

## **SHARON ZONING BOARD OF APPEALS MINUTES OF WEDNESDAY, JULY 22, 2020**

**LOCATION OF MEETING:** In compliance with the Governor's emergency declaration relative to the conduct of public meetings, the Town arranged to conduct board and committee meetings using Zoom video/audio conferencing in an effort to minimize the spread of COVID-19. Interested citizens received directions on how to attend the meeting remotely in the Agenda as posted on the ZBA website and the Town. This meeting was presented with the video and/or audio available for later broadcast. The Zoning Board of Appeals is focused on observing the spirit of the Open Meeting Law during this temporary emergency situation to assure accountability for the deliberations and actions of elected and appointed officials conducting the public's business.

A virtual meeting of the Sharon Zoning Board of Appeals was held on Wednesday, July 22, 2020, at 7:00 P.M. The following members were present as established by roll call: Abe Brahmachari, Joe Garber, Steve Weiss, David Young, Sam Reef. Mr. Brahmachari opened the meeting noting Covid19 protocols per the Governor of MA and procedural ground rules.

### **7:01 PM- 181 Pond Street, 1861 Sharon High School -- New Hearing**

Materials provided by the applicant included an application for hearing dated June 18, 2020, that contained a Memo from Richard Gelerman, Esq. dated April 29, 2020, outlining the zoning requirements that may require relief; Memo from Richard Gelerman, Esq., dated April 22, 2020, discussing the Dover Amendment; transportation study prepared by Howard Stein Hudson dated September 2, 2019; and Site and Architectural Drawings dated June 16, 2020; separately received a four-page New Sharon High School presentation dated July 22, 2020.

Other materials include: Sharon Wetlands Protection Bylaw WPA Form 5 – Order of Conditions issued on June 5, 2020

Present for the applicant was Ti Johnson, ASLA, LEED AP, Associate Principal, Warner Larson Landscape Architects. He said the engineering team on zoom to answer questions including Will Schreefer, Senior Project Engineer, and Christopher D Blessen, AIA, LEED AP | Principal, Tappe Architects, Boston, MA.

Applicant, Mr. Johnson, ASLA, LEED AP, Associate Principal, Warner Larson, Inc., for Tappe Architects, Boston, MA on behalf of the Town of Sharon, offered a brief overview of the project and the various items they are looking for. He spoke about how they came to the design as detailed in plans. Building is directly south of the existing building and the current building will be used during construction. One hundred percent of the construction documents should be done by Sept. and Oct. and construction could begin late summer 2020 on top of current baseball and softball fields.

Mr. Johnson explained that the site design was driven by an attempt to fix traffic congestion on Pond Street. Separate bus drop-off accommodates 13 buses. Access from Ames Court was reduced from about 50 parking spaces to 15 parking spaces, and will be a dead end essentially. Service vehicles enter from Beach St. for loading, trash, and recycling. A large semi truck can not make the turn on Beach Street, so the semi truck only has an exception in ability to exit via Ames Court.

Along the north face of the building there is a pedestrian only zone that accommodates student drop off as well as being a public outdoor space with benches, tables. The back of the building overlooks the lake.

The lawn that looks over onto the lake is for community use. There is a wetland in this community space that drove the design.

A tennis court and baseball field will be naturalized as wetlands. A new concession and restroom building are added to design and bleachers will be refurbished and a new press box added.

Proposal is for 191 parking spaces. Currently 190 spaces so they match what is existing.

The property has 24% natural vegetation; rural residential is 50%. So, design reduces vegetation slightly. Mr. Johnson offset this by naturalizing the area around the wetlands. The area is planted with native plants that like wet conditions, they amend the soil, They included bioretention areas, and a stepped rain garden. Almost 200 new trees were included in this project. Existing trees along Pond St. and Beach St. will be for the most part left alone. They will not impact any trees within the right of way, but the driveway will require some tree removal.

In a bioretention area stormwater is directed to bioretention to soak into the ground. Area is replanted with native plants that like the wet conditions as well as amend the soil heavily to allow the water to infiltrate back into the ground. It's an above ground recharge area. This enhances site design while offering storm water mitigation and recharge. These areas are planted with shrubs, seed mix, or plugs and will look like a native wet meadow. There is some maintenance required to make sure it functions as a bioretention area. Whereas the natural vegetative area around the wetland will eventually be forest.

Impervious area rural residential is 15% max. Existing is 19%. Existing building has a larger footprint than the new high school, but more pavement addressing drop off and fifth tennis court. The northern D zone in the track is also paved. South zone was kept as non-paved. They are proposing a pedestrian promenade with pervious pavement. They are proposing porous pavement and stone dust in the back park area. Current totals have the firelane as impervious, but they are looking into pervious materials there and on the path to softball fields. They didn't consider a pervious parking lot because there is a cost to maintenance and it doesn't work as well in areas that require plowing.

