

Town of Longmeadow
Planning Board
MINUTES
Of Regular Meeting
October 6, 2004

PRESENT: Chairperson Bruce Colton, Richard Curran, Walter Gunn,
Louis Kornet and Roy Johansen

The meeting was held at the Longmeadow Police Department Community Room, Williams Street, Longmeadow, MA. The meeting was called to order at 7:02 p.m. by Chairperson Bruce Colton.

HAZEL HOPKINS – REQUEST OF TWO SIGN CHANGES – CHARTER ONE BANK, 398 LONGMEADOW STREET AND FLEET BANK, 734 BLISS ROAD, LONGMEADOW, MA – Ms. Hopkins presented sign changes at Charter One Bank, 398 Longmeadow Street first. The wall sign, which will now read, “Citizens Bank” is one continuous sign box, back illuminated. The sign is green with white letters 36” X 125” @ 31 square feet. It is also proposed to have a custom illuminated night deposit surround with text approximately 1 square foot. The material of the sign is an aluminum container with a plastic face. Ms. Hopkins also proposed an additional sign on the side of the building (Edgewood Avenue) 36” X 125” @ 31 square feet, the same type and color as the signage on the front of the building.

There was discussion from Planning Board members on the side signage request on the corner of the building at Edgewood Avenue. The Planning Board felt that because the building is set back on Longmeadow Street and is not located directly on a street corner, the additional sign could not be approved. Ms. Hopkins requested to withdraw the request for the side sign. After discussion, Bruce Colton made a motion for placement for a new sign for Citizens Bank, 398 Longmeadow Street as shown in the plans submitted by Philadelphia Sign Company dated July 26, 2004 representing Citizens Bank. The Board made a motion to waive a Site and Design Review hearing on the sign and custom illuminated night deposit surround. The motion does not include the second sign adjacent to Edgewood Avenue. Richard Curran seconded the motion; and it was approved 5-0.

The second request for signage is at the Fleet Bank, 734 Bliss Road. Ms. Hopkins indicated that the existing signage for Fleet Bank is 11 square feet with lettering 18” high. The request is for replacement with the Bank of American sign and logo. There is no illumination for anything. The sign will be plate letters 12” high with no illumination and will be 18.5 square feet. The lettering will be blue and the logo will be red and blue. After discussion, Bruce Colton made a motion to waive Site and Design Review for the

new Bank of America sign at the former Fleet Bank at 734 Bliss Road, Longmeadow Shops, as shown on the plans submitted by Philadelphia Sign Company dated September 21, 2004. The sign will be plate letters 12" high with no illumination and will be 18.5 square feet. The lettering will be blue and the logo will be red and blue. Walter Gunn seconded the motion; and it was approved 5-0.

BAY PATH PARKING PLAN SITE & DESIGN REVIEW – DISCUSSION: Mr. Colton reported that Bay Path has filed a further revision of the parking plan. Rick Klein, Berkshire Design Group is prepared to file a report, including lighting and plantings as well. Mr. Klein explained the revised plans. Revisions include pulling the parking out of Emerson Road and to the property lines. They also worked on the intersection at the Town Lot as well and spoke with the Fire Department. The walkway will be remaining by Deepwoods Hall. It will be a 16' paved walkway for emergency vehicles. The area curved off by the main driveway – that area would be developed with Fire Department recommendations. Along the property line around Lot A there will be a 6' black vinyl chain link fence. Mr. Kornet had a question about Lot A. Is there an additional fence for the drop-off. Bay Path representatives felt that the one run of fence will be beneficial and no one could get back there because of the hedges, trees, and fencing.

The lighting plans were shown and the foot-candles were illustrated as well. The height of the poles is 10'. Mr. Klein asked that the Planning Board consider granting permission to install lights on the wall where it is taller and a post type light where the wall is lower, particularly after Mr. Gunn and other board members indicated that certain areas might be too dim. Mr. Klein would like to revise plans to include pedestrian style Bollard light. Mr. Johansen asked about installing uniform type lighting along the College and Green. Mr. Klein stated that he would like to keep the proposal as it is and revisit possible changes in the future.

Planning Board members asked Mr. Jeffrey Pechulis, JSP Inc., traffic consultant, if he had any comments on the changes presented by Bay Path this evening. He indicated that the chanelization island looked okay with him. Mr. Johansen had a question about taking down trees as proposed in the demolition plan. In particular, removing of birch trees. Mr. Klein stated that quite a bit of landscaping would be done. Mr. Curran asked if the tree at the Kessler property would be removed. The response from Bay Path was no. There were no other questions from the Planning Board.

Mr. Colton asked if there were any comments from members of the public. He reminded the public that the Planning Board is required to vote on the plan as presented and to please keep remarks to issues regarding the proposal. Mrs. Knaus stated that she feels disadvantaged to make a presentation to materials that are no longer applicable. Town Counsel has advised the Planning Board that a special permit is not needed to add parking spaces. Mrs. Knaus indicated that her group has not had a chance to look at the plan presented tonight or the first plan and has not received proper information. Mrs. Knaus felt that the Planning Board does not want to hear what she has to say. Louis Kornet indicated that he would like to hear what she has to say. Mrs. Knaus stated that she has a five-part presentation with several neighbors also giving presentations. Mrs.

