

CITY OF NEWTON

IN BOARD OF ALDERMEN

LAND USE COMMITTEE REPORT

TUESDAY, JUNE 20, 2006

Present: Ald. Mansfield (Chairman), Ald. Albright, Merrill, Samuelson, Vance, Harney, Fischman, and Hess-Mahan; also present: Ald. Sangiolo, Parker, and Baker

City staff: Michael Kruse (Director of Planning & Development), Nancy Radzevich (Chief Planner), Ouida Young (Associate City Solicitor), Linda Finucane (Chief Committee Clerk), Lou Taverna (City Engineer)

Request for a Consistency Ruling re special permit #470-04, granted on April 19, 2005, for the expansion of Newton Wellesley Hospital's Emergency Department/parking/garage expansion

The portion of the facilities approved under this special permit last year that is related to this request for a consistency ruling is the expansion of the current employee garage to the south and behind the main hospital to provide more employee spaces as well as dedicated spaces for Emergency Department (ED) patrons. The approved plans had two egresses on the west end of the garage (towards Washington St.) for employees to enter and exit, and a new entrance and exit on the north side for ED patients and visitors, which could also be used by exiting employees. After the garage had been expanded (but before the new ED has been completed), employees experienced a congested queue at the west entrance when entering in the morning. To relieve this congestion, NWH officials opened both lanes for entrance only, and employees are now all exiting through the ED entrance. For a long-term solution, NWH explored building a second entrance and exit for employees on the east side, but this would have required more grading and constructions and would impact the neighbors' view. Instead, they have proposed a new entry on the north side, reconfiguring the dedicated ED spaces, which would reduce these interior and exterior spaces by a total of 13. However, they have also been able to add 17 spaces on the west side for a net gain of 4 spaces. Ms. Radzevich also explained that this will divert some vehicles from the circulation near the ED entrance.

Ald. Sangiolo reported on a Neighborhood Council meeting where these plans were reviewed, and that the Council found that this solution was preferable to an east side entrance, but that several neighbors were concerned about the process. Specifically they asked why the hospital's traffic engineer and the City's two traffic engineers had not anticipated this congestion problem. Had they done so, she speculated, the overall design of the garage might have been improved. She also said that some neighbors were concerned that the new circulation pattern might eventually lead to the use of the fire access road. Ald. Samuelson noted that to do so would definitely require an amendment to the special permit, and that while she shared the neighbors' concerns about the deficiencies of the technical analyses, she thought this solution was consistent with the approved permit. Ald. Albright added that the proposal seems to fix the problem without adding new ones.

But one of the abutters, Debbie Salloway of 10 Bonaire Circle, expressed a strong opinion that this change was not consistent since only two entrances had been approved. Frank Stearns, attorney for the hospital, explained that the special permit had required NWH to undertake a traffic analysis as facilities were completed, and so adjustments like this were anticipated. Brian McKenna, of TRO Architects, suggested that cars exiting from the proposed new egress would all be turning away from the neighbors. However, Ms. Salloway said that since gates in the exterior lots are not kept closed, cars would be free to not follow this suggested circulation. Gene Geremini, NWH's Director of Parking, reiterated the problem that now exists between 6:45-7:15 AM, but Ald. Sangiolo suggested only opening the second entrance during this time, instead of building a new one. Mr. Geremini replied that it would be difficult for drivers to get used to such a time restriction, and there might also be a bottleneck at the ED entrance once that facility opened.

Ald. Parker asked what the standards are for a consistency ruling. Ms. Young replied that there are none, as it is an informal process. Ald. Mansfield explained that the Inspectional Services Commissioner makes the ruling, and that he is only seeking advice from the Committee through this process. Ald. Sangiolo asked whether City Traffic Engineer Clint Schuckel had reviewed the new plans, and was told that he had not. She suggested that he should do so, and report to the ISD Commissioner.

#102-06(2) KESSELER DEVELOPMENT, LLC petition for a change of zone from SINGLE RESIDENCE 3 to MULTI RESIDENCE 3 for a parcel of land located on LaGrange Street, Ward 8, identified as Section 82, Block 37, Lot 95, and shown as Lot H-1 on a Subdivision Plan of Land in Newton MA, "Toomey-Munson & Associates, Inc.," dated April 28, 2004, recorded with the Middlesex South County Registry of Deeds in Plan Book 2005, page 102.

ACTION: HELD 7-0 (Merrill not voting)

#102-06(3) KESSELER DEVELOPMENT LLC petition for a SPECIAL PERMIT/SITE PLAN APPROVAL to construct a condominium complex consisting of three (3) structures with one (1) multi-family residence of 52 dwelling units and two (2) single-family attached dwelling structures with a total of 10 units for a combined total of 62 dwelling units with accessory parking on land located on LaGRANGE STREET, Ward 8, known as Section 82, Block 37, Lot 95, and shown as Lot H-1 on a Subdivision Plan of Land in Newton MA, "Toomey-Munson & Associates, Inc.," dated April 28, 2004, recorded with the Middlesex South County Registry of Deeds in Plan Book 2005, page 102, containing approximately 640,847 sf of land in a PROPOSED MULTI RESIDENCE DISTRICT 3 . Ref: § 30-24, 30-23, 30-20(l), (e)(5), 30-19(k)(2),(3),(h)(2)a c) and (m), 30-9(d)(1), (b)(5), 30-5(b)(4), 30-15 Table 1 proposed footnote 9, 30-15(h) of the City of Newton Rev Zoning Ord 2001.

ACTION: HELD 7-0 (Merrill not voting)

NOTE:NOTE: At Ald. Vance's suggestion, the Committee spent some time in this meeting reviewing in detail the by-right options for this site, as well as the basic question of the most desirable location of the proposed project on the parcel. The Inclusionary Housing plan was also reviewed, based upon a decision by the Mayor (as provided for in the Cooperative Bidding Agreement) to require Cornerstone Corp. to provide 11 affordable units, 8 targeted at 80% of the area median income and 3 at 120%. This is above the ordinance requirement of 6 + 3 previously offered, but not equal to the 20% (12 units) the Bidding Agreement would have required except for the Mayor's decision. The Committee also reviewed a draft Construction Management Plan, a revised Traffic Study, and a Landscape Plan recently submitted. The attorney for the Rangeley Road neighbors also submitted a detailed list of suggested conditions, and the Committee agreed to review these and draft conditions prepared by the Planning and Law depts. at the next working session

All this information will be presented in more detail once the Committee makes its recommendation to the full Board.

Application for a 2006 Class 2 Auto Dealer License
#238-06 RADOSLAV STAMBOZIEV
 304 Watertown Street
 Nonantum

ACTION: HELD 7-0 (Merrill not voting)

NOTE: This is a new application, and since the applicant was not present, the Committee held the matter until a later time.

The meeting was adjourned at 11:10 PM

Respectfully submitted,

George E. Mansfield
Chair