

**City of Salem Planning Board
December 6, 2018**

A public hearing of the Salem Planning Board was held on Thursday, December 6, 2018 at 7:00 p.m. at City Hall Annex, 98 Washington St., Large Public Hearing Room, First Floor, Salem, Massachusetts.

Chair Ben Anderson calls the meeting to order at 7:04PM.

I. ROLL CALL

Those present were: Chair Ben Anderson, Matt Veno, Kirt Rieder, Matt Smith, Carole Hamilton, Helen Sides

Absent: DJ Napolitano, Noah Koretz, Bill Griset

Also in attendance: Ashley Green, Staff Planner, and Stacy Kilb, Recorder

II. REGULAR AGENDA

- A. Location: 84 Congress Street (Map 34, Lot 218)**
Applicant: Gregory Investment Group LLC
Description: A continuation of a public hearing for all persons interested in the application of GREGORY INVESTMENT GROUP LLC for the property located at 84 CONGRESS STREET (Map 34, Lot 218) for a Site Plan Review in accordance with the Salem Zoning Ordinance section 9.5 Site Plan Review. Specifically, the applicant proposes to demolish existing automotive service station and construct a four-story wood-frame structure containing twelve (12) residential units, a fitness space, first-floor commercial space, and fifteen (15) covered parking spaces. Associated improvements including landscaping and utility work are also proposed.

Dan Ricciarelli of Seger Architects presents.

Rich Williams, Civil Engineer, and Darius Gregory, Applicant, are also present.

Planters and plantings are described

- Street trees proposed include five Jefferson Elm
- A proposed transformer location is described; this is subject to National Grid's approval
- Electric and gas meters are also being relocated from the previous set of plans. They will be hidden by a solid screen fence and have bollards for protection
- Bike storage has been added indoors
- Trash location is described; a 6' solid board fence will shield abutters from headlights
- Massing: brought building forward to street by 6-8'
- Façade material is now Hardie Clapboard (not EFIS), 7" monolithic exposure. Hardie Panel will be installed in some parts. Front and rear of building are shown
- Renderings are shown
- Glass has been added to the community room for full exposure
- Materials on first floor are outlined

Rich Williams, Williams & Sparages, outlines engineering details

- Detail added to utilities and roof drain

- Engineering Dept commented re provision of additional infiltration; there is no opportunity as the site is contaminated. The proposal includes the construction of the building, which will be covering almost the entire lot, taking roof runoff and directing that into drainage. This runoff is considered clean vs the runoff currently produced from the parking lot. The LSP (Licensed Site Professional) requests that they do not put groundwater into the substrate as it is urban fill, contaminated, and on top of clay; therefore, no infiltration system will be installed.
- Demolition plan including cutting and capping of existing utilities is now included. Applicant won't know exact locations of existing utilities until construction begins. Construction fence is now shown; erosion controls are missing from the plan, but will be along the fence right at the edge.
- Lighting plan has been submitted and lighting is described as entirely building-mounted lights.

Chair Anderson asks about the colors on the finishes and these are outlined as light gray clapboard and a terra cotta color on the corners, with dark gray on the cornice. Window casings are dark gray.

Matt Smith feels that there is a lot going on for a small building, and wonders if the "Legacy" signage could be better integrated. Kirt Rieder agrees, feeling that "Legacy" acts as a chimney. The text itself seems "inelegantly scaled" and out of scale for any neighborhood that is not commercial. This is a placeholder in the signage package, so Board input will be taken into account.

Kirt Rieder also comments:

- First story glass: will be clear
- Approves of Jefferson Elm but all drawings show Norway maple, a prohibited invasive species
- Planters: ground cover juniper usually used to cover a lot of space, low growing, and the Applicant needs instead to make it visible from cars, and have different appearances for different seasons

Helen Sides notes that re letters, it is an important vertical space; letters cannot merely be shrunk and can't distinguish that piece any more; it should not appear too balanced. Consider another vertical item that would draw attention to that door while keeping in character with the neighborhood. She feels that the South rear elevation is unresolved. There is a large building beside it, so seems like something should go down the middle as it is similar to the front but there is no overlap. This input will be taken into account. The Dow St. side is more successful as it reads more vertical and separate; try to imitate on the other side.

Chair Anderson opens to public comment.

Jessica Herbert of 70 Webb St., representing the Historical Commission, has submitted a letter to the Board. The Historical Commission wanted more development of the design and approves of the Applicant heading in that direction. She has input she will share with the Planning Department.

