



City of Lowell - Planning Board

Planning Board Meeting Minutes

Monday August 16, 2021 6:30 p.m.

Conducted via Zoom

Note: These minutes are not completed verbatim. For a recording of the meeting, visit www.ltc.org

Members Present

Gerard Frechette, Vice Chairman
Richard Lockhart, Member
Caleb Cheng, Member
Robert Malavich, Member
Russell Pandres, Associate Member
Sinead Gallivan, Associate Member

Members Absent

Thomas Linnehan, Chairman

Others Present

Jess Wilson, Associate Planner

A quorum of the Board was present. Vice Chair Frechette called the meeting to order at 6:31pm.

I. Minutes for Approval

July 19, 2021

C. Cheng motioned and R. Lockhart seconded the motion to approve the July 19, 2021 minutes. The motion passed unanimously, (5-0).

II. Continued Business

Site Plan Review and Special Permit: 380 Lawrence Street

Larkin Real Estate Group, Inc. has applied to the Planning Board for Site Plan Review and Special Permit approval to construct a three (3) story Lodging House Building at 380 Lawrence Street. The Applicant originally proposed 35 units but has since submitted revised plans for an 18-unit building. The property is located in the Neighborhood Business (NB) zoning district and requires a Special Permit under Sections 12.1 (2) and Section 11.3.1 and Site Plan Review approval pursuant to Section 11.4.2 (2).

On Behalf:

None

Speaking in Favor:

None

Speaking in Opposition:

None

Discussion:

None

Motion:

R. Lockhart motioned and S. Gallivan seconded the motion to withdraw the application without prejudice. The motion passed unanimously (5-0).

Site Plan Review and Special Permit: 135-153 Chelmsford Street 01851

Ryan M. Rourke has applied to the Planning Board for Site Plan Review and Special Permit approval to construct a three and a half (3.5) story mixed-use development, including 6 residential units, and 3,062 square feet of commercial space. The property is located in the Neighborhood Business (NB) zoning district and requires a Special Permit under Sections 12.1 (d) and Section 11.3.1 and Site Plan Review approval pursuant to Section 11.4.2.

On Behalf:

Mark O'Hara, Civil Engineer

M. O'Hara updated the Board Members on changes made to the Landscaping and Site Plans. Changes to the Landscaping Plan include invasive species identified for removal, the proposed inclusion of shade trees from DCR, and a five-foot (5') front setback to provide room for street trees. Changes to the Site Plan include standard nine-foot (9') by eighteen-foot (18') parking stalls, provided dimensions for drive aisle widths, added an interior bicycle rack for residents and an exterior bicycle rack for patrons, and proposing down-cast sconce lights on the building façade, which are also on the Landscaping Plan. M. O'Hara noted that no exterior off-building lights are being proposed and that there are existing street lights on the other side of the street.

John Geary, Attorney

J. Geary elaborated on the changes to the architectural plans which include the submission of more accurate renderings, detailed building materials, proposed lighting included on the elevations, and the inclusions of bike storage.

Speaking in Favor:

None

Speaking in Opposition:

None

Discussion:

R. Lockhart asked what types of commercial uses the Applicant anticipates, as it will impact parking requirements.

J. Geary responded that they anticipate a neighborhood business and are confident the site provides sufficient parking for whatever type of businesses move in.

R. Malavich asked if parking spaces would be allocated for residential and commercial uses via permits.

J. Geary responded that the spaces will be allocated via signage.

C. Cheng asked if the City's stormwater review team had provided comments on the project.

M. O'Hara responded that they have not received a response, but did communicate with Mike Stuer early in the process and received preliminary approval. He noted that it is standard practice to recharge all stormwater underground. The system is designed to accommodate a 25-year storm. Larger storm events, like a 100-year storm which happen less frequently, would cause ponding on site but would not spill over onto the street until the water reaches a depth of four (4) to five (5) inches.

C. Cheng asked if the project has received final approval from the City stormwater management review team.

M. O'Hara stated that he is not sure but would be amenable to conditioning approval upon obtaining a stormwater permit.

C. Cheng commended the applicant on the positive changes made to the project since the previous hearing.

S. Gallivan agreed that the exterior is an improvement and asked whether the Applicant would be willing to plant shade trees rather than ornamental trees.

M. O'Hara stated that they would defer to the recommendations from DCR or the City of Lowell.

R. Pandres asked if the applicant is ok with conditioning approval upon the provision of an updated plan showing nine-foot (9') by eighteen-foot (18') parking stalls per the DPD Staff comment memo.

J. Geary clarified that the dimensions are shown on the Plans and was discussed with DPD staff.

G. Frechette commended the Applicant on the successful revisions and asked if the Applicant would defer to DCR to select tree type and location/s.

J. Geary and M. O'Hara confirmed.

Motion:

R. Lockhart motioned and C. Cheng seconded the motion to approve with conditions the Site Plan Review. The motion passed unanimously (5-0).

1. Applicant shall defer to the Massachusetts Department of Conservation and Recreation (DCR) Greening the Gateway Cities Program Staff to determine suitable tree species and site location/s, contingent upon final approval from Lowell Department of Planning and Development (DPD) Staff.
2. Applicant shall work with DPD Staff to finalize locations of bike racks.
3. Applicant shall work with the City's Stormwater Management Team to finalize the stormwater design and obtain any required permits.

G. Frechette motioned and R. Lockhart seconded the motion to approve with conditions the Special Permit. The motion passed unanimously (5-0).

1. Applicant shall defer to the Massachusetts Department of Conservation and Recreation (DCR) Greening the Gateway Cities Program Staff to determine suitable tree species and site location/s, contingent upon final approval from Lowell Department of Planning and Development (DPD) Staff.
2. Applicant shall work with DPD Staff to finalize locations of bike racks.
3. Applicant shall work with the City's Stormwater Management Team to finalize the stormwater design and obtain any required permits.

Site Plan Review and Special Permit: 1115 Westford Street 01851

Assured Testing Laboratory has applied to the Planning Board for Site Plan Review and Special Permit approval to open a marijuana testing laboratory at the above address. The property is located in the Office/Research Park (OP) zoning district and requires a Special Permit under Sections 12.8 (f) and Site Plan Review approval pursuant to Section 7.10.5.

On Behalf:

Dimitrios Pelekoudas, Assured Testing Laboratory

D. Pelekoudas stated that the project team is still working toward obtaining the updated Site Plan requested by the Planning Board and are having some difficulty engaging a civil engineer. He stated that they do not have a definitive date for when the updated Site Plan will be ready, but for now are requesting a continuance to the September 9, 2021 Planning Board meeting.

Speaking in Favor:

None

Speaking in Opposition:

None

Discussion:

None

Motion:

R. Lockhart motioned and R. Malavich seconded the motion to continue the application to the September 9, 2021 meeting. The motion passed unanimously (5-0).

III. New Business

IV. Other Business

V. Notices

VI. Further Comments from Planning Board Members

R. Lockhart provided an updated on the Lowell Historic Board's efforts to offer hybrid in-person/remote meetings out of the Mayor's Reception Room. He stated that the Board and Administrator are working with LTC to accommodate scheduling conflicts and technological challenges, and that great progress is being made toward making the Board's activities more accessible to the public.

VII. Adjournment

C. Cheng motioned and R. Lockhart seconded the motion to adjourn the meeting at 7:00pm. The motion passed unanimously (5-0).