

TOWN OF DEDHAM
COMMONWEALTH OF MASSACHUSETTS

John R. Bethoney, Chair
Michael A. Podolski, Esq., Vice Chair
James E. O'Brien IV, Member
Jessica L. Porter, Member
James McGrail, Esq., Member
Andrew Pepoli, Associate