

(Approved May 5, 2005)

Town of Longmeadow Planning Board
MINUTES
Of Public Hearing
March 22, 2005

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

A Public Hearing was held at the Longmeadow Community House, 735 Longmeadow Street, Longmeadow, MA. The purpose of the meeting is a continuation of a Public Hearing for Bay Path College for Site and Design Review for Lot A on the main campus for parking purposes. The Public Hearing was postponed from March 8, 2005 due to inclement weather. The meeting began at 7:05 p.m. Walter Gunn introduced all Planning Board members in attendance. Mr. Gunn explained the format of the meeting: Bay Path will make a presentation, Planning Board will ask questions, and the public may make comments. He also requested that the public cite their name and address for the record.

Jeffrey Roberts, Counsel for Bay Path College, made a presentation. Rick Klein, Berkshire Design Group, also spoke about the project. Attorney Roberts gave a history of the project. He indicated that efforts to build parking on campus would be beneficial to all parties. He indicated that if parking is expanded in Lot A, it is the most logical place to construct parking. All spaces will be built within the original lot lines. The nearby hill would have to be excavated and a retaining wall would have to be put in. No renovations will take place within the buffer zone. Mr. Roberts stated that the Conservation Commission has indicated that they have no jurisdiction over the plan. They (Bay Path) have not had any feedback from the Police Department or Fire Department. He also indicated that cars would be pulled from nearby streets to Bay Path campus. Rick Klein commented on some of the design features, trees to be removed, etc. He stated that 33 trees will be removed, 35 will remain. Trees will be added after construction as well as a 6' evergreen hedge. Security fencing will also be added on the entire length of the property.

Planning Board members had an opportunity to ask questions or to make comments. Richard Curran asked about the new trees that will be planted. He also asked about the canopy size of the trees. He sensed that a new tree would not have the same canopy size as existing trees. Planning Board members asked about the size of some of the trees when they are planted. Mr. Klein stated that they would plant substantial trees.

PUBLIC COMMENTS - The public was invited to speak to the issues.

Deborah Sirulnik, 92 Arlington Road -- She questioned if this plan was the same one as in Town Hall. She indicated that the wetlands buffer is added. She wanted to know what the discrepancy was between 48 trees in the first plan and 35 trees now.

Roger Nadeau, 41 Shaker Road - He stated that the plan does not look like the same plan as submitted tonight. He thought that the depiction of trees was put in later. Mr. Curran stated that the difference might be the colonization of trees on this evening's plans. Mr. Klein stated that detailed specifications are written on each page of the plan. Mr. Nadeau also asked several questions about the concrete wall and the site plans. Mr. Gunn stated that he would make available the additional information before the next public hearing. Mr. Nadeau stated that he felt that there is a lack of detail on this plan.

Joseph Kessler, 65 Arlington Road - Mr. Kessler asked how close to the property line will the wall be. The response from Bay Path representatives was: property line to wall 10'; 15' to his stonewall. He also questioned the effect of his trees on the property.

Nancy Knaus, 113 Arlington Road - Dr. Knaus stated that she is disappointed with the same plan; there was no notice. There are plenty of options. She passed out a letter to Planning Board members outlining the hardships that would be imposed if the Planning Board approved Bay Path's parking Lot A plan and reasons for their opposition to the plan. She stated that this is just a dressed up plan with by-law violations, as well as dramatically changing the character and look of the Arlington Road neighborhood.

Rina Cohan, 78 Maple Street, Springfield - She is the attorney for the Arlington Road Association. She stated that this plan affects properties and visual amenities of the neighbors. In regard to the parking provisions - this will not provide relief of zoning by-laws for the neighbors. She stated that she wants the Planning Board to deny the plan in the interest of regulation of parking. She stated that Bay Path is in violation of the setback requirements as well as zoning by-laws. For 44 parking spaces, a neighborhood will be ruined. It would be a disservice to all residents of Longmeadow. There are many different options; this is the most cost effective project for Bay Path. We are asking the Planning Board to deny the plan.

Deborah Sirumik, 92 Arlington Road - It is Bay Path's responsibility for protecting the residents. There is no offer to neighbors to protect their interests.

William Knaus, 113 Arlington Road - Dr. Knaus stated that all the homeowners object to the plan. It will destroy the landscape and tranquility to the street. The project would turn into a Turner Park type atmosphere. He does not feel that the neighborhood should be the brunt of Bay Path's growth. It is unrealistic to maintain a good relationship with neighbors; it is their problem, they need to solve it.

Nancy Knaus, 113 Arlington Road — Dr. Knaus had a question about the retaining wall. She questioned if there was a similar retaining wall in Longmeadow that they could look at. Rick Klein stated that he could not come up with a specific one right at the moment but he will do research and inform the Planning Board of his findings.

Robert Foerster, 80 Arlington Road - He wanted to resubmit his letter from last year (October 16, 2004) regarding the impact to the neighborhood and Bay Path's parking plan.

Israel Schepps, 130 Arlington Road — Mr. Schepps asked why did Bay Path purchase three homes. Rachel St. Onge-Boisseau stated that they (Bay Path) were looking for residences for faculty and is also accessible to Bay Path. They plan to keep the homes as residential properties.

There were no further comments from the public.

Planning Board member, Roy Johansen, asked about the lighting plan, i.e., how many light fixtures and the footprint of the lighting candles. The response was: three light fixtures, 20' tall. Mr. Gunn asked about the retaining wall by the Kessler's property. He asked if Bay Path is planning on doing additional grading beyond the wall. The response was yes; additional grading will be done but done when the retaining wall was in place.

Richard Curran gave his thoughts on the parking proposal. He stated that he received a copy of a letter from Jeffrey Roberts in advance of the hearing. Richard Curran reported on findings from an arborist, Fire Department Chief, and neighbors' correspondence. Mr. Curran asked aloud who will benefit and who will be adversely affected by the parking proposal. His conclusion was that the neighbors would be affected. He feels that it is a quality of life issue, one that the Planning Board must seriously look at. He stated that basically the Lot A plan is the same as before. Mr. Curran stated that he urges the Planning Board to reject the plan and ask Bay Path to look at other alternatives. He urged Bay Path to come up with a parking plan that everyone can live with. He stated that it is Bay Path's responsibility not to make the neighbors make the sacrifice. Mr. Curran also read a ZBA decision from 1967 rejecting a parking proposal.

There being no further comments, Walter Gunn closed the hearing for Parking Lot A at Bay Path College at 8:35 p.m. Mr. Gunn indicated that a decision by the Planning Board would be reached in 90 days.

Respectfully submitted,

Judy Downie, Secretary
Longmeadow Planning Board