High School sits on 28.5 acres and the impervious area is 26% of the property including building and lot coverage, so they are going from 19% to 26%. So 11% over 15% maximum. The green roof is 20,000 square feet and not considered in these pervious numbers. Stormwater all goes to above or underground retention. Mr. Schreefer, civil engineer for the project, said the standard is to control runoff leaving the site for a 100-year storm and they are meeting that. Regarding recharge they have something around 40,000 cubic feet of storage on the site that allows water to recharge into the ground. Recharge between bioretention areas and underground systems is providing for recharge on site meeting all the MA DET standards for stormwater design.

For parking, 9-by-18-square-foot is the most common parking space size in most communities. Current drawing shows 9-by-18-square-foot, they want to reduce space size to 9-by-18-square-foot for some of the spots and then they can give some of the land to the pervious materials. Impacts about 100 spaces, which is an 1800 square foot reduction in impervious. Middle School has 9-by-18-square-foot spaces. Current SHS has a mix. Groceries and Home Depot have 9- by-18-square-foot typically.

Existing building is 41 feet high, maximum allowed is 35 feet. Chriss Blessen, principal architect, explained that the new school has a 44-foot height above the auditorium which is several hundred feet from the road. At the front entrance there is an angled pitch where it is at its highest, 44 feet. Floor-to-

floor height on the project is 14 feet. Roof is 28-feet other than some 6-foot pitched roof areas. They have tried to maintain the 35 feet height everywhere with the exception of auditorium and entry. The end profile of the classroom wing makes it so the building has more of a house-type-style where it addresses the Pond Street side of the property.

For the loading bays, the 240,000-gross-square-foot building requires 6 loading bays. They have a trash compactor, recycling, and two additional loading bays. Six seems unnecessary, so they are providing four total. The requirement of six comes from the zoning bylaw.

Member asked how far into the side setback they are on Pond Street and Mr. Johnson responded that design is within the setback line on the three wings.

Chair commended applicant for design and sensitivity to wetlands and reviewed reliefs being asked for: 1) parking space sizes, so instead of 9 x 20 they seek combination of 9 x 18 and 9 x 20 square foot spaces; 2) number of parking spaces required is 400, which is 1 space per 600 square feet of gross square area, but not clear if on-site or including off-site. There are 230 spots in the DPW controlled lot across Pond St.; 3) 15% pervious maximum allowed. Existing is 19% and they propose 26% including all the impervious pavement and the building footprint; 4) Building height designed with 35 feet in mind but proposed has 44 feet at the auditorium and entry; 5) Institutional use requires six and they are providing 4 loading bays to match the existing building; 6) vegetative cover minimum required is 50% and they propose 18.3% existing is 24.1%

There is no proposed new sports lighting for baseball, softball, or tennis. Lights proposed are full cut off lights. Glare and backlight rating are the lowest they can be. Photometric target 0.5 foot candles on the property. Goal for the lighting was a low lighting level understanding it's a rural area. Parking lot main poles are 25 feet high. Lights along the pedestrian paths are 12 feet high. Light level across Pond St. is 0.0 foot candles; 0.2 foot candles do go into the intersection. Not an adequate amount for any safety lighting. Lights don't have a shield, but they point directly down. Reflectors are very precise and the lights are full cut off as well, so shields are not included.

If green roof were to be removed from the project for cost reasons or whatever, they included the higher number for impervious. The fire lane is not included in impervious numbers for the same reason. D-area on track can't be porous. The strip from Ames Ct. could be considered for pervious because it's a lesser used driveway. If parking spaces are reduced to 9-by-18-square-foot spaces and the fifth tennis court removed, where would that leave porous? Tennis court is 120 feet by 60 so approx. 700 feet and if they reduced approx. 100 parking spaces they are looking at a 2,000 square foot reduction in impervious. And yes, if they deleted that pavement it could go to landscape conditions. Not only the school but the community advocated for the fifth court so it was put in.

Per Mr. Johnson, the primary point of access to the property will be a 20-foot-wide driveway with an adjacent sidewalk off of Beach Street. Daily use is in and out there. The one exception is a large delivery would back up into the loading dock and then depart to the north to Ames Ct. Designers wanted to keep his area a pedestrian area pavement wise, but a gate from Ames Court allows access to some vehicles.

No plans on signaling for the entryway, just a service entrance for garbage, food, etc. No additional lighting proposed on Beach St., but yield to pedestrian signalization across Pond St. Proposed condition is that the Beach Street remains as is. No traffic engineer recommendation to include crosswalk signals. Board asked about push crosswalk signalization or flashing school crossing signs may be warranted at Beach St.

The truck/trailer issue with the gate is a shared pedestrian zone. Chair recommended that the strip where the truck may enter the pedestrian zone may have a different paving pattern so drivers know it may have another use.

Board clarified that if vehicles come in off of Ames Court and the gate is opened, they can't get to the carpool lane because there is a curb. Mr. Johnson said that is not the intent. He thinks people will get used to it being a very limited area for parking pretty quickly.

Alon Zephroni, 34 Ames Court, asked about clearing of natural vegetation near this area. Mr. Johnson showed how they are fitting in a softball field, but are not clearing to the property lines. Because the softball field is set upon septic it has to be the same elevation or higher than it is now, so there is a bit of a slope off. And in order to fit the shot put in the design there is some clearing on the corner that intersects with the new parking. The resident asked if it is absolutely necessary to clear trees for shot put area? Mr. Zephroni wanted them to move it back towards the baseball field to clear that corner. Mr. Johnson said if there are substantial individual trees in there of large caliber, they will certainly make an effort to save large old growth trees. He will look at whether rotation of shot put is possible. Questioned as to why there is a shot put and a discus area? Vast number of projects include both.

Fencing currently surrounds the perimeter of the softball field. Property line between the school and Ames Street property lines does not show fencing in the current designs. Mr. Zephroni says there is a fence along existing fields and if it is to be taken down a new fence needs to be put up.

Harris Lapen, 30 Ames Court, requested light impact onto Ames Court. No lighting on softball field per Mr. Johnson. New baseball diamond will not have sports lights. Backside of the property towards Ames Court has no new lighting. Mr. Johnson said they can look at moving the lights near the shot put area when they look at that area concerning shifting the discus direction.

Ahmed Mohammed, 47 Ames Street, said he sees the fifth court will be fit where vegetation is now. Trees will come down. He also asked if between tennis courts and passwalk will they maintain any landscaping? And Mr. Johnson said the existing walkway will maintain existing vegetation. Mr. Brahmachari asked about the practice board at courts. They are at 60% construction phase now. Mr. Brassen? Said any comments from ZBA will go back to the Building Committee so they can decide if they want to change scope, but that they are not related to tonight's requested relief.

stays on the same grade as it goes down along this driveway. Going North the curb is on the actual drive aisle, not on the actual vehicular traffic isle per Mr. Blesser.

ZBA members had seven comments unrelated to the permits after reviewing the project. The list included:

1. Signalized push button type or signalized intersection at Beach Street crossing
2. Come up with a large truck paving pattern to differentiate where trucks can go
3. Ames Ct. parking and driveway consider using semi-pervious surface there
4. Shot put area consider moving to the east so not as much tree removal
5. If removing fence, consider replacing fence
6. Consider moving the light pole to the east to not have as much light shown on adjacent property
7. Practice wall for the tennis court added?

Chair acknowledged appreciation for town counsel for providing a summary of the project for ZBA members.

Mr. Blessen said they hope to get relief tonight; reliefs they are asking are not related to design suggestions ZBA is making. Mr. Brahmachari thinks one way of handling this is to take a vote on the reliefs and have the design team come back to the zoning board to make a presentation on the seven design items.

Mr. Johnson asked to close the hearing, and is happy to come back later and update ZBA on 7 items.

Mr. Brahmachari made a motion to close the hearing for Case 1861, 181 Pond St., Sharon High Project. Mr. Garber seconded. Board voted unanimously, 5-0-0, to close the hearing (Brahmachari, Garber, Weiss, Reef, Young).

Mr. Brahmachari made a motion to approve relief numbers one through six based on drawings dated June 16, 2020:

1. Approve the parking space size per section 3113, with votes to be taken individually. Mr. Garber seconded. Unanimously approved 3-0-0 (Brahmachari, Garber, Weiss).
2. Approve the number of parking spaces as provided in the drawing, section 3111. Mr. Garber seconded. Unanimously approved 3-0-0 (Brahmachari, Garber, Weiss).
3. Approve the Maximum Allowed Building Height, Section 2425 relief at the entrance and the auditorium area. Mr. Garber seconded. Unanimously approved 3-0-0 (Brahmachari, Garber, Weiss).
4. Motion to approve the percentage lot coverage relief per section 2425 Mr. Garber seconded. Unanimously approved 3-0-0 (Brahmachari, Garber, Weiss).
5. Approve relief being asked per vegetative cover section 2423. Mr. Garber seconded. Unanimously approved 3-0-0 (Brahmachari, Garber, Weiss).
6. Approve the relief being asked in terms of the number of loading bays per section 3133. Mr. Garber seconded. Unanimously approved 3-0-0 (Brahmachari, Garber, Weiss).

Approval of the July 8, 2020 minutes held until August 12, 2020, because ZBA members received them just recently.

The meeting adjourned at 8:57 P.M.

Respectfully submitted

Approved August 12, 2020