

CITY OF NEWTON

IN BOARD OF ALDERMEN

SUPPLEMENTAL LAND USE COMMITTEE REPORT

TUESDAY, OCTOBER 13, 2015

Present: Ald. Laredo (Chairman), Ald. Albright, Cote, Crossley, Harney, Lennon, Lipof, and Schwartz; Ald. Fuller, Rice, Brousal-Glaser

Staff: Robert Waddick, Assistant City Solicitor, Stephen Pantalone (Senior Planner), Daniel Sexton (Senior Planner), Linda Finucane (Assistant Clerk of the Board)

#148-15(2) INTRUM COPORATION petition for a SPECIAL PERMIT/SITE PLAN APPROVAL to construct a second 60,565 square-foot building to be connected to an existing office building, as well as a one-story parking deck, and to redesign existing parking facilities increasing the number of parking stalls from 215 to 379 at 180 WELLS AVENUE, Ward 8, on land known as SBL 84, 34A, 3, containing approximately 220,097 square feet of land in a district zoned LIMITED MANUFACTURING. Ref: 30-12(g)(2), 30-19(m) of the City of Newton Rev Zoning Ord, 2012 and Board Order nos. 276-68(3), 761-69, 734-72 (884-71). NOTE: Accompanying the petition is a request to amend the Deed Restriction adopted by Board Order #276-68(3), dated November 18, 1968, and subsequent amendments be further amended or waived to increase the Floor Area Ratio from .25 to .53, which exceeds the maximum of .25, to waive the minimum 40% open space requirement, and to allow a greater percentage of square footage in the office park to be dedicated to office space. ***(A Public Hearing was opened and continued on September 10, 2015)***

ACTIONS: HEARING CLOSED; APPROVED 8-0
#148-15(3) AMENDMENT TO the Deed Restriction APPROVED 7-0
(Crossley not voting)

NOTE: The petition was presented by attorney G. Michael Peirce, architect Kent Knight and site designer Dan Malloy of Elkus Manfredi Architects, Bob Michaud of MDM Transportation Consultants. The petitioner is proposing to construct a three-story, 60,601 square-foot addition attached to the existing structure, redesign the existing parking facilities, and construct a one-story parking deck. The proposed expanded building will have approximately 116,377 square feet of total gross floor area. The changes proposed to the parking facilities on the site will increase the number of parking stalls from 215 to 378. Various site improvements are proposed as well. The petitioner is seeking a special permit to construct an addition greater than 20,000 square feet. The petitioner is also seeking to amend/waive the Deed Restriction for the office park as noted in the docket item.

The project is intended to modernize the functionality and visual appearance of the property to complement its "park" aspect. The proposal includes using building, site design, and construction techniques that ensure the efficient use and conservation of natural resources and energy. The project will be LEED certifiable. The precast concrete panels will be removed and

replaced with glass curtain wall to let in natural light; features include balconies and an open courtyard between the existing building and the proposed addition, and a roof-top courtyard. The glass is Low-E, which has an invisible coating that instead of letting heat from the sun in reflects heat back to the sun and in cold weather it reflects heat back into the building. The L-shaped parking deck is 60-feet wide; a 20-foot setback all around the deck will be landscaped with native plants. Although the open space will decrease from 54% to 40%, the parking deck does not factor into the decrease as it is over pavement. The petitioner has submitted a robust landscape plan that includes walkways connecting the site to Wells Avenue and other areas, with benches. Also included is the management of surface water runoff, prevention of erosion on and off the site by construction of an on-site stormwater retention system consisting of surface storage ponds and underground storage chambers. There was some concern about the height of the proposed light poles and other fixtures and the amount of light they would shed.

The Urban Design Commission reviewed and commented on the proposal in a memorandum dated July 27, 2015, which is attached to the Planning Department Memorandum dated September 4, 2015.

MDM in evaluating the traffic indicated that there is no material change from no-build conditions. The petitioner has offered to monetarily support the advancement of planned intersection improvements, as was done in the 2 Wells Avenue special permit, and implement a Transportation Demand Management program (TDM). Engineer Jeffrey Durkin, the city's peer reviewer from Vanasse & Associates, explained that the vehicle backup of approximately 600 feet will still occur, but the contribution from this project is two to three vehicles. This number was arrived at by using intersection capacity: using 6% of the total capacity you arrive at the maximum number than can be physically accommodated at the intersection. The intersection most impacted is Wells Avenue/Nahanton Street. It is projected that approximately 30 people will bike to the site each day. Although the petitioner is proposing an extensive landscaping plan with new grassed areas and planting beds as well as deciduous and conifer trees and shrub, several committee members asked about the removal of mature trees. The petitioner has worked with the city's tree warden and will offset the removal of the trees either through the in-kind planting of trees on-site or a payment in the city's Tree Preservation fund.

Members of the committee agreed the proposed addition is a handsome building; however, there were concerns about traffic. There are many moving parts, including signal improvements, the Needham Office Park, and the Add-a-lane project. This is an extremely large lot with a small building. How many other properties in the office park have the ability to do something similar? Several committee members asked for more information re the energy efficiency/sustainability aspects of the project.

This evening Mr. Sexton reviewed the impacts of the project on intersection queuing, confirming that the intersection to be the most impacted is Wells Avenue/Nahanton Street, with a three vehicle increase during the weekday evening peak hour. However, the proposed TDM is expected to reduce traffic impact during peak hours, and is expected to reduce trip generation by

up to 5% below industry standards. Per Vanasse Associates' review, it found that the CAP methodology used for 2 Wells Avenue was the most appropriate for establishing the proportional share of the improvements costs for the project. Vanasse determined that the allocated costs of the improvements of \$75,000 for the Nahanton Street/Wells Avenue intersection and \$5,000 for the Nahanton Street/Winchester Street intersection represent a fair share contribution for the project.

The light poles have been lowered to 20 feet, and the petitioner will shield the light fixtures nearest property lines and will consider different styles to promote safe pedestrian and vehicle movement. The Planning Department had recommended an uninterrupted walkway system; however, the petitioner has decided to stay with the proposed limited walkway from the new driveway off of Wells Avenue to the building. The petitioner prefers the limited walkway because of liability, maintenance, and infrastructure concerns. The petitioner has agreed to upgrade the sidewalk segments and pedestrian accessible aprons along the Wells Avenue frontages.

The Planning Department memorandum dated October 9 includes an email from Elkus Manfredi Architects outlining how the building and site design will contribute to the efficient use and conservation of natural resources and energy.

Alderman Lipof moved approval of the special permit with the findings and conditions in draft special permit #148-15(2), which carried 8-0. Alderman Lipof then moved to approve the Deed Restriction to increase the Floor Area Ratio from .25 to .53, which exceeds the maximum of .25, to waive the minimum 40% open space requirement, and to allow a greater percentage of square footage in the office park to be dedicated to office space. The motion to amend the Deed Restriction carried 7-0, Alderman Crossley not voting.

Respectfully submitted,

Marc C. Laredo, Chairman