

East Longmeadow Planning Board

60 Center Square

East Longmeadow, Massachusetts 01028

since 1894

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Ralph Page, chair

Michael Carabetta, vice chair

Tyde Richards, clerk

George Kingston

Deborah Bushnell

robyn d. macdonald, director

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Minutes of February 23, 2016

Present were: Chair, Ralph Page; Vice Chair, Michael Carabetta; Clerk, Tyde Richards, George Kingston and Deborah Bushnell.

Steve Graham – Informal discussion re: The Train Depot

Mr. Page welcomed Steve Graham, Owner of The Train Depot.

Steve Graham said that he has owned the train depot for about 5 years and bought it from the owner of the land Jay LaFebvre and leases the site it from him. Mr. Graham showed the Board a picture of the Depot the way it looked a number of years ago and said the reason that he purchased it was to make sure that it didn't disappear. He said that he has thought about doing a number of different things and spoke with Ms. Macdonald who suggested that he come in and talk with the Board. Mr. Graham said that he would like to turn it into an ice cream shop in its present location and keep it intact as original as possible given whatever code requirements might be necessary to accomplish it. He said that he would be happy to answer any questions from the Board and his basic idea is one to preserve it in the original condition both inside & out and secondly turn it into an ice cream shop. He said that he & his wife have lived in town for about 25 years and he has been active in town over the years and was the wrestling coach at the high school for a number of years. Mr. Graham said that he is involved with East Longmeadow Endowment Fund and owns Toner Plastics at 35 Industrial Drive. He said that he is very interested in seeing the iconic building preserved and he is also interested in things that might enhance the quality of life and attractiveness of East Longmeadow. Mr. Graham said that he thinks with the walking trail an ice cream shop might be a really nice addition.

Mr. Richards asked Mr. Graham if he was going to do a long term ground lease with the land owner and keep the Depot where it is right now. Mr. Graham said that his hope is that it stays exactly in the same place forever and he is willing to invest his own personal funds so that it remains there. He said that he cannot say if he would be able to execute a long term ground lease.

Mr. Page said that it is business zoned in the front section of that property and an ice cream business would be retail which is allowed in that zone.

Mr. Carabetta said that he thinks it would be a great idea and would love to see that building used.

Mr. Kingston asked Mr. Graham how much land he is actually leasing. Mr. Graham said the portion he is leasing is from the street and the chain link fence and from the end of the building from the rail trail to Maple Court. Mr. Kingston said that he does have the frontage which is important.

Ms. Bushnell asked how long his current lease is for. Mr. Graham said currently his lease is from month to month.

Mr. Page said that it is something that Mr. Graham has to deal with. He said that the Board would have to look at whether or not the location is adequate for it and Mr. Graham would have to present a Site Plan to the Board showing the parking.

Ms. Bushnell said that she thinks the idea is a great one, it's iconic, it's eclectic.

Mr. Richards asked if Mr. Graham is leasing enough land to have the required parking in order to do what he wants to do. Ms. Macdonald said that she thinks it is about 200 feet deep.

Mr. Carabetta said also if another business decides to go in there then they can readdress it but right now it is the only thing being presented to the Board.

Mr. Page said that it's allowed and one of his questions would be through Mr. Kingston is it historical. Mr. Kingston said it has not been declared or registered so it's not officially historic in that sense.

Mr. Kingston said that it has frontage and it is a great use and he understands that Mr. Graham understands if someone goes in and buys the property to put up something else such as a strip mall that somehow or another negotiation will have to happen to stay there that will be included in their plans. He said for the time being it is the only structure on the property so it's the principal structure. Mr. Kingston said that he doesn't see anything in zoning that precludes it.

Mr. Page said that he thinks the Board would agree that it is a great use of the building. Mr. Graham said that he would take the proper steps required to work there and said he has persevered documents that he found in the building from many many years ago. He said that he has preserved the scale that was in there and assuming that the building code allows the scale to be put back in they will really try to keep it as original as possible.

Mr. Richards asked how many square feet is the building. Mr. Graham said approximately 20' x 40'. Mr. Richards said that is 800 square feet and they would only need 6 parking spaces and said that Mr. Graham would probably want a lot more than that because he will hopefully have more customers than that on a hot summer day.

Mr. Graham asked the Board if they had any more questions or any other suggestions. Mr. Kingston said that he thinks they would require a Site Plan at minimum and until

they see that they really can't vote but the concept sounds good to him. Ms. Macdonald said that Mr. Graham would need an interior plan with his proposals for the Department of Health because he also needs his licenses from them. Mr. Kingston asked Ms. Macdonald if they are providing internal seating for customers does that turn into a Special Permit. Ms. Macdonald said they would have to be making and preparing it on site to meet the restaurant definition.

Mr. Page told Mr. Graham that he may have to come before the Board for a Special Permit and with that permit it is an allowed use in that zone. He said typically if it is an allowed use, allowed zone and the right amount of parking there are usually no problems. Mr. Page said that it sounds wonderful and thanked Mr. Graham for coming in and talking with the Board.

