



CITY OF SALEM PLANNING BOARD

A public hearing of the Salem Planning Board was held on Thursday February 16, 2023, at 6:30 p.m. via remote access. Public participation was possible via Zoom video and conference call.

Chair Bill Griset opens the meeting at 6:32 pm

I. ROLL CALL

Present: Bill Griset (Chair), Kirt Rieder (Vice Chair), Sarah Tarbet, Tom Furey, Carole Hamilton, Zach Caunter, Jonathan Berk, Helen Sides (8)

Absent: Josh Turiel,

Also in attendance: Elena Eimert, staff planner, Beth Forrestal

II. REGULAR AGENDA

- A. Location: 373 Highland Ave (Map 7, Lot 58), 355 Highland Avenue (Map 7, Lot 46), 2 Cedar Road (Map 7, Lot 57), 3 Cedar Road (Map 7, Lot 47), 5 Cedar Road (Map 7, Lot 48), 6 Cedar Road (Map 7, Lot 56), and 10 Cedar Road (Map 7, Lot 55)**

Applicant: Joseph Correnti f/b/o Berman Properties, LLC

Description: A public hearing for all persons interested in the application of JOSEPH CORRENTI f/b/o Berman Properties, LLC/Tropical Products for the property located at 373 Highland Ave (Map 7, Lot 58), 355 Highland Avenue (Map 7, Lot 46), 2 Cedar Road (Map 7, Lot 57), 3 Cedar Road (Map 7, Lot 47), 5 Cedar Road (Map 7, Lot 48), 6 Cedar Road (Map 7, Lot 56), and 10 Cedar Road (Map 7, Lot 55) in the B2 and BPD Zoning District for an amendment to Site Plan Review in the Entrance Corridor Overlay District in accordance with the following sections of the Salem Zoning Ordinance: Section 9.5 Site Plan Review, Section 8.2 Entrance Corridor Overlay District, and 8.3 Business Park Special Permit. Specifically, the applicant proposes to amend an existing Business Park Development District Special Permit, and Stormwater Management Permit, and Site Plan Review decision dated February 23, 2022.

The applicant specifically proposes to revise the site layout to add a concrete pad and propane tanks in the rear of the building, the relocation of accessible parking spaces, changes to the building facade, rooftop screening for mechanicals, addition of a concrete walkway from Highland Avenue to the building, adjustment of tree planting locations, minor reconfiguration of the vehicular entrances off Highland Avenue, and revisions to the site grading, drainage, and utilities.

Attorney Correnti is here for the Applicant along with Brandon Kubik of Connolly Brothers Inc., and Paula Thompson of Beals and Thomas.

Issues have arisen regarding the gas line and the Applicant is asking for amendments to the plans, the biggest in the form of a propane tank farm.

Chair Griset asks if staff will need a continuance and Elena Eimert explains that they are waiting to hear from Engineering and the Conservation Commission (ConCom) and that they are still within the 35-day window of needed to respond. The Board can hear the presentation tonight and then decided to continue and wait for Engineering comments. Attorney Correnti says that this came to their attention a day or so ago.

The Applicant has had comments from Fire, there are grade changes to the plan to accommodate the propane farm. The Applicant was hoping for a quicker response from Engineering and ConCom and for a vote tonight. The Board is clear that they are unlikely to vote without Engineering comments. The Board chooses to hear the presentation but wait for Engineering's comments.

Paula Thompson shows a brief PowerPoint. Cedar Road has been relocated. National Grid had initially said that services could be linked to the gas line by Barnes Road and then came back and said that service would be linked to a line by Walmart. The Applicant team has determined that this would be too costly to the project and extremely impactful to Highland Avenue. When looking at other options, propane was determined to be the best solution. Connolly Bros. has had meetings with Fire to let them know the project's intent to use propane and Fire is deferring to the Planning Board for review. Fire has no safety concerns. The propane farm will be located toward the eastern portion of the site and will not be visible from Highland Avenue. The intent is to provide safety bollards and a 6-foot high black vinyl chain link fence allowing the area to look fenced in and not like a propane farm. There will be a berm planted in the back as well to provide further visual screening and protection. The eastern pavement is to be pulled back and mounded up 3 feet against possible future development. The accessible parking spaces have been moved to the front of the building, which is better as this is the community access to the building. The parking lot has been regraded slightly to accommodate and MassDOT has made changes to the radius of turning for trucks. The project's plumbing engineer determined that there was a booster pump needed and the grading plan was changed to accommodate this as well as a new sidewalk leading to the double doors for the pump. The drainage will remain as is with added area drains for the sidewalk in front to avoid possible flooding. The utility sheet shows other minor changes, the roof screen from the building has changed, the transformer pad has moved per National Grid, and while there are the same number of trees as previous, the distance between has been tightened up (23" center to center).

