



PLANNING AND SUSTAINABILITY • CITY OF NORTHAMPTON

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The Northampton Planning Board
Minutes of Meeting
Feb 25, 2016

City of Northampton Council Chambers, 210 Main St., Northampton, MA

Members Present:		Time
R	Chair, Debin Bruce	
R	Vice Chair, John Lutz	
	Ann DeWitt Brooks	
R	William Grinnell	
R	Karla Youngblood	
R	Mark Sullivan	Left 8:20
R	Theresa "Tess" Poe	
	Dan Felten, Associate Member	
R	Alan Verson, Associate Member	

Staff:

	Planning Director, Wayne Feiden	
R	Senior Planner, Carolyn Misch	

7:00 PM Debin Bruce opened the public meeting at 7:00 PM with an invitation for public comment. There was none.

7:00 PM Debin Bruce opened the public hearing on the proposed Zoning Code Amendment Chapter 350-7 Sign Ordinances to:

- Define LED Signs, create specifications for size, illumination, time of illumination and districts in which they are allowed
- Clarify/simplify subsections of sign code
- Remove special permit allowance for taller signs

Staff presented the code changes.

The Board discussed the proposed changes and possible modifications.

Susan Timberlake, Spring Grove Ave, stated her concerns about creating consistency with other sign regulations in the ordinance and the proposed curfew.

Andrew Crystal, board member for the Academy of Music, noted that the proposal would not allow the Academy to advertise the way it does now and that it was too restrictive. He also noted that the curfew would not allow businesses that close early the same discretion as those that closed later.



The Board discussed the time allowance for each message in the commercial district versus the residential district and differentiating curfews by district.

Upon motion by Mark Sullivan and second by Tess Poe, the Board voted unanimously to close the hearing.

Upon motion by Mark Sullivan and second by William Grinnell, the board voted unanimously to recommend the ordinance with changes proposed including the additional language in 7.2D, E, M and text modifications regarding message timing, curfews, sign heights, definition clarifications.

8:20 PM Debin Bruce Site Plan Review, Recreation Department Office building at JFK Middle School, 100 Bridge Rd, Florence, Map ID 16B-3.

Mark Sullivan noted past work with Berkshire Design and asked if there were any objections to his participation.

One member of the public noted her objection. Mark Sullivan stepped down.

Dave Pomerantz described the need for a new recreation department office building and why other sites were not feasible.

Debin Bruce asked for clarification about the modular building and whether this was considered a temporary building.

Pomerantz noted that this is a new building with 20 year life span, it is well insulated and will meet the energy efficiency standards of the stretch code.

Rachel Loeffler, Landscape Architect from Berkshire Design Group, Inc. presented the details of the project. She noted the building will share parking with JFK Middle School and minimize new impervious areas.

Loeffler noted that some trees would need to be removed.

William Grinnell asked for specific condition and type of trees that will be removed. Loeffler noted that the evergreens were large and would be compromised by the construction therefore they would have to be removed. The landscape plan shows new 8' trees to be planted upon completion of construction.

The Board discussed the changes in the utility connections and Pomerantz noted that the propane tanks would be located on the north side of the building in the secured portion of the site.

John Lutz asked if the trees could be protected instead of removed.

Debin Bruce asked for clarification on changes to the drainage.

Karla Youngblood asked how propane deliveries would be made on the north side and about site lighting.

Pomerantz explained the delivery protocol and indicated that the only new lights would be over the two entrances.

William Grinnell asked for more information about the trees to be planted.

Loeffler described that eastern red cedar is a native and fast growing tree. She noted that planting trees larger than 8' is not recommended because they are more difficult to become established and survive transplant.

Loeffler reiterated that the drainage plans were modified to incorporate issues related to infiltration that were raised by Department of Public Works.

Tess Poe asked about comparison of size of the proposed building to the existing recreation department offices.

Kevin McDonald 220 Spring Grove Ave asked about HVAC location on the outside. Is it inside or outside the building. He voiced his concern about noise and relayed information from Councilor Klein that indicated the HVAC system would be in an interior closet. McDonald also stated his concerns over possible increase in traffic and impact to the trees.

Lore Detenber 212 Spring Grove Avenue voiced her concern about the health of the new trees to be planted and HVAC noise.

Ann Wilson, 204 Spring Grove Avenue stated her disappointment about the tree removal, HVAC sounds and asked how the rear restricted access to the school will be enforced.

Sue Timberlake, 190 Spring Grove Ave. noted that there should be protection measures established for the trees that will remain on the private property side of the project and asked why there wouldn't be a stockade fence.

The Board discussed trees and other conditions and asked about the type of fence.

Loeffler indicated the existing fence along the property line would remain and not be replaced.

Upon motion by Alan Verson and second by John Lutz, the Board voted unanimously to close the hearing.

Alan Verson noted reasons why plans would be reasonable and met the standards in the zoning. Karla Youngblood agreed.

John Lutz noted that this is a small addition to school site.

William Grinnell noted it the project did comply with the site plan standards.

Upon motion by Tess Poe and second by William Grinnell the Board voted unanimously to approve the permit with conditions discussed:

- 1). All utility connections must meet Department of Public Works standards.
- 2). Prior to any site work, adequate tree protection measures shall be installed to protect deciduous trees on the abutting parcels of 204 and 212 Spring Grove Ave. Any such measures shall be determined by the City's Tree Warden.
- 3). The light over the south building entrance shall be turned off when building is not occupied.
- 4). Landscape shrubs shall be interspersed between and offset from the proposed Red Cedars unless the landscape architect determines in writing that such planting will not thrive and/or will inhibit the growth of the Red Cedars.

Other:

Staff presented the request for street acceptance of Bottums Rd. Upon motion by Karla Youngblood and second by William Grinnell the Board voted unanimously to recommend that Council not accept Bottums Rd as a public way.

Staff presented Rust Ave ANR. Upon motion by John Lutz and second by William Grinnell, the Board voted unanimously to approve of the endorsement of the ANR.

9:50 Adjourn