



March 16, 2016

Nathaniel N. Strosberg
Town Planner/Director of Community Development
Town of Ashland
101 Main Street
Ashland, Massachusetts 01721

Re: 2 High St (366 Pleasant St.) - Site Plan Application and Site Plan Review - Peer Review

Dear Mr. Strosberg and Members of the Board:

Professional Services Corporation, PC (PSC) completed the peer review of the submitted 366 Pleasant Street Site Plan Review Application. This letter is provided to summarize findings, comments and recommendations.

BASIS OF REVIEW

PSC received the following documents prepared by Connorstone Engineering, Inc., Northborough, MA which will serve as the basis of the review:

- ***Special Permit Application and Site Plan Review*** dated January 25, 2016 including the following:
 - Application with Supplemental Information Zoning Board
 - Application with Supplemental Information Planning Board
 - Zoning Map Excerpt for Locus
 - Legal References – Deeds and Plan
 - Assessors Data and Assessors Map
 - Site Plan
 - Site 'Maps' (Source MapsOnline and Bing)
 - Historic Site Imagery (source-Google Earth and Bing Maps)
 - MBTA Original Layout
 - Commonwealth of Massachusetts DEP and EOE Permitting Information
 - Abutters. List
- Plans (2 Sheets) entitled ***Parking Plan of 366 Pleasant Street in Ashland Massachusetts*** dated February 2, 2016

Review by PSC will include the above items along with the following:

- **Chapter 282 – Zoning** as amended through May 6, 2015
- ***Chapter 343 – Stormwater Management*** dated May 28, 2008.

SITE AND PROJECT OVERVIEW

The project parcel is located between Pleasant and High Streets and the MBTA station and parking area. The existing lot is developed with a restaurant and commuter parking. The parcel has access to off both

High Street and Pleasant Street. The development area is currently a level lawn area. Stormwater runoff from the area flows onto the existing parking lot where is capture in the closed drainage system.

Plans show that portions of the lot are located within the 100-foot buffer zone and riverfront area associated with the Sudbury River. The proposed development area is located within the outer riparian zone of the riverfront. FEMA maps points out that a portion of the site and where work is proposed is located in the AE flood zone. DEP Priority Resource Map indicates that there are no approved wellhead protection area (Zone 2) or NHESP mapped area of estimated habitat of rare wildlife and priority habitats of rare species within immediate proximity of the site. NRCS maps indicate the soils on site consist of Merrimac-Urban land complex with a hydrologic group rating of A – high infiltration rate.

The project consists of installing pavement in the remaining yard area to construct 17 additional commuter parking spaces.

STANDARD ENGINEERING PRACTICE

The submitted plans generally comply with standard engineering practice.

EP1. The plan should bear the signature and seal of the surveyor of record.

CHAPTER 282 - ZONING

District and Use Regulations (§2.0 & 3.0)

The project site is located within the Industrial (I) zoning district, Floodplain Overlay District (FPOD) and Photovoltaic Installation Overlay District (PIOD). The project is not located within the Groundwater Protection Overlay District (GPOD). The land on the other side of both High and Pleasant Street is zoned Residence B. On the opposite side of the MBTA tracks is zoned Rail Transit District C.

The restaurant is allowed use by right. The commercial parking facility use requires a special permit from the Board of Appeals.

Dimensional Requirements (§4.0)

The project lot meets the minimum lot area, frontage, front and rear yard and maximum height requirements.

- Z1. Although the existing building is proposed to remain unchanged, provide dimensions to show existing front yard setback.
- Z2. Board may want to discuss, or get the opinion of the zoning enforcement officer, whether the two trailer storage containers located in the front yard of High Street are appropriate.

General Regulations (§5.0)

The project proposes to create a commercial parking lot screened from High and Pleasant Street by existing wood stockade fence. Application indicates that lighting of this area will be from existing lighting from adjacent parking and building areas.



- 23. Revise plan to locate parking spaces outside front yard setbacks for High Street or seek required relief (§5.1.4.4).
- 24. Provide required buffer area plantings and details (§5.4.3) or request Special Permit (§5.4.7)
- 25. Provide required interior landscaping and details (§5. 4.4) or request Special Permit (§5.4.7)
- 26. Provide surface materials and details of proposed parking, sidewalks and edging/curbing.

Special Regulations (§6.0)

The project will utilize two existing access drives one on High Street and the other on Pleasant Street. Observations during site visit indicate visual obstructions due to truck trailer storage, utility pole and vegetation on the west side of the High Street driveway.

- 27. Provide site distance measurements at driveways and provide improvements if necessary.

Floodplain Overlay District (§8.1)

Although a structure is not proposed, portions of the project are located within a FEMA mapped 100 year (AE) flood zone.

(§8.1.4.3) requires: *All encroachments, including fill, new construction and substantial improvements to existing structures, and other development are prohibited in the floodway unless certification by a registered professional engineer is provided by the applicant demonstrating that such encroachment shall not result in any increase in flood levels during the occurrence of the one-hundred-year flood.*

- FP1. Provide required certification and basic earthwork (cut/fill) calculations (§8.1.4.3).

Photovoltaic Installation Overlay District (§8.2)

The project is not proposing photovoltaic installation – not applicable.

