

Walpole Planning Board Town Hall
Tuesday, April 10, 2018 7 PM

Below are the portion of the Planning Board minutes that pertain to the request to schedule a Public Hearing for D&C Transportation

New Business: Mr. J. Miller explained the process for this new proposal from D&C Transportation to build next to the veterinary clinic on Route 12. The Planning Board's involvement in this is that it has to give a recommendation after a Public Hearing. Tonight's meeting was for a request for a Public Hearing from the applicant. The Public Hearing would be the second Tuesday in May, and after public testimony, the Planning Board makes a decision to recommend or not recommend this project to the Zoning Board.

It is one of the requirements that the Zoning Board needs to make a decision when it hears a Special Exception when there is a change of use in the rural/ag district to commercial. The ZBA then has several other criteria it must consider before making a decision.

Tonight, Mr. J. Miller said, will be a quick presentation of the proposal and then maybe some questions from the Board. And then we'll set a date for a Public Hearing for the written recommendation to the ZBA about the Special Exception.

Request for a Public Hearing for a recommendation to the ZBA for a Special Exception: D&C Transportation, Orleans, Vt. Map 10, Lot 2, Rural/ag district. Proposed use: Filling station and convenience store with a Drive Thru. Mr. James Phippard, a land use consultant in Keene, represented D&C Transportation, the owner of the land at the intersection of Route 12, South Street and Walker Road.

With a map on display, he pointed to the land being discussed – a field located on the west side of Route 12. The Connecticut River is located

at the rear of the property. The total parcel of land is 10.2 acres and includes a forested area, and fields down by the Connecticut River and the terrace of land being used for the filling station and convenience store is about 40 feet higher than the river below.

The proposal is to construct a convenience store with a filling station and drive thru. That requires a Special Exception in the Rural/ agricultural zone, Mr. Phippard said. The convenience store would be 6,000 square feet in size, operated by Big Deal Convenience Stores. There are two other Big Deal convenience stores in the area – one in Keene and one in Spofford on Route 9. He suggested visiting either of those stores if interested.

There are eight filling stations with two filling stations off to the side for diesel gasoline. The property was designed to accommodate not only passenger cars but also trucks. It's not unusual to find trucks stopping to buy products from convenience stores. So in order to accommodate them the architect designed the area, so trucks wouldn't be parking on Route 12. There is adequate circulation for tractor trailers and there are three parking spaces for tractor trailers.

This is not a truck stop, Phippard said. It is a safety feature so trailer trucks don't stop on Route 12, in the public right-of-way, when they visit this facility.

There will be town water extended across the street from South Street and Mr. Phippard did speak to the water department.

The driveway that is there now is the driveway to the veterinary hospital. By deed, that driveway is shared with the lot next to it. We will be improving that driveway – paving it and widening it to accommodate two exiting lanes and one entrance lane.

There will be an on-sight septic system and soils on the property are good soils so there should be no problem there. There will be underground fuel storage, which is regulated by NH Department of Environment, he said. DES has established guidelines on usage and how to install those storage tanks safely.

Mr. Phippard said the plan will comply with the town's zoning ordinances regarding signage, lighting, landscaping and will be using screening plantings in several locations.

Also, they will be making improvements to Route 12 as the Department of Transportation requires. Currently, there is a left-turn lane for southbound traffic; a right-turn lane will be added. There has been a significant traffic study and more information on the traffic will be forthcoming at the Public Hearing.

There will be 18 parking spaces, plus the parking at the fuel pumps, so 28 vehicles can be accommodated on the property at one time. The company believes that is adequate for the volume of business that is expected.

Mr. Phippard requested a Public Hearing for May so he could complete the process and get on to the Zoning Board.

Ms. Andros wanted to know what some markings on the map signified in the top left-hand corner. Mr. Phippard said underground fuel storage tanks. Then she asked where the parking spaces were. Mr. Phippard said across the front of the store, off to the side where there are also three trucks space and at the fuel pumps. Then Ms. Andros wanted to know what they would sell at the drive thru. Mr. Phippard said the store has a large deli – so food and coffee. Customers would pick up their food at the pick-up window on the other side of the building.

Mr. Marcom wanted to know the amount of paved area. Mr. Phippard said 1½ acres.

With regard to the left-turn lane, Mr. Marcom asked, does the state pay for that. Mr. Phippard said the applicant pays for that because his operation will impact traffic along Route 12.

The applicant is required to get a DOT driveway permit. The applicant is planning a right-turn lane, which will probably include 800 linear feet of roadway. The width is already there but it has to be repaved and restriped.

Jeff White pointed to the area of the bottom right corner of the map. He said no two tractor trailers could meet there and make a safe turn onto Route 12, especially during winter. He also didn't think three parking space for three tractor trailers was sufficient. He thought it should be more. On any given day at Jiffy Mart, there are three parked trailers as well as a propane truck, a fuel truck and a couple of logging trucks. And 28 parking spaces at 6 to 7 in the morning is not enough, Mr. White said.

Mr. Aldrich noted that the building is located just south of the Westminster Bridge where the speed limit is 55. Mr. Phippard said DOT may recognize the 55 mph problem and lower it to 40 mph. "I will be sure to raise the issue," Mr. Phippard said.

Mr. Dalessio asked if D&C Transportation was aware they needed a Special Exception when they purchased the property. Mr. Phippard said "yes."

Mr. Aldrich made motion to schedule a Public Hearing in May. Mr. R. Miller seconded the motion and the motion carried.

Ms. Marcia Galloway asked if Mr. Phippard was aware of the recreational trail at the edge of his property. Mr. Phippard said "yes." Someone else asked what was going to happen to it. Mr. J. Miller said that will be discussed at the Public Hearing.