Most of the changes are from requests from the DRB. Brandon Kubik discusses a few modifications to the building such as changes to the roof screens on the roof, window locations, and changing the location of windows to structural constraints. On the south elevation, the regrading modification mentioned and the door at the southeast corner of the building is raised 3 feet to accommodate the grade shift.

PLANNING BOARD QUESTIONS

Kirt Rieder asks if the fire pathway is perpendicular to the building. It is. Mr. Rieder follows up with a question regarding slope. Paula Thompson notes that it is less than 2% at the top and nearly 5% at the bottom. Further questions regarding the setting of the propane tanks, they are on concrete pad about 5-6 inches above the pad.

Kirt Rieder wonders about snow storage and wonders if the propane farm can be shifted northward a bit. Paula Thompson says that as Cedar Road is now a property line, they must adhere to the setbacks. Brandon Kubik notes that they are at a minimum 25 feet from the edge of the pad. Paula Thompson says that the propane tanks and concrete pad have a very small footprint and will not affect snow removal.

Helen Sides asks if there is a way to vote soon or does the Applicant have to wait for the March 2 meeting. Elena Eimert offers that the Board can identify a date for a public hearing but must allow at least a week's notice to the public, otherwise the Board will need to wait until March 2 to vote. Attorney Correnti offers that the Board could vote tonight subject to Engineering conditions. Ultimately, the Board declines to do this and continues to March 2, 2023. The end of the 35-day deadline is March 8, 2023 and Attorney Correnti asks to be sent the comments prior to the next meeting, if possible.

PUBLIC COMMENT

Written Comment by Kathleen Ingemi is available in SharePoint: [Kathleen Ingemi Public Comment](#)

Jeff Cohen
Ward 5 Councilor
12 Hancock Street

Expressing concern as City Councilor and a citizen. Prior to becoming a councilor, was the vice chair of SERC and the Renewable Energy Task Force. The state legislature passed the Climate Bill allowing 10 communities to participate in a pilot program to create an ordinance to prevent fossil fuel installations. Then put a home rule petition in front of the council and it passed 11-0 and just waiting for the petition to come back to be considered. The Mass Clean Energy Center (MassSave) now offers rebates for commercial properties, not just residential. Electric is more advanced and financially viable. Propane is a volatile fuel. Also feels that some in the meeting were dismissive of the volatility of propane and the climate crisis. Does not feel we should be enabling this technology.

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

**** Tom Furey has been in the audience during the meeting. After his public comment below, he was promoted to a panelist and continued the meeting thusly. ****

Tom Furey is concerned about the Barnes Road neighbors. Are there any other facilities on Highland Avenue that have propane as their energy source and if so can the team please give out information to the neighbors. Brandon Kubik states that an immediate abutter, Northeast Animal Shelter has about 5 propane tanks and that further down the road, North Sore Self Storage also has propane.

- Attorney Correnti: There have been several meetings with the Fire Marshal and there were no concerns. 2023 standards are being met.

Helen Sides recognizes Councilor Cohen's points and points out that the Board didn't ask about the solar panels that are part of this project. And were the solar panels an alternative investigated instead of propane? Brandon Kubik says that solar panels are still in line to happen with the building and the infrastructure is being installed on the rough. However, load calculations shows that solar panels alone will not provide enough energy to run the manufacturing part of the building.

Motion to continue to the March 2, 2023 Planning Board meeting is made by Kirt Rieder, seconded by Sarah Tarbet and passes in a 8-0 roll call vote.

Bill Grisct	Y
Tom Furey	Y
Carole Hamilton	Y
Zach Caunter	Y
Jonathan Berk	Y
Helen Sides	Y
Kirt Rieder	Y
Sarah Tarbet	Y

B. Location: 65 Washington Street (Map 35, Lot 600)

Applicant: 65 Washington Street, LLC

Description: A public hearing for all persons interested in the application of 65 WASHINGTON STREET, LLC for the property located at 65 Washington Street Salem, MA (Map 35, Lot 600) for an amendment to a Planned Unit Development Special Permit and a Site Plan Review in accordance with the Salem Zoning Ordinance sections 7.3 Planned Unit Development and 9.5 Site Plan Review. Specifically, the applicant proposes to amend an existing Planned Unit Development Special Permit and Site Plan Review decision dated April 4, 2018. The applicant proposes to revise the lower garage level of the development and reduce the number of parking spaces from 61 to 59 spaces. No changes are proposed to the exterior of the development.

