

EAST LONGMEADOW PLANNING BOARD

Date: October 5, 2021

Time: 6:00 PM EST

Zoom Webinar



MINUTES

Chair Russel Denver opened the meeting at 6:00 pm.

Present: Russell Denver, Chair
George Kingston, Vice Chair
Jonathan Torcia, Clerk
Peter Punderson
Cassandra Cerasuolo

Staff Present: Bethany Yeo, Director of Planning & Community Development

APPROVAL OF MINUTES

- September 21, 2021

Motion to approve made by Board Member Peter Punderson; second by Vice Chair George Kingston and approved by roll call vote five (5)-zero (0).

SITE PLAN WAIVERS

1. **Case SPRW 2021-44:** Request for Site Plan Review Waiver for Treehouse- A First Step Learning Center, Inc. a childcare facility at 310 Maple Street (Assessor's Parcel ID 6-120B-D) in the Residence B zoning district. Applicant: Jennifer Michaelian, 310 Maple Street, East Longmeadow, MA 01028.

Applicants Jennifer and Wayne Michaelian were present for discussion. Applicant Jennifer Michaelian introduced their plan to open a child daycare facility, with a potential enrollment of 50+ children. Chair Russell Denver opened up discussion and questions from the Board. The applicants answered questions from the Board regarding the previous childcare facility at this location, but no questions about the current applicant's plans. At this time there were no further comments or questions from the Board.

Motion to approve made by Vice Chair George Kingston; second by Board Member Peter Punderson and approved by roll call vote five (5)-zero (0).

2. **Case SPRW 2021-45:** Request for Site Plan Waiver for E.J. Associates, Inc. dba Auth Fuels, a heating oil and HVAC company at 507 North Main Street (Assessor's Parcel ID 1-15-2) in the Business zoning district. Applicant: E.J. Associates, Inc. PO Box 345, East Longmeadow, MA 01028.

Applicant Joan Taft was present for discussion. Applicant Joan Taft introduced their case with no adjustments to their business besides switching financial institutions. Chair Russell Denver opened up discussion and questions from the Board. There were no comments or questions from the Board at this time.

Motion to approve made by Vice Chair George Kingston; second by Board Member Peter Punderson and approved by roll call vote five (5)-zero (0).

3. **Case SPRW 2021-46:** Request for Site Plan Waiver for a home office at 24 Forest Hills Road (Assessor's Parcel ID 58-26-0) on a .46 +/- acre site in a Residence A zoning district. Applicant: Bruce LaRiviere, 24 Forest Hills Road, East Longmeadow, MA 01028.

Applicant Bruce LaRiviere was not present for discussion. Planning Director Yeo introduced the applicant's case for the addition of a home office. The plan includes no commercial vehicles, hours of operation 9:00am-5:00pm, and no customers or employees. Chair Russell Denver opened up discussion and questions from the Board. Board Member Peter Punderson stated the Board usually does not make motions without applicants present; Chair Russell Denver concurred, wanting more information from the applicant. No motion was made at this time.

CONTINUED PUBLIC HEARINGS

4. **Case SITE 2021-9: 235 Dwight Road:** Request for Site plan Review for an addition of approximately 3,275 sq. to the existing Faith Formation Center hall at 235 Dwight Road (Assessor's Parcel ID 2-29-0) on a +/- 235,761 sq. ft. site in the Residence C zoning district. Applicant: St. Paul the Apostle Roman Catholic Church. 235 Dwight Road, Springfield, MA 01108, c/o Casella Design Associates, LLC., 200 Shoemaker Lane, Agawam, MA 01001 (Cont. 9/21/2021).