City Comments are not completely resolved, and this Board would like to see the changes requested tonight, so Chair Anderson recommends a continuance.

A motion to continue to the January 3, 2019 meeting is made by Carole Hamilton, seconded by Matt Veno, and passes 6-0.

- B. Location: 2 Atlantic Street (Map 32, Lot 9)**
Applicant: Gregory Investment Group LLC
Description: A public hearing for all persons interested in the application of GREGORY INVESTMENT GROUP LLC for the property located at 2 ATLANTIC STREET (Map 32, Lot 9) for a Flood Hazard Overlay District Special Permit

in accordance with the Salem Zoning Ordinance Section 8.1. Specifically, the applicant proposes (after-the-fact) construction of new two-family dwelling and associated improvements.

Rich Williams of Williams and Sparages represents the Applicant Darius Gregory. The Applicant was not aware that he needed this permit initially. They went before several other Boards, including the Zoning Board of Appeals and Conservation Commission before this missed step came up. Both properties have sold and are occupied by new owners.

The house is in the floodplain, and while the finished floor space and all mechanical equipment are above the flood plain, the garage is below the flood elevation. Flood resistant construction is required by building code; engineered openings are installed in the garage doors to allow water to come into and flow out of the garage.

They have received a Certificate of Occupancy, and the Applicant feels the construction meets the requirement of the Special Permit. The first level space is garage only; the first living area is up a full flight of stairs, at least 7' above the flood level. Helen Sides comments that photos would have been helpful for context.

Chair Anderson asks for a review of how it was missed that they needed this permit; Mr. Williams further clarifies. Mr. Gregory, managing member, explains. The City requires a routing slip prior to the issuance of a building permit, and the Applicant must get all departments to sign off – Building Department, Conservation Commission, Planning Department, Assessors Office, Fire Department, etc. Their attorney had advised them that they were all set, but then they learned that they had to go before the Conservation Commission, so once they got that permit, the building permit was issued. 9-10 months in to build, buyers were found, and a Certificate of Occupancy obtained. One astute buyer asked if the required Special Permit was obtained, so Mr. Gregory asked Tom St. Pierre, who said “good catch,” so now Mr. Gregory is trying to make things right. The consensus was for them to raise the utilities, be sure to be in compliance with any other building code requirements, and sell the condos, but put money in escrow. They are here today due to the Planning Board backlog.

The Chair feels this is helpful. He opens to public comment but there is none.

A motion to close the Public Hearing is made by Matt Veno, seconded by Matt Smith, and passes with all in favor 6-0.

A motion to approve FHOD Special Permit is made by Matt Veno, seconded by Matt Smith, and passes with all in favor 6-0.

- C. Location:** 81 Highland Ave; 108 Jefferson Ave; Old Rd; 1 Dove Ave; 79 Highland Ave; 55 Highland Ave; and 57 Highland Ave (Map 24, Lots 1, 2, 88, 19, 216, 218, and 220; and Map 14, Lot 129)
- Applicant:** North Shore Medical Center, Inc.
- Description:** A public hearing for all persons interested in the application of NORTH SHORE MEDICAL CENTER, INC. for an Amendment to the previously approved Site Plan Review decision and Stormwater Management Permit for the property located at 81 Highland Avenue (Map 24, Lot 1); 108 Jefferson Avenue (Map 24, Lot 88); Old Road (Map 24, Lot 19); 1 Dove Avenue (Map 24, Lots 216 and 218); 79 Highland Avenue (Map 14, Lot 129); 55 Highland Avenue (Map 24, Lot 220); and 57 Highland Avenue (Map 24, Lot 2). The applicant proposes changes to the area in front of the Davenport Building and Surgi-Center, where the old campus utility plant was located. Proposed improvements include changes to grading, additional parking spaces, and landscaping and creation of an accessible, multi-vehicle drop off and pick-up area. New signage is also proposed.

This amendment is for the proposed reconfiguration of the Davenport parking lot. Attorney Joseph Correnti of 63 Federal St. introduces the proposed amendment. Mary Jo Gagnon of administration is present, as is Shelley Bisegna and Chris Walters. The original Decision was issued in December of 2016, launching the campus renovation project. The parking lot reconfiguration proposed will significantly improve the existing condition.