Knaus indicated that she also had some questions about the Planning Board minutes. Mr. Jerosz had several comments about parking issues. He and several others counted cars during the last two weekends. The first weekend they counted 571 cars and the second weekend they counted 582 cars. During two weekends in February 527 and 542 cars were counted. He stated that reality proves out more cars than the 512 spots available at Bay Path.

Mr. Bob Forester, 80 Arlington Road, gave a pictorial documentation of the area. Their concerns are the preservation and character of the neighborhood and community. He also quoted Article 11F 1-C from the Town of Longmeadow By-laws that he hopes that the Planning Board consider.

Nancy Knaus submitted a letter to Planning Board members. Her issues are the long-term planning and what is Bay Path doing in this regard. Her neighborhood association is getting little pieces from Bay Path each time. It is of vital interest to her and her neighbors. She stated that the long-term plan has not been shared with her neighborhood. She feels that approval of Bay Path's proposal is detrimental and significant to their neighborhood. She feels that it is a "stick it down your throat approach". She asked the Planning Board if they look at how this project affects the entire Town of Longmeadow. Mr. Curran responded that the Planning Board members have to look at the plan presented to the Planning Board. The Planning Board is trying to be sensitive as possible and how it affects the Town. He feels two issues of concern are backyards and trees.

Attorney Rena Cohen indicated that she was not here tonight to argue law; the Planning Board has the ability to protect the community. She urged the Planning Board to listen to the neighbors. The aesthetic character of the neighborhood would be preserved by denying this plan. Dr. William Knaus spoke before the Planning Board. He indicated that the Planning Board is trying to hear all issues. He and his neighborhood are committed to draw the line. It is disturbing to most people in the neighborhood. The Arlington Road Association must fight back to hold their ground. Aesthetics and quality of the neighborhood is essential. They will do whatever means necessary legally, politically and by public relations to not burden their neighborhood. The majority of people have their hearts in the right place. Dr. Knaus stated that the Planning Board has an "awesome responsibility, do not be swayed by the "Dover Amendment".

Mrs. Knaus had a question on the numbers used for the traffic study. Mr. Peculis explained the formula and numbers used to compile his report. He explained that it is difficult to do traffic counts for something that does not yet exist.

Attorney Jeffrey Roberts stated that he appreciates what the Planning Board has done and they have been thorough and professional. The new plan reflects many of the Planning Board's concerns; he acknowledged that there have been many concerns stated tonight also. He feels that the plan submitted by Bay Path shows they are making every effort to please everyone.

The Planning Board members continued to review the proposed plans and the Town Zoning By-laws. After discussion, it was determined based on Town By-laws that the proposed retaining wall would be considered a structure. Therefore, the parking lot would have to be no more than 10' from any structure or property line. Planning Board members stated Lot A does not seem to meet the zoning by-law regulations: **ARTICLE XII OFF-STREET PARKING AND LOADING AREA STANDARDS, SECTION C, #5** – *“In no case shall any parking space or loading area be located less than ten (10) feet from a side, rear, or front line or be located less than ten (10) feet from any structure.”*

Bay Path representatives stated that in response to this issue they would like to take the most conservative approach on this issue. They also stated that they would have to decide whether to “slide” parking 10' from the retaining wall and possibly eliminate the student walkway. Mr. Klein also indicated that they would try to save as many trees as possible, particularly at the Kessler property. The question for Town Counsel is does 10' of the lot line requirement apply to the properties that Bay Path owns. Bruce Colton will contact Attorney Aronson for a reply. There was discussion on whether Bay Path members would like to vote on the presentation tonight. Planning Board members decided not to vote on the proposal tonight; and Bruce Colton will contact Attorney Aronson for an opinion of **Article XII Off-Street Parking and Loading Area Standards, Section C, #5**. Bay Path representatives discussed the issues and agreed to grant an extension to the next Planning Board meeting, with a decision to be rendered by November 5th. November 3rd at 7:00 p.m. was the date decided for the next meeting with a location to be determined.

BY-LAW CHANGES – Walter Gunn and Roy Johansen wrote some language on a By-Law amendment regarding trespass signage. Planning Board members went over the text to the proposed amendment. The proposed changes must be submitted to Town Hall to be placed on the Town Meeting warrant. A Public Hearing must be held before the November 30th Town Meeting.

APPROVAL OF MEETING MINUTES – Planning Board members decided not to review the previous month's meeting minutes until the next meeting.

ADJOURNMENT – There being no further business, Bruce Colton made a motion to adjourn the meeting; Walter Gunn seconded the motion and it was approved 5-0. The meeting adjourned at 10:55 p.m.

Sincerely,

Judy Downie, Secretary
Longmeadow Planning Board