



CITY OF NORTH ADAMS, MASSACHUSETTS

Planning Board

REGULAR MEETING

MINUTES

December 14, 2020

Call to order 6:00 p.m.

Chair statement for virtual public hearing

Chairman Leary read the following statement: Pursuant to Governor Baker's March 12, 2020 Order Suspending Certain Provisions of the Open Meeting Law, G.L. c. 30A, §18, and the Governor's March 15, 2020 Order imposing strict limitations on the number of people that may gather in one place, this public hearing of the North Adams Planning Board is being conducted via remote participation. No in-person attendance of members of the public will be permitted, but the public can listen to this meeting while in progress via teleconference. Members of the public attending this meeting virtually will be allowed to make comments if they wish to do so, during the portion of the hearing designated for public comment, by teleconference.

Members present virtually Chairman Michael Leary, Lisa Blackmer, Lynette Ritland Bond, Robert Burdick, Kyle Hanlon, Kayla Hollins, Paul Senecal, and Larry Taft

Members absent Brian Miksic

Others present virtually Jonathan Berman, Tammy Daniels – iBerkshires, Salvatore Garozzo, Brent Johnson, Patrick Kennedy, William Meranti – Building Inspector, Francesca Paris – Berkshire Eagle, Dave Westall, and Brett Westbrook

Chairman Leary read an announcement from the Administrative Officer from the City of North Adams:
The City of North Adams is pleased to offer for public review the Draft North Adams Hazard Mitigation and Climate Change Adaptation Plan. The purpose of hazard mitigation planning is to reduce or eliminate the need to respond to hazardous conditions that threaten human life and property. Hazard mitigation can be a policy, action, or physical project designed to reduce or eliminate the long-term risks from hazards. The Hazard Mitigation Plan complements the work and findings of the City's Municipal Vulnerability Preparedness Plan that was developed in 2019.

The Draft Plan will be posted for review on the City's website at www.northadams-ma.gov from December 14 to December 28, 2020. Requested paper copies of the Draft Plan are also available for review; contact Angie Ellison, aellison@northadams-ma.gov (413) 662-3000 x3011 for more information. Please forward comments to Angie Ellison as well.

Public hearings new business

- **Case No: SPA2020-36** Application of Torrington Supply Company Inc DBA Torcco for property located at 50 Roberts Drive. Special permit requested for a change of use to operate a wholesale supply house in an I-1 zone.

Chairman Leary opened the hearing to Patrick Kennedy. Mr. Kennedy explained that their business is the same type of business that was previously in their space. They are a wholesale plumbing and heating distributor. They are just changing locations from Union Street to the proposed Roberts Drive location.

Chairman Leary requested questions from the board or the gallery. No questions.

Chairman Leary requested a motion to close the public hearing. Member Hanlon made a motion to close the public hearing. Member Taft seconded the motion. All in favor. Motion carried.

- **Case No: SPA2020-37** Application of Brent Johnson – Midland General Contractors, Inc. for property located at 856 and 858 State Road. Special permit requested for a change of use to operate an urgent care clinic in a B-1 zone.

Chairman Leary requested that Member Hanlon to take over this portion of the meeting so that he and Member Taft could recuse themselves from this case.

Member Hanlon opened the hearing to Brent Johnson. Mr. Johnson explained that Clear Choice MD is an urgent care operator that operates in Vermont and New Hampshire and is looking to expand into Massachusetts and other areas. Their business model is a retail medical office, a typical urgent care center. Hours of operation are typically 8:00 a.m. to 8:00 p.m. seven days a week. They take care of typical urgent care needs such as sprains, stitches, X-Rays, colds, coughs, etc. They will be combining the former liquor store and the former Papa John's spaces.

Member Hanlon requested questions from the board. Member Burdick inquired about the staffing on site and if there would be mostly nurses on site. Mr. Johnson explained that he is the builder but most of the models include mid-level providers.

Member Burdick inquired about signage. Mr. Johnson explained that it was submitted with the original package.

Member Hanlon requested questions from the public. Tammy Daniels inquired about a clarification of the name. Mr. Johnson explained that the name is Clear Choice MD. They are the operator. This location will be called Southwest Vermont Healthcare Urgent Care because of the partnership. He does not know what they would request from their sign package as they have a local sign vendor prepare them. It may represent Clear Choice/Southwest Vermont Urgent Care.

Member Hanlon mentioned that when it comes time to approve the case that there should be a condition that any changes to the sign package be approved by the board prior to installation.

Member Hanlon requested questions from the board or gallery. No questions.

Member Hanlon requested a motion to close the public hearing. Member Blackmer made a motion to close the public hearing. Member Senecal seconded the motion. Chairman Leary and Member Taft abstained. All in favor. Motion carried.

- **Case No: SPA2020-38** Application of Berkshire County Head Start for property located at 535 Curran Highway. Special permit requested for a change of use to operate two classrooms and a gymnasium for the pre-school day program in a B-2 zone.