Special Permit Criteria (§9.3.2)

§9.3.2. States: *Special permits shall be granted by the Special Permit Granting Authority, unless otherwise specified herein, only upon its written determination that the adverse effects of the proposed use will not outweigh its beneficial impacts to the town or the neighborhood, in view of the particular characteristics of the site, and of the proposal in relation to that site. In addition to any specific factors that may be set forth in this By-Law, the determination shall include consideration of each of the following:*

- SP1. *Community needs served by the proposal; **Applicant Indicates parking spaces to be available for commuters.***
- SP2. *Traffic flow and safety, including parking and loading; **Traffic and safety issues will be minimal.***
- SP3. *Adequacy of utilities and other public services; **Project requires no significant utility and public services.***
- SP4. *Neighborhood character and social structures; **Project is surrounded by existing parking areas.***



- SP5. *Impacts on the natural environment; and Parcel is currently developed – project will have little impact on the natural environment.*
- SP6. *Potential fiscal impact, including impact on town services, tax base, and employment. Project is not likely to have a significant fiscal impact.*

Site Plan Review (§9.4)

- P1. Provide proposed landscape features, including the location and description of screening, fencing and plantings (§9.4.4.6).
- P2. A construction timetable indicating estimated startup and completion dates (§9.4.4.11).
- P3. An architectural rendering and/or cross-section of the development shall be submitted (§9.4.4.12). Note that no new building is proposed.

Site Plan Review Criteria (§9.4.6)

Site Plan Review Criteria and Design Plan Review; General Criteria. The following criteria shall be considered by the aforementioned Boards in the review and evaluation of a site plan, consistent with a reasonable use of the site for the purposes permitted or permissible by the regulations of the district in which it is located. If the proposal also requires a special permit, it must conform to the special permit requirements set forth herein. The development shall be integrated into the existing terrain and surrounding landscape and shall be designed to protect abutting properties and community amenities. Before approval of a site plan, the Planning Board may request the applicant to make modifications in the proposed design of the project to ensure that these criteria are met. Site plans shall, to the extent feasible:

- PR1. *Minimize use of wetlands, steep slopes, floodplains and hilltops; Site does not contain wetlands, steep slopes, and hilltops – See comments in Floodplain Overlay District.*
- PR2. *Minimize obstruction of scenic views; Board should discuss appropriateness of trailer storage in front yard.*
- PR3. *Preserve unique natural or historical features; Site does not contain any obvious natural or historic features – not applicable.*
- PR4. *Minimize tree, vegetation and soil removal and grade changes; The project does not propose significant vegetation and soil removal and only minor grade changes.*
- PR5. *Maximize open space retention; Site does not contain open space – not applicable.*
- PR6. *Screen objectionable features from neighboring properties and roadways. See comments on landscaping.*
- PR7. *Consideration shall be given to the impacts of the project on town services and infrastructure. Project does not include new residences and should have minimal impacts to town services and infrastructure.*



- PR8. Electric, telephone, cable television, gas, water, sewer, drainage and other such utilities shall be underground except in cases of extreme physical and environmental constraints. **Project does not require new utility services. See comments on Stormwater Management.***
- PR9. Exposed storage areas, machinery, service areas, truck loading areas, utility buildings and structures and other unsightly uses shall be set back or screened to protect the neighbors and those using public ways from objectionable features. Such areas shall not impede the flow of traffic on public ways. **See comments on storage trailers in front yard.***
- PR10. When applicable, the site plan shall show measures to reduce and abate noise generated from the site that will impact surrounding properties. **Other than noise from vehicles, impacts related to noise should be minimal.***
- PR11. The site plan shall comply with all zoning requirements for parking, loading, signage, dimensions and environmental performance standards and all other provisions of this By-law. **See comments in Zoning section.***
- PR12. The site plan shall be consistent with the objectives of the Comprehensive Plan and other applicable specific plans adopted by the Planning Board. **PSC defers to Planning Board.***

Building Design (§9.4.7)

The project does not include construction of a building – not applicable.

Traffic (§9.4.8)

Applicant indicates the parcel will be used as a long term parking facility that should not generate significant traffic volumes.

Water (§9.4.9)

For comments on drainage and stormwater management see stormwater management section.

Landscaping (§9.4.10)

A Landscape Plans was not provided for review. See comments in Zoning above related to buffers, screening and landscaping requirements.

Buildings (§9.4.11)

The project does not include construction of a building – not applicable.

Stormwater Management (Chapter 343)

Plans indicate that stormwater runoff from this area is captured in catchbasins and routed to a subsurface facility. The project includes grading exiting lawn area to install a new parking lot and routing runoff to two rain gardens. The area of disturbance shown does not exceed 10,000 square feet.

- SW1. Recommend that the applicant provide test pits or data from previously installed subsurface stormwater facility sufficient to determine groundwater elevations (§7.6.10.7).



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SW2. Recommend that the applicant provide basic drainage calculations to show that the raingardens are appropriately size to mitigate increased runoff (§7.6.12)

SW3. Provide or update existing Operation and Maintenance (O&M) plan to include rain gardens (§7.6.16).

If there are questions or you need additional information regarding this review do not hesitate in calling the undersigned.

Very Truly Yours,
Professional Services Corporation, PC

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read "Philip Paradis".

Philip Paradis, PE, LEED AP, CPSWQ
President

