



Planning Board Minutes – June 16, 2015

A meeting of the Town of Freetown **Planning Board** was held on **June 16, 2015** at the Freetown Town Hall 3 N Main St Assonet, MA. **Present:** Chairman Keven Desmarais, Robert Jose, Nicolas Velozo, Mark Rogers, Assoc. Member Debra Robbins

A. Meeting called to order at 6:00 PM

B. Special Permit Hearing for Bristol County Savings Bank, 1 Chace Road, Installation of 2 Electronic Messaging Center units

The public hearing was called to order. Motion to waive the reading of the public hearing notice: Mark Rogers; Second: Robert Jose, all in favor. Attorney Patrick Matthews representing Bristol County Savings Bank (BCSB), Ron Ferrigno of Sign Design and Donald Smyth of BCSB approached the Board. Atty. Matthews states that BCSB is seeking to make a change to an existing freestanding sign to add (2) Electronic Messaging Center (EMC) units measuring approx. 96 inches wide by 41 inches high. Another change will be a replacement of the face of the top existing portion of the sign to include signage for a recently acquired insurance company that will have dealings within the building; dimensions will remain the same. They are seeking a special permit for the installation of the EMCs. All proposed changes to the signage will help BCSB in marketing to the community, and establishing their identity. The EMCs are to display BCSB's products and service as well as show time and weather information. Atty. Matthews states that they can also be programmed to promote Freetown events.

The Board inquired as to the frequency of message changes on the EMCs. Discussion ensued as to what the proper frequency would be in order for the sign to be effective for BCSB as well keeping drivers safe from possible distraction. After some discussion, the Board proposed a 10 second interval between messages. The applicant conferred with each other and agreed the 10 seconds was amenable to them.

The applicants requested the ability to have the EMC display a static message to the effect of "ATM Open" after a certain hour, as well as to keep the top portion of the sign lit. The Board discussed typical hours of operation of surrounding businesses, as well as the state of lit business signs after a certain hour. The board discussed keeping consistency throughout the business community.

Motion to close the public hearing: Mark Rogers; Second: Robert Jose; all in favor. The Board deliberated the case. Motion to approve the applicants' request with the following conditions:

1. That the internally lit top portion of the sign shall be shut off from the hours of 11 PM to 6 AM each day
2. That the EMC signs will display a single static message from the hours of 11PM to 6 AM each day advertising the ATM
3. That the EMC shall not contain moving video or flashing in a single message and messages shall replace each other at a sooner than 10 second intervals (maximum of 6 messages per minute)
4. Brightness of the display shall be no greater than as proposed in the application; 10,000 NITS in the day and 750 NITS at nighttime

Motion made by Mark Rogers; Second: Robert Jose; all in favor.

C. ANR Plan for land located off off Slab Bridge Rd (Map 217 Lot 1)

Nicolas Velozo recused himself from discussion. Tony Peruzzi, land surveyor with Alpha Surveying and Sean Provencher of DCR approached the Board. Mr. Peruzzi stated that the shaded area indicated as 'Parcel B' on the plan (77.36 acres) is land that DCR is looking to attain. The State currently owns a large parcel of adjoining land to the west of the piece in question, and are in the process of obtaining 600 acres of nearby land in Lakeville. The land currently owned by Ken Rezendes would make the state owned land contiguous.

Motion to endorse the plan: Robert Jose; Second: Mark Rogers; Abstained: Nick Velozo; motion passes.

D. Site Plan Review Rules & Regulations and By Law

Sandy Conaty of SRPEDD approached the Board with a draft of a revised Site Plan Review by law. The work is being funded by a DLTA grant. She stated that she has added in a table of parking regulations that can be part of the site plan review by law, or stand alone to be used for any project that comes into town. The base language for the by law was derived from the Town of Seekonk, and she crafted this to be similar to our current special permit rules and regulations. Items from other towns' by laws were also incorporated.

The Board discussed at length the aspects of a project that would trigger site plan review. The Chairman voiced his concerns that currently, with the threshold being an aggregate of 10,000, a large facility putting up a small storage shed triggers site plan review. The Board agreed that they need to find a balance in regard to the threshold. Ms. Conaty discussed that some towns use a percentage of the square footage of the project in relation to the existing building and/or a flat sq footage number, and often times a change in use will trigger a site plan review. She has also seen that a project needing for example, 5 additional parking spots over what currently exists, will trigger the site plan review. The Board discussed 'change of use' as a trigger. Ms. Conaty pointed out that with different uses, come parking requirements that could be very different, as well as hours of operation, signage, etc. She stated that the Board needs to determine which impacts they want to review. The Planning Technician will examine thresholds used by other communities.

Ms. Conaty discussed the possible site plan review application process with the Board. Many communities employ pre-application meetings. Discussion ensued as to how that would work in conjunction with the current practice of having applicants first get a zoning determination from the Building Inspector; they weighed the merits of having an applicant wait for a determination that would be accurate and let them know all the approvals they would need to get vs. getting a project started expeditiously. They discussed an option of having language stating that obtaining a zoning determination is strongly advised, otherwise they can waive the request at their own peril to start the site plan review process sooner.

The Board will discuss further at the next meeting on July 14th, SRPEDD will return for the August meeting.

Motion to pay the bills: Mark Rogers; Second: Nicolas Velozo; all in favor

Meeting adjourned at 8:15 pm

Respectfully submitted,

Lauren Moreau
Planning Technician