Mary Jo Gagnon outlines:

- Progress thus far
- May 2016 aerial view
- Current aerial view – renovations of Spaulding building described
- New access road is shown (Bertram Field side)
- Highland Ave sidewalk views, including plantings
- NSMC campus plan
- Bird's Eye View including demolished pad of former power plant and the current medical office building (MOB). Current traffic circulation is shown and outlined, 15' drop-off from top to bottom
- Existing Davenport 4 Entrance Experience (the "wind tunnel")
- Existing view from Lower Parking Lot
- Proposed View from Lower Parking Lot; area will be leveled, will have to circle but can still connect to both areas, without a drop-off
- Proposed view from Highland Ave. Provide visibility and line of sight to hospital
- Proposed site plan, including islands with plantings. Can't level upper building yet, so will paint overhang and make it more welcoming
- Highland Ave. proposed improvements (part of first project) not yet installed

Carole Hamilton asks about valet parking. It is currently in front of Wheelock but will likely be moved closer to Davenport 4. This has not been decided yet.

Shawn Malone, Civil Engineer from Oak Consulting Group, presents:

- Project Area site plan
 - Highland Ave entrance; two lanes in and out, guard shack will be removed, striping improved, signage added. 90 degree parking will replace angled spaces currently in place
 - Drop off area will accommodate 8 vehicles
 - Less than 5% slope coming back up to entrance for accessibility
 - 59 parking spaces will be added
- Grading, drainage and erosion control plan
 - Stormwater goes south to detention basin at Highland Ave entrance, into an old system
 - Stormwater conveyance and management will be improved w/deep sump catch basins, new drainage will be sized appropriately and a stormwater treatment unit added. Stormwater will be directed to a shallow basin, which will help detain as it enters the system w/smaller pipes
 - Will eliminate 10,000 square feet of impervious area, reducing volume and rate of runoff from site
- Entrance Corridor Overlay District (ECOD)
 - Standards require 24 trees; a waiver was requested to reduce the number of trees because the hospital is concerned with obscuring wayfinding. They would substitute hedges or low growing plants

Helen Sides comments on the amount of fill needed to raise the site; at Highland Avenue where a large planting area was approved, how will this change? The southwest is the high point. No area will be raised above Highland Ave.

Paul Worthington-Berry of Shepley Bulfinch, speaks about signage:

- Perspective from lower parking lot
- Highland Exterior signage, 378' from street, but must still be visible to patients and visitors
- Proposing a large metal panel affixed to the building; 5th floor of existing has OR and 2 surgery rooms, so can't impact those
- Individual internally illuminated letters, 30" tall, not haloed.
- 45' across, dimensions within façade itself to fit in with the building. NSMC graphic will be scaled up

The Chair asks if it is a mounted letter on a metal face? Yes, and the graphic is also its own thing. This allows for a minimal number of electrical openings into the building. Letters will be white for easy night visibility, but the Applicant will apply a film so they appear black during the day.

Chris Walters, of NSMC, notes that the drop off area is below the signage.

Chair Anderson asks if they will examine signage bringing pedestrians and vehicles from Highland Ave. into the site. Mary Jo Gagnon mentions that they have engaged 212, a wayfinding company from New York. Upper Highland, Lower Highland, and Dove Ave entrances have proposed signage. Pylon signs are there now with a LOT of text; these will be streamlined. The Applicant will clarify and plans will be sent to Board for review. Floor numbers will be color coded; it is not intuitive that you come in on the 6th Floor in Axelrod, for example. Labels will be by floor, not building, for example Davenport 4 is an entrance on the 4th Floor, so now all floors across buildings will match in color and level.

Chair Anderson asks about the bus stop; there is one at each entrance. He feels circulation is tight in the Davenport corner, and is concerned that traffic may back up. There is an MRI unit in a trailer there complicating things, but a new MRI will be installed in the interior so there will be more space; the trailer will be removed. Wayfinding must be clear to prevent a bottleneck. The Chair's overall comment reiterates his concern with that corner, and he asks that the Applicant also make it clear for pedestrians getting off the bus how they can get to the entrance. If drop-offs are not at driveways, does it make sense to have another entrance off Highland Ave for pedestrians? Difference in grades are a challenge.

Helen Sides feels that the large sign is crowded and should have more negative space. Shelley Bisegna speaks about the trees, commenting that a clear line of sight is needed and that they don't want large trees obscuring the façade and signs. Chair Anderson comments on bike rack locations – please consider this. Currently bicycles are accommodated within the “wind tunnel” where there is an 8' bike rack. The Board feels that this is not enough and it should be doubled.

