**Planning Board Meeting Minutes**

Benjamin Eddy Bldg., 6 South Killingly Road

Wednesday, April 19, 2023

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1. **Call to Order**
Anthony Renzi called the meeting to order at 7:05 PM.
2. **Roll Call**
Planning Board Members: Mike Carpenter; Bill Gibb; Susan Joyce; Anthony Renzi; Secretary, Hilary Downes-Fortune.

Excused: Warren Ducharme; David Paolissi

Staff present: Grant McGregor, Planner; Joanna Achille, Solicitor

Public present: Christopher O’Connor, Attorney with Blish & Cavanaugh; Virginia King, Project Manager, MCM Holdings; Cameron Hendry, Project Engineer, All-Points Technology Corporation; Bill Paul and Catherine Bay, Foster Center Fire Company.

1. **Approval of Minutes**

Mr. Renzi asked for a motion to approve the April 5, 2023 minutes. Mr. Carpenter made the motion; Mr. Gibb seconded. No discussion. Motion passed 5-0.

1. **Review of Application for Commercial Site Plan**

**Applicant: MCM Holdings, LLC**

*Applicant proposes to construct a 150’ monopole communication tower and related accessory equipment at 86 Foster Center Road, Plat 20, Lots 2 & 5. Property is zoned A/R (Agricultural/Residential) and M (Municipal).*

Attorney Christopher O’Connor, representing MCM Holdings, presented a summary of the proposed communications tower project. He explained that the 150-foot-tall monopole tower will replace the existing 100-foot lattice type tower and will be located to the rear of the fire station building. Mr. O’Connor said the existing communication equipment (fire, rescue, town) will be moved to the new tower, as shown on plans he provided us. Below that equipment there is room for up to four cellular providers’ equipment; recently Verizon showed new interest in the tower. Mr. O’Connor explained that in 2001 MCM Holdings received approval from the planning board for a similar tower. They knew then that it was within an Historic District because 1996 Federal regulations required that this was determined; review of the plans found that the monopole style tower was the least intrusive option. He provided us with minutes and correspondence from that time. The project was not completed because it hinged on a carrier (AT&T) being willing to fund it. Mr. O’Connor stated that the current lease for the tower expires in 2042, as does the Fire District’s lease from the town of a portion of the Municipal lot. He explained that after Planning they go to Zoning and then to the State Historical Commission, and only with all approvals in place will they firm things up with Verizon.

Mr. Gibb noted that it all passed in 2001, but the tower location has moved a little. He asked if there are any abutters in opposition to the project and was told no. Ms. Joyce asked if they have spoken to the Foster Preservation Society and was told no. Mr. Renzi asked if there will be fencing around the lower portion and was told yes, as well as landscaping.

Mr. Carpenter noted that the Fire District is a volunteer station and asked what the plans are for security. MCM representatives explained that there will be a locked 8-foot-high chainlink fence around the tower, and there will be low voltage lighting on a timer. They also stated that there will not be lights on the top of the tower since it is less than 200 feet tall. Mr. Hendry also stated that there will not be any guy wires supporting the tower; rather, it will be secured to a mat foundation designed by their geotechnical engineer. Mr. Carpenter asked if there is a plan in place for removal of the tower if/when it becomes obsolete per the historical commission’s letter. It was stated that the lease share goes to the Fire District, not the Town. Mr. Carpenter also asked about back-up generators. Mr. Hendry said the generator would be diesel powered, not propane, as the site is too small to allow for a spark zone.

Mr. Renzi stated that he is on the Building Committee for the new police station. He said that Gordon Rogers said the current fire department equipment will be obsolete because they’ll be changing the frequency to 800 MHz frequency, which is what the new tower at Woody Lowden uses via AT&T FirstNet. He was told the town still benefits since FirstNet supplements the local communication equipment. Mr. Renzi asked if, when opened, the new police station will be able to use this tower. The response was unclear.

Mr. Carpenter noted that UHF/VHF/800 MHz all rely on line-of-sight and we don’t have a coverage map for this tower. He asked that MCM Holdings provide a coverage map for the tower as part of the application for a Special Use Permit (SUP).

Mr. Renzi asked for a motion. Mr. Gibb made a motion to approve the approve the Commercial Site Plan contingent upon approval of the SUP, with the caveat that a tower coverage map would be included with the SUP application, and any conditions to the SUP would be incorporated into the Commercial Site Plan. Mr. Carpenter seconded. No discussion. Motion passed 5-0.

1. **Zoning Ordinances:** **Discussion of current zoning ordinances and potential options for amendment(s) to sections and chapters of the Code of Ordinances**

Mr. Renzi, Mr. McGregor and others noted that the printed zoning ordinances do not match the online version; there are sections missing. Ms. Achille stated that ordinances the Planning Board approved pre-COVID did not get submitted to the Town Council. Mr. Carpenter said that we need to get the newest version of the Foster Zoning Ordinances and compare it to the State Zoning Ordinances to make sure we at least meet the state ordinances. Ms. Achille asked where is the $10,000 that was delegated to do this work. In terms of updating and amending the Code of Ordinances, Mr. McGregor recommended that we start with “low-hanging fruit” such as dumpster storage. Ms. Achille reminded us that anything not in the Table of Uses is, by definition, prohibited. It was determined that Mr. McGregor will come to the May 3rd meeting with a list of ordinances for discussion, and before the June meeting we will have a list of items to post for discussion and action. Mr. Renzi noted that we are supposed to have a joint meeting with the Town Council in May, but instead he will invite David Paolissi to our next meeting as liaison. It was agreed that we need design standards first.

1. **Zoning Map: Discussion of current zoning districts and options for amendments to zoning map for Route 6 and abutting parcels to enhance development**

Mr. McGregor said he will locate and print a larger (than the 11x17 version) map of existing zoning so we can propose changes. He explained the difference between floating and flexible overlay zoning and discussion ensued regarding the handout provided by Ms. Joyce regarding Flexible Zoning Techniques, etc.

1. **Economic Development Strategy – Acceptance of strategy document prepared by Camoin Associates as implementation guide for the goals, objectives, policies, and actions set forth in the comprehensive plan as provided in RIGL 45-22.2-6(1)(7)**

This item was continued for a future meeting.

1. **Adjournment**

Mr. Renzi asked for a motion to adjourn. Ms. Joyce made a motion to adjourn. Motion passed 5-0. Meeting adjourned at 8:50 PM.

Respectfully submitted.

Hilary Downes Fortune, Secretary