

City of Salem Planning Board
Approved January 3, 2019

A public hearing of the Salem Planning Board was held on Thursday, January 3, 2019 at 7:00 p.m. at City Hall Annex, 98 Washington St., Large Public Hearing Room, First Floor, Salem, Massachusetts.

Vice Chair Matt Veno calls the meeting to order at 7:01PM.

I. ROLL CALL

Those present were: Matt Veno, Helen Sides, Kirt Rieder, Carole Hamilton, Bill Griset, Matt Smith

Absent: Chair Ben Anderson, DJ Napolitano, Noah Koretz

Also in attendance: Ashley Green, Staff Planner

II. REGULAR AGENDA

A. Location: **84 Congress Street (Map 34, Lot 218)**

Applicant: **Gregory Investment Group LLC**

Description: A continuation of a public hearing for all persons interested in the application of GREGORY INVESTMENT GROUP LLC for the property located at 84 CONGRESS STREET (Map 34, Lot 218) for a Site Plan Review in accordance with the Salem Zoning Ordinance section 9.5 Site Plan Review. Specifically, the applicant proposes to demolish existing automotive service station and construct a four-story wood-frame structure containing twelve (12) residential units, a fitness space, first-floor commercial space, and fifteen (15) covered parking spaces. Associated improvements including landscaping and utility work are also proposed.

Dan Ricciarelli, Seger Architects, represents the Applicant. Rich Williams, Civil Engineer with Williams & Sparages, and Dorias Gregory, Applicant, are also present.

Rich Williams states that revised plans have been submitted and additional comments received from the Engineering Department, but they have not been able to respond yet.

Dan Ricciarelli outlines some changes to the landscaping plan. The shrubs in question were on Dow St. The Board has also received a letter from the Salem Historical Commission; the Applicant will meet with them to resolve any issues. Many issues are graphic. The Commission's issues are outlined; John Seger will need to have a discussion with the Historical Commission:

- Consistent fenestration spacing; John Seger will need to address this but windows have been changed to one over one
- Window heights and sills – will align, graphics issue
- Recess stair tower behind façade – recessing it will not make a statement
- Agreed to raise corner cornice
- Will add canopy, and door is recessed
- Materials are identified
- Vertical sign – difference of opinions, also prior discussion, will be working with graphics person re signage. The sign permit process and ordinance are described; whether or not this is outside Planning Board jurisdiction is discussed. It does have an impact on the project.
- Garage entrance will be open, no gate

- Solid board fence to screen trash/recycling – that was agreed to on Dow St., but this is on Congress St. (new comment). Location of trash and recycling are discussed
- Concrete sidewalks will be continued as discussed at the last meeting. Timing of comments is discussed
- Increasing planting bed on Congress St. This is City property, so is a good idea but the City would have to be amenable. Kirt Rieder notes they are proposing a mulch bed but don't have the ability to extend it; he does appreciate the advocacy for an additional tree as long as it does not impact turning traffic at the corner of Dow and Congress St. as shown on Plan A2. Kirt Rieder prefers flexi-pave over mulch beds, or better yet, lawn. The Applicant agrees
- Re additional tree – this will be worked in and is discussed. Spacing of the trees is also discussed
- Viability of the planting beds: dimensions are described and the contents of the planters/logistics are discussed
- Concrete from the curb back to both streets will be done

The windows and building exterior configuration are discussed; there is a “frame” around the sets of windows on the left hand side. Materials are described. Helen Sides feels that the trim board is not necessary.

Kirt Rieder asks about a board fence, and whether it would be in front of the bollards or not. Fencing logistics are discussed. The fence would be behind the bollards and will have vertical boards.

Kirt Rieder notes that there may be up to half a dozen graphics changes that need adjustment; the Board prefers to have a more complete, thorough idea of what a project will look like.

Extensive discussion of fenestration continues. Much discussion also centers on the vertical “Legacy” sign on the side of the building. Board comments include:

- Setup of windows and vertical alignment of fenestration are acceptable
- Board looks forward to graphics input on the sign
- It is suggested that the sign does not necessarily have to be letters
- The jurisdiction of this Board and the Zoning Board of Appeals is discussed; these may overlap somewhat and they want to be consistent
- Dan Ricciarelli notes that the Applicant wishes to go before the Zoning Board of Appeals (ZBA) for a variance for the sign
- The Board feels strongly that the sign should meet the requirements of the Ordinance, and further, that the urban landscape should not be changed to accommodate a sign. Specifically, Kirt Rieder notes for the minutes that this project does not merit a variance for the sign. The Board would like to make a recommendation about the sign before it goes to the ZBA
- The Applicant would like more direction on what the Board wants in the sign, other than a reduction in size. Vice Chair Veno comments that he appreciates the nontraditional vertical element, even its size, though he is in the minority in that opinion
- Suggestions for changes:
 - Letters may be out of scale to pedestrians; more of a drive by scale, and not even visible to pedestrians. Thus, the name does not need to be that big or to be framed
 - Additional graphics design is needed
 - A line could replace the letters
 - Kirt Rieder cites Liberty Hotel in Boston as an example

Dorias Gregory wonders if the City has a representative that could provide oversight as it is unlikely that all Board members will be pleased; the Board reiterates that the Applicant should work within the existing zoning framework.