Waivers being requested for the large sign:

- Size; length allows a certain size but distance would be best served by a larger sign. 260 sf allowed, asking 450 sf
- Also height – Only allowed to window sills, this is much higher
- Working on pylon signs

Carole Hamilton asks about a section of the road to drop off area. It switches to one way past the Medical Office Building, and stays one way up to the lower parking lot.

The valet parking area will be within the parking field, but the exact location is as yet undecided. Matt Smith asks if there will be improvements to pedestrian access and asks that, especially from Highland Ave, the Applicant please consider this. The hospital should focus on those who cannot drive their own car here, as many access the hospital via public transit.

Kirt Rieder suggests that the area of pavement [at the intersection by the MOB and the driveway down to Axelrod] that will be striped crosshatch instead be planted. The Applicant cites cost effectiveness as a goal, but also has the objective of controlling traffic coming to/from Axelrod. The Board feels that by making this a fork, it is not a good pedestrian condition. Pedestrian traffic is anticipated for the upper part of the campus, not the lower, as the bus stop is at the south end of things. Pedestrians have to cross four lanes of traffic on a hill with poor visibility. The Applicant should consider line of sight and the speed at which people, particularly the elderly, cross. Lack of thought is a major problem for Matt Smith and Kirt Rieder. Possible relocation of the bus stop is mentioned, but this may not be feasible. There is a pedestrian signal on the north side, that corresponds with peak of 107.

Kirt Rieder comments:

- Slopes: Grade from north end of lot down is 10%, so fairly steep; people may want to walk down but can't do a sidewalk at 10% slope
- They will differentiate between upper and lower lots/buildings. Intent is so that lower people and upper people have dedicated entrances. Kirt Rieder notes that people will ask themselves, "how close can I get to the building" so will park where there are fewer cars
- How steep is an acceptable cross slope for a parking lot? Not beyond 5-6%; one zone is already at 5%. Even if they have to add 6" of fill to flatten it out, and have a higher retaining wall, it will make sense
- Trees: how was the number 24 arrived at and what is now proposed? 24 is one tree per 3 parking spaces within the ECOD area (the 150' setback). In terms of zoning, 72 spaces within that area = 24 trees. Kirt Rieder does not approve of waivers for the 2nd largest property owner outside of Salem State. Why is the north area of grass bereft of trees? How to put trees elsewhere on site? Trees are only helping the image and perception of the campus. Mary Jo Gagnon is more concerned with the location than number of trees.

Much discussion centers on the large sign proposed.

- Kirt Rieder notes that 212 is a fantastic firm, and asks that the Applicant please have them work on the big surgery sign as well as all of the other signs. There is a need to have a graphic wayfinding expert discuss how to enhance visibility. The fact is is that it is 400' back from the road because that is where they chose to put it. This was least objectionable based on existing architecture, however the Applicant then had to solve a bunch of other problems to make it work. The applicant responds that the location proposed is because Davenport 4 is the primary entrance for the hospital. 212 is aware of this location. Perfect visibility is not achievable.
- Helen Sides agrees that trees have benefits and enhance the experience of those leaving cars who become pedestrians; trees are part of the experience being made completely different than it is today. Kirt Rieder comments that a project he is working on involves putting in 200 trees in a two block area. He feels trees and wayfinding are not at odds. Chair Ben Anderson notes that we have not seen a lighting strategy for the parking lot. This will also affect all other pieces. 6 new sight lighting elements are proposed, and are included in submission but were not presented.
- Matt Smith agrees regarding signage and trees; signage along Highland Ave. will be much more effective than what is 400' away from the road. Internal wayfinding will guide people to the drop off area. Robust signage will be needed. Focus should be on the entry to the hospital. Don't get rid of trees because of a sign no one can read from the road regardless.
- Kirt Rieder notes that on the plans, one tree is to remain in front of surgery center where the new sign will go. There are currently 3, and one is already 25+ feet tall, blocking 50% of sign as proposed. Any trees the Board agrees to will be canopy trees, so he asks that the Applicant not propose short fruit trees
- Additionally, he notes that another of his client is rebuilding an MBTA station to control their entrance to the City; here the Hospital has a chance to re-brand the bus stops as NSMC and put their signs on those to help. Replacing the shelters with new architecture and signage would provide visibility 17" from the curb rather than 400' away.

