letter to the planning department stating that they are in agreement with the changes.

Mr. Pearce stated that an as-built will need to be submitted to the planning department depicting the changes made.

4 Mid Iron Drive – minor modification to P.U.D.

Mr. Pearce stated for the record that he read the minutes regarding the previous meeting.

Mrs. McKnight stated that the wording in the original P.U.D. could be interpreted to mean that no changes can be made at all, including that this property was originally intended to be the sales office. So, because this use has always been residential, it's no change from what it was before, but it needs to be clarified by the planning board.

There was not a quorum present to vote on the matter, so this item will be placed on the next meeting for approval vote.

113 Haverhill Street – bond release

The town engineer requested some minor changes be made to the as-built plan. These changes have not yet been submitted to the planning department.

Minutes

The minutes of November 14, 2017 were approved at the December 19th meeting.

Other Business – Old & New**20 Main Street/CVS – signage**

Mr. Hayden asked if two free-standing pylon signs on the same property were legal.

Mrs. McKnight stated that she asked the building inspector if everything was okay in regard to the zoning and he told her it was. She believes that the planning board is able to approve the signs as part of this site plan review, but normally, a site can only have one pylon sign.

Mr. Hayden stated that the first pylon sign is being grandfathered, to be that close to the sideline of the property.

Mr. Pearce stated that years ago this was more than one piece of property and over time was consolidated.

Several members noted their preference for the lighting to be external rather than the proposed internal.

Mr. Hayden asked if there was a height restriction on signs.

Mrs. McKnight stated there is, the Main Street Overlay, which is still in effect, "top of sign, may not be more than 25' in height.

Mr. Bellavance stated that the CVS sign is 24' high.

Mr. Hayden stated that he does not like the reader board below the sign. In his opinion, this is two signs.

Mrs. McKnight stated that she believes that the building inspector in terms of the signs will give this board latitude in the approval. The zoning bylaw states that "there may be one wall or free-standing, multi-tenant sign facing each street on which the premises has frontage."

Mr. Pearce stated that they have two frontages for this property, and therefore, are able to put one sign on Park Street and one on Main Street.

Mr. Bellavance stated that it looks like they are doing a master signage and master façade upgrade.

Mr. Hayden stated that they should have come to this board before going for a building permit because it is part of the site plan.

Mrs. McKnight stated that it is optional for them to do the master signage plan. The building inspector has not issued any permits because there is not much that can be done on the site, until the spring. He has routed it to this board for comment. If the board would rather it be incorporated into the site plan review, this can be done as a minor modification, or advertise and have a public hearing.

Mr. Hayden stated that he would like to know what types of materials are going to be used.

Mrs. McKnight stated that the building inspector does not consider this to be new signs, it is just re-facing.

Mr. Hayden stated the CVS sign will be 59.85' on one side, so the sign they have below it will be illegal. He doesn't believe that they have violated the wall signs.

Mrs. McKnight stated that if they get a master sign approved, it can be increased up to 25% in the maximum total signage.

Mr. Hayden noted that the CVS sign exceeded even the 25% increase allowed by the master signage special permit.

Mr. Bellavance stated this is probably why they are showing it all.

Mrs. McKnight stated that if they are showing all of it, then it would be a special permit from this board.

Mr. Bellavance stated that his interpretation of this is if they put one of these signs on Park Street, it won't trigger a special Permit approval, but if they leave it where it is, then it will.

Mr. Pearce stated that the question is going to be whether or not they want to go through a whole process of the special permit for signage.

Mr. Bellavance stated that he thinks overall, they are going to have to do for the façade change, so do it all.

Mrs. McKnight stated that she will notify the applicant of the items listed below:

- 1) Submit an application for an amendment to the Site Plan Review, for the façade
- 2) Submit the master signage plan/special permit.
- 3) The additional signage area exceeds 25% bonus area, and it should be reduced because the board cannot approve it at that size.
- 4) Consider externally lit signage.

Adjournment at 9:05PM

Respectfully submitted,



Jonathan Cody, Clerk