Matt Smith departs at 7:45PM

Chair Anderson opens to public comment.

Jessica Herbert, Chair of the Historical Commission, apologizes for the tardiness of their comments. The design has not yet been discussed as a group.

- She asks about the windows in the front. There was a graphic error.
- Planting beds: moot point, as has been eliminated
- Does not approve of the sign but feels that it is important to consider as it pertains to the spirit of the project
- Suggests that, if the surface is concrete, letters could be incised or recessed so as to be more subtle
- All other Historical Commission comments have been addressed

Gary Gill Ward 3 – In favor of the project

- Building plays off 135 Lafayette
- Sign is too large – cites a sign in Cambridge
- Wonders about lighting the stairwell behind the sign with windows
- Affordable units are discussed; developer notes that margins are tight, and two of 18 units is already above the 10% required
- This will be an extension of downtown going towards Salem State

Dorias Gregory notes that commercial space will be donated to Point Neighborhood Association for a community room

Other comments:

- Would like to see trees spaced more evenly
- Side with garage doors should be a focal point
- Asks who will maintain the landscaping ; the owner/condo association is obligated to take care of mowing
- Developer would put together condo budget and have funds in reserve account for maintenance,

Tom Furey, Councilor At Large, 36 Dunlap St. – In favor

- Feels the project is an asset to the Point neighborhood

Alice Merkl, 28A Federal St, Unit 2 – In favor

- Approves of the project and appreciates the donation of commercial space

Kirt Rieder comments that the tree planting plan and species should be in the package.

Carole Hamilton notes that comments from Engineering have not been resolved, plus the question of signage is still outstanding.

The Board requests sign alternatives at the next meeting; while the Planning Board will not enforce zoning rules, they do have the right to ask to see signage. Jurisdictions of Planning and Zoning Boards should be clarified. This Board can express its opinion, and may be able to insist or not depending on the jurisdiction of site plan review. This legal question should go to City.

Three options will be presented at the next meeting.

The Board reiterates that anything before it should be zoning compliant to begin with.

A motion to continue to the February 7 2019 meeting is made by Helen Sides, seconded by Kirt Rieder, and the matter carries.

B. Location: 81 Highland Ave; 108 Jefferson Ave; Old Rd; 1 Dove Ave; 79 Highland Ave; 55 Highland Ave; and 57 Highland Ave (Map 24, Lots 1, 2, 88, 19, 216, 218, and 220; and Map 14, Lot 129)

Applicant: North Shore Medical Center, Inc.

Description: The applicant requested a continuance to the regularly scheduled

meeting on THURSDAY, JANUARY 17, 2019 of a continuation of a public hearing for all persons interested in the application of NORTH SHORE MEDICAL CENTER, INC. for an Amendment to the previously approved Site Plan Review decision and Stormwater Management Permit for the property located at 81 Highland Avenue (Map 24, Lot 1); 108 Jefferson Avenue (Map 24, Lot 88); Old Road (Map 24, Lot 19); 1 Dove Avenue (Map 24, Lots 216 and 218); 79 Highland Avenue (Map 14, Lot 129); 55 Highland Avenue (Map 24, Lot 220); and 57 Highland Avenue (Map 24, Lot 2). The applicant proposes changes to the area in front of the Davenport Building and Surgi Center, where the old campus utility plant was located. Proposed improvements include changes to grading, additional parking spaces, and landscaping and creation of an accessible, multi-vehicle drop off and pick-up area. New signage is also proposed.

A motion to continue to the January 17, 2019 meeting is made by Kirt Rieder, seconded by Carole Hamilton, and the matter carries.

III. OLD/NEW BUSINESS

Staff report back to Planning Board regarding the expected completion date of the gabion wall (including landscaping and public pathways) at the Footprint Power plant site.

Ashley Green is awaiting a written response that will be ready at the next meeting. Bill Griset notes that he was also wondering about a general completion date, including fencing on the street, etc. Ashley Green did have more thorough questions for them. They are very responsive.

Bill Griset asks if the Board should request of the City Solicitor an update on the three pieces of litigation in which Planning Board members are defendants. The Board would like this update.

IV. APPROVAL OF MINUTES

A. Special Joint Planning Board and City Council Meeting held on December 13, 2018.

Tabled until a future meeting

B. Regular Planning Board Meeting held on December 20, 2018.

A motion to approve the December 20, 2018 minutes is made by Bill Griset, seconded by Carole Hamilton and the matter carries.

V. ADJOURNMENT

A motion adjourn is made by Bill Griset, seconded by Helen Sides, and the matter carries.

The meeting ends at 8:15PM.

For actions where the decisions have not been fully written into these minutes, copies of the decisions have been posted separately by address or project at: <https://www.salem.com/planning-board/webforms/planning-board-2018-decisions>

Respectfully submitted,
Stacy Kilb, Recording Clerk

Approved by the Planning Board on 02/07/2019

Know your rights under the Open Meeting Law M.G.L. c. 30A § 18-25 and City Ordinance § 2-2028 through § 2-2033.