Waiver of Site Plan Reviews Approved

Brush, 44 Harkness Avenue

Verizon Wireless, 30 Benton Drive

Elm Crest Country Club, 105 Somersville Road

Request for Signage – Big Wind Corporation 182 Benton Drive – Coyote's Den Self Storage

Tyde Richards recused himself due to possible conflict of interest. Michael Carabetta read the request for signage for Coyote's Den Self Storage – Big Wind Corporation 182 Benton Drive. He read the request stating that the sign measured 99 feet 59 inches single faced not free standing attached to the building with no projection. Distance of 16" above the vertical wall – sign is permanent – total amount of signs is one - total size of signs is 99 square feet 59 inches.

Mr. Page asked 99 feet 59 inches? 59 inches is another 5 feet – or is it 99.59 square feet? Ms. Bushnell said that is probably what it is. Mr. Kingston said 99 ½ square feet and Ms. Bushnell said yes, just under 100. Mr. Carabetta said it was not quite described like that – Ms. Bushnell concurred and stated she read it in the email like that also. Ms. Bushnell asked if they were including the canopy or just a sign. Mr. Page stated that the entire canopy is the sign. Ms. Macdonald advised that the sign was measured in three different ways and it needs to be in total and Mr. Carabetta stated all the way up and across right? Ms. Macdonald stated that was correct.

Mr. Carabetta said, for the record, he is looking for approval of the sign that is already up? Mr. Kingston said yes. Mr. Carabetta asked what the limit was – 100 feet? Ms. Bushnell said square feet. Mr. Page said that he is in Industrial Garden Park and Ms. Bushnell said, so clearly over the 100 square feet.

Mr. Page then stated according to Section 5.85, subsection D says "No sign shall have a square footage in excess of five percent of the square footage of the front elevation of the primary building, but in no case shall the square footage of the sign be more than 100 square feet."

Mr. Page then stated that he asked Robyn to pull the plans for the original building and that the building is 30 feet long 9' 7½" high which would give the front elevation of 289 square feet – if this is almost 100 you are looking at (Ms. Bushnell – 33%) Mr. Page – 33% - way over the 5% allowed. Mr. Kingston stated that also, if you measure it as a rectangle it measures 114 square feet not including the wings. Mr. Carabetta stated that it does not meet the requirements and Ms. Bushnell said it does not meet either one.

Mr. Kingston made a motion to approve and stated that is the proper way to make the motion. Mr. Carabetta seconded – Mr. Page asked for further discussion and hearing none called for all in favor – Ms. Bushnell stated “aye” Mr. Page called for all opposed, Mr. Carabetta, Mr. Kingston and Mr. Page all voted “nay”. Mr. Page stated 3-1 against. Mr. Carabetta stated that it was a teachable moment – Ms. Bushnell stated a very teachable moment. Ms. Macdonald mentioned that perhaps it should be explained to Ms. Bushnell as the votes are very important.

Mr. Carabetta stated that it was done in reverse – Mr. Kingston explained that you make the motion to approve the request and if you vote against it then it is a denial. Ms. Bushnell stated okay – she then asked if she can re-cant her vote. Ms. Macdonald stated that the Board would need to re-vote – however Mr. Carabetta stated it was a moot point as the motion was denied. Ms. Bushnell stated it was okay, it was already no so it was fine. Mr. Kingston stated it had already been denied - - Ms. Macdonald checked for what the vote was and Ms. Bushnell stated 3 to 1. Mr. Kingston stated with one recusal.

Mr. Kingston stated it was one of those little quirks – Ms. Bushnell acknowledged. Mr. Page stated that he thinks they all did the same thing once and Mr. Kingston agreed.

Miscellaneous

Mr. Page said they had talked about Mario's wanting Keno and that they would have to come back to the Board for a change in their Special Permit because entertainment wasn't included in it. He said after saying that the Board of Selectmen notified the Board that Bentley's does have Keno but it's not included in their Special Permit. Mr. Page asked Ms. Macdonald to draft up a letter to Bentley's just saying obviously it was an oversight and they went through and asked them to come in for a discussion. He asked the Board if they were in agreement with that. The Board said absolutely.

Mr. Page said he has a letter to Ms. Bower from the registry of deeds saying all the Board members that are allowed to endorse an ANR and subdivision plans for the town.

Minutes

The Board reviewed the minutes of February 9, 2016 and upon motion duly made by Deborah Bushnell and seconded by George Kingston, the Board voted (4-0) to approve the minutes.

The Board reviewed the minutes of January 26, 2016 and upon motion duly made by George Kingston and seconded by Deborah Bushnell, the Board voted (5-0) to approve the minutes.

With no further business and upon motion duly made by Michael Carabetta and seconded by George Kingston, the Board voted 5-0 to adjourn at 6:45 p.m.

For the Board,

Tyde Richards, Clerk