Applicant representatives Raymond Casella [Casella Design Associates, LLC] and Gary Swanson, PE were present for discussion. Chair Denver clarified the Town is not proposing to make any road a one way in relation to this project site. The Planning Director recounted data from the Police Department records regarding traffic and noise concerns; over approximately the last five years in their records for 235 Dwight Road, there were six calls for loud music complaints specifically from St. Paul's Church and all complaints were made after 10:00 pm in the evening. There were no reports regarding traffic complaints coming specifically from St. Paul's Church. A possible traffic control option implemented by other communities of converting streets to one-way during Sunday morning hours to prevent congestion from church attendees was mentioned; however, The Planning Director advised this approach is not recommended without data to support the traffic flow change. Speed bumps were also suggested as a possible solution to alleviate traffic concerns expressed by residents at the last public hearing for this project. Speed bumps are no longer among the recommended traffic calming devices according to the Institute of Transportation Engineers. Chair Russell Denver added that a Town Counselor has reviewed the last meeting and brought the residents' concerns about noise and traffic to the attention of the Licensing Committee. There were no further comments or questions from the Board at this time.

Chair Russell Denver opened the hearing to public comment, limited to the construction proposed, not any further traffic or noise concerns.

Siobhan Ireland, 101 Admiral St spoke in opposition of the project with continued concerns regarding parking availability and the use of the parking area to park trucks for church purposes. Mr. Casella responded that the parking formula satisfied the zoning requirements and the Planning Director

confirmed this to be true. The Planning Director informed the public that the Zoning Enforcement Officer had been notified of the trucks parking in the parking area for the use of the church and he does not consider it to be a zoning violation. There were no further comments or questions from the public at this time.

Motion to close the public hearing by Vice Chair George Kingston; second by Board member Peter Punderson and approved by roll call vote five (5)-zero (0).

There were no further comments or questions from the Board at this time.

Motion to approve made by Vice Chair George Kingston; second by Board member Cassandra Cerasuolo and approved by roll call vote five (5)-zero (0).

5. **Case ZN 2021-03: Ground-Mounted Photovoltaic Installations Bylaw Amendment:** For the purpose of amending and clarifying the Town of East Longmeadow Zoning Bylaws SECTION 7.5 Ground-Mounted Photovoltaic Installations and Schedule of Uses SECTION 3.041-Ground-Mounted Photovoltaic Arrays by adding language permitting ground-mounted installations in residence zoning districts. Petitioner: East Longmeadow Planning Board (Cont. 9/21/2021).

Chair Russell Denver opened discussion by clarifying the existing bylaw with Planning Director Yeo, with regards to the amount of parcels in town that meet the current sizing requirement to host Ground-Mounted Photovoltaic Installations. Planning Director Yeo offered to consult with the Town Attorney on if the current language of the bylaw is considered, subjectively, too restrictive. Board Member Peter Punderson expressed his disappointment with the court's decision to go against the Board's current bylaw, which was purposely made restrictive to protect the residents of the town. Board Member Peter Punderson suggested changing the language of the bylaw to not restrict Ground-Mounted Photovoltaic Installations by size, but rather by a proportion of usage. Vice Chair George Kingston stated he would like to address both issues of parcel size and usage in the new language, with a separation of residential and industrial zone usage language. Board Members Cassandra Cerasuolo and Jonathan Torcia both concurred that the language of the bylaw should not be too restrictive, but rather more inclusive allowing for more homeowners to meet the regulations and be able to install their own solar panels. Planning Director Yeo offered to communicate with the PVPC to see what other surrounding communities have implemented in terms of solar bylaws to include residential parcels under 2 acres. The Board agreed they would like feedback on their comments made tonight by the Town Counsel, to be heard at the October 19th meeting. Chair Russell Denver opened the public hearing. There were no comments or questions from the public.

Motion to continue to the October 19th meeting at 6:30 P.M made by Board Member Peter Punderson; second by Vice Chair George Kingston and approved by roll call vote five (5)-zero (0).

OTHER BUSINESS

1. Director's Report

Planning Director made the Board aware of a staffing change with the hire of a new Planning Department Administrative Assistant. Director Yeo also stated she would add the expansion of the Rail Trail on the next meeting's agenda.

There was no further discussion by the Board at this time.

Motion to adjourn made by Vice Chair George Kingston; second by Board Member Peter Punderson and approved by roll call vote five (5)-zero (0) at 6:47 PM.