Chairman Leary opened the hearing to Dave Westall, Brett Westbrook and Sal Garozzo. Mr. Westall explained that UCP is renting space to Berkshire County Head Start in the north section of the building. The interior alterations to accommodate Head Start involve transforming one large conference room into two classrooms and one large storage area into a gymnasium. The other part of the project was the reuse of the office spaces for the Head Start administrative offices. No work needed to be done in that area. The only exterior work that needed to be done was the installation of the water main line from the back of the building to Old State Road for the water supply for the required fire suppression system.

Chairman Leary requested questions from the board. Member Ritland Bond commented that it is a wonderful partnership and mentioned that she hoped that there would be some parking lot improvements in the future.

Chairman Leary requested questions from the board or gallery. No questions.

Chairman Leary requested a motion to close the public hearing. Member Senecal made a motion to close the public hearing. Member Taft seconded the motion. All in favor. Motion carried.

- **Case No: SPA2020-39** Application of Jonathan Berman dba TaxPopUp.com for property located at 36 Ashland Street. Special permit requested for a change of use to operate a tax preparation office in a CBD zone.

Chairman Leary opened the hearing to Jonathan Berman. Mr. Berman explained that he has been a CPA in Massachusetts since 2007 and would like to open his own business. He was surprised to hear the H & R Block did not open last year. The offices were previously used as doctor offices. The offices do not need any adjustment. He has a plan to have hand sanitizer available and will only handle a client or a couple at a time.

Chairman Leary requested questions from the board or gallery. No questions.

Chairman Leary requested a motion to close the public hearing. Member Senecal made a motion to close the public hearing. Member Hanlon seconded the motion. All in favor. Motion carried.

Approval of minutes

- Planning public hearing – November 9, 2020

Chairman Leary requested a motion to approve the minutes of the Planning public hearing for November 9, 2020. Member Hanlon made a motion to approve the minutes. Member Blackmer seconded the motion. Member Hollins abstained. All in favor. Motion carried.

- Regular meeting – November 9, 2020

Chairman Leary requested a motion to approve the minutes of the Planning regular meeting for November 9, 2020. Member Hanlon made a motion to approve the minutes. Member Blackmer seconded the motion. Member Hollins abstained. All in favor. Motion carried.

New business

- **Case No: SPA2020-36** Application of Torrington Supply Company Inc DBA Torrco for property located at 50 Roberts Drive. Special permit requested for a change of use to operate a wholesale supply house in an I-1 zone.

Chairman Leary requested a motion to approve. Member Hanlon made a motion to approve. Member Ritland Bond seconded the motion. All in favor. Motion carried.

- **Case No: SPA2020-37** Application of Brent Johnson – Midland General Contractors, Inc. for property located at 856 and 858 State Road. Special permit requested for a change of use to operate an urgent care clinic in a B-1 zone.

Chairman Leary requested a motion. Member Hanlon made a motion to approve with a condition that any changes to the signage that are not included in the provided rendering must be approved by the board. Member Blackmer seconded the motion. Chairman Leary and Member Taft abstained. All in favor. Motion carried.

- **Case No: SPA2020-38** Application of Berkshire County Head Start for property located at 535 Curran Highway. Special permit requested for a change of use to operate two classrooms and a gymnasium for the pre-school day program in a B-2 zone.

Chairman Leary requested a motion to approve. Member Burdick made a motion to approve. Member Ritland Bond seconded the motion. All in favor. Motion carried.

- **Case No: SPA2020-39** Application of Jonathan Berman dba TaxPopUp.com for property located at 36 Ashland Street. Special permit requested for a change of use to operate a tax preparation office in a CBD zone.

Chairman Leary requested a motion to approve. Member Hanlon made a motion to approve. Member Blackmer seconded the motion. All in favor. Motion carried.

Other business

- Request from Ed's Variety to place advertising signs on front exterior of building for property located at 524 Union Street.

Chairman Leary inquired about the city ordinance that states that signage may only take up a certain percentage of the building. Mr. Meranti confirmed and explained that they must have misunderstood and proposed what they had when they were asked to take it down. Chairman Leary explained that his preference would be to have Inspector Meranti go back to explain the ordinance and have them resubmit their proposal. Member Blackmer made a motion. Member Ritland Bond seconded the motion. All in favor. Motion carried.

Member Blackmer explained that it was her understanding that signage should not be advertising products and the proposal submitted were all advertising products with the exception of one sign that read Ed's something... There was no representative present to speak on behalf of Ed's Variety. Chairman Leary requested that Inspector Meranti work with Ed's Variety on appropriate signage placement and content.

- Request from Evergreen Strategies to modify the exterior elevations by removing the existing structures and replacing with post and beam structures for property located at 221 State Road.

Chairman Leary requested Inspector Meranti explain the proposal as no representative was present to speak on behalf of Evergreen Strategies. Inspector Meranti stated that the work is already done. They removed the false pergola with the roof that covered where the ice cream window used to be and vestibule in the entry way has been removed. They have since been replaced with the proposed post and beam structure to cover both areas in a different style than what was there before.

Chairman Leary requested a motion to approve. Member Hanlon made a motion to approve. Member Taft seconded the motion. All in favor. Motion carried.

Adjournment Motion to adjourn 6:28 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,



Michelle Ells
Planning Board Secretary