The 65 Washington Street team is here along with Attorney Correnti.

The plans called for 61 residential units and commercial space on the first floor and for 61 parking spaces in the under garage. The building is 100% sold and one owner purchased two units and combined them into one so there are currently 60 units. The issue is the maneuverability of the spaces in the garage. Our team continued to look at this and agreed to make some modifications to try and improve access to some of the spaces. The Team hired an architect with experience in laying out garages and they made recommendations to eliminate 2 spaces to open up corners. We agreed to that with condo association. We are seeking a reduction from the 61 spaces to 59 spaces. This is basically 1-1 parking.

Skip Rose from the Washington Street team shares the parking schematic. The homeowners have asked for wider spaces and with the architect were able to remove spaces along Washington Street.

The condo association has submitted a letter in support. BGA: is this the end result or will there be another end?

PLANNING BOARD COMMENTS

Zach Caunter shares that he doesn't mind a less than 1 to 1 parking ratio particularly with the proximity to downtown. What is the percentage of the garage being utilized by the building?

- 54 units have spaces. Some units have purchased 2 spaces.

Mr. Caunter follows up by asking if you are buying the spaces separate to the condo itself. The answer is yes.

Jonathan Berk states that he is generally opposed to parking minimums and feels we should let the building and residents dictate the changes. The majority of the Board agrees.

PUBLIC COMMENT

Written comment from Rene Olson on behalf of the condo association: [65 Washington Street board of trustees comment](#)

As the draft decision is not ready, the Board decides to close the public hearing and continue to March 2, 2023

Motion to close the public hearing is made by Kirt Rieder, seconded by Helen Sides and passes in a 7-0 roll call vote with one abstention.

Bill Grisct	Y
Tom Furey	Y

Carole Hamilton	Y
Zach Caunter	Y
Jonathan Berk	Y
Helen Sides	Y
Kirt Rieder	Y
Sarah Tarbet	A

Motion to continue to the March 2, 2023, meeting is made by Helen Sides, seconded by Jonathan Berk and passes in a 7-0 roll call vote with one abstention.

Bill Grisct	Y
Tom Furey	Y
Carole Hamilton	Y
Zach Caunter	Y
Jonathan Berk	Y
Helen Sides	Y
Kirt Rieder	Y
Sarah Tarbet	A

III. OLD/NEW BUSINESS

A. Updates from Staff

- Reminder to complete the conflict of interest and ethics training. This is a new system, and everyone must participate regardless of when this was done last.

IV. APPROVAL OF MINUTES

A. Approval of the January 31, 2023, Joint Public Hearing minutes

Motion to approve the January 31, 2023 Joint Public Hearing minutes is made by Helen Sides, seconded by Sara Tarbet, and passes 8-0 in a roll call vote.

Bill Grisct	Y
Tom Furey	Y
Carole Hamilton	Y
Zach Caunter	Y
Jonathan Berk	Y
Helen Sides	Y
Kirt Rieder	Y

Sarah Tarbet Y

B. Approval of the February 2, 2022, Regular Planning Board minutes

Motion to approve the February 2, 2023, Regular Planning Board minutes is made by Carole Hamilton, seconded by Helen Sides, and passes 8-0 in a roll call vote.

Bill Grisct	Y
Tom Furey	Y
Carole Hamilton	Y
Zach Caunter	Y
Jonathan Berk	Y
Helen Sides	Y
Kirt Rieder	Y
Sarah Tarbet	Y

IV. ADJOURNMENT

Motion to adjourn made by Kirt Rieder, and seconded by Helen Sides, and passes 8-0 in a roll call vote.

Bill Grisct	Y
Tom Furey	Y
Carole Hamilton	Y
Zach Caunter	Y
Jonathan Berk	Y
Helen Sides	Y
Kirt Rieder	Y
Sarah Tarbet	Y

Adjourned at 7:50 pm
Approved by the Planning Board on March 2, 2023