- Chair Anderson feels that it must be clear how people can get quickly to the entrance; no route is defined in the plan but there are opportunities
- Mary Jo Gagnon notes that the lower entrance is better marked
- Kirt Rieder comment on the amount of mulch proposed everywhere, and opines that this may be because of salting the parking lot in the winter. He asks that, in zones where no plant material is proposed, the Applicant please include plants, for example low growing sumac or other plant material that will come be hardy enough to withstand salt and pedestrians, and will hide mulch

Chair Anderson opens to public comment

Chris Walters of NSMC speaks about the sign. The Applicant has consulted 212 about it, and the main point of its size and location is not to have it be visible from the street, but rather to distinguish the main entrance (Davenport 4) from the many other entrances that present themselves. The sign is an architectural aid marker, and only part of a larger campus wayfinding strategy.

Chair Anderson disagrees, commenting that the size of the sign does not indicate its importance, and that the Applicant needs to find another way to define this as a main entrance. There is a master plan of things the hospital can do, and this is just a step in that direction.

Mr. Walters disagrees that the pedestrian situation will be made worse; it is the same. They will take everything under consideration though the grade change is a huge challenge with a 6-level entry campus. The MOB is in the way, but they can't do away with it yet. Chair Anderson understands the comments regarding signage and budget but challenges the wayfinding group to spend money in other ways than a huge sign.

Matt Smith comments that regarding the curb, that could have a canopy with lettering to indicate the drop off, providing an element at the entrance. He also feels that the cross hatching and wide pavement gives a false sense of security to pedestrians because cars drive over that striping. Bollards or planters could be used instead to make it safe for them. Pedestrian access along the parking lot and entrances is strong, and the same consideration should be shown at the upper entrance. If 10,000 square feet of pavement are being eliminated, another 2,000 could be removed at the yoke.

Christine Caton-McGill, 37 Greenway Road, approves of project and sidewalk, but would like to discuss with Applicant the back side of the project that was approved previously, along with issues with sound, light and trees.

Mary Jo Gagnon notes that they had to eliminate the canopy over the drop off as an option, which is why they went with a sign. Carole Hamilton notes that a sign will not help because Davenport 4 does not look like a hospital entrance and people driving or walking up will not be able to see the sign from beneath.

A motion to continue to the Jan. 3, 2019 meeting is made by Helen Sides, seconded by Carole Hamilton, and passes 6-0.

III. OLD/NEW BUSINESS

Kirt Rieder announces the City Council's first passage of the Lorax Ordinance for changing how the City works with trees. Helen Sides asks about the clearing of trees on private property - trees can be clear cut on private property unless it is restricted in a Decision from the Planning Board. If the Board wants to it can condition new and existing trees. The Ordinance will apply to multi-family dwellings of 4 or more units only. It will be a City ordinance, not a zoning ordinance.

Helen Sides comments that when trees were removed on North St. behind the gas station, they were required to keep those as a condition of the Decision for this project; this ordinance wouldn't apply to a case like that.

Chair Anderson has a complaint about the driveway to Jefferson Ave, at the CVS near Bertini's. The bollard lighting is always out, and it is dark and unsafe. He thought that pole lights would be more appropriate, but in any case, any lighting needs to be maintained. Please draft a letter or petition to change to pole lights. Carole Hamilton notes that the landscaping is not well taken care of.

Catherine Miller has been confirmed as the new DRB member.

IV. APPROVAL OF MINUTES

A. Regular Planning Board Meeting held on November 1, 2018.

A motion to approve the November 1, 2018 minutes is made by Matt Smith, seconded by Carole, and carries 5-0 with Helen Sides Abstaining.

B. Regular Planning Board Meeting held on November 15, 2018.

A motion to approve the November 15, 2018 minutes is made by Helen Sides, seconded by Carole Hamilton, and carries 6-0.

V. ADJOURNMENT

A motion adjourn is made by Carole Hamilton, seconded by Kirt Rieder, and carries 6-0.

The meeting ends at 9:00PM.

For actions where the decisions have not been fully written into these minutes, copies of the decisions have been posted separately by address or project at: <https://www.salem.com/planning-board/webforms/planning-board-2018-decisions>

Respectfully submitted,
Stacy Kilb, Recording Clerk

Approved by the Planning Board on 12/20/2018

Know your rights under the Open Meeting Law M.G.L. c. 30A § 18-25 and City Ordinance § 2-2028 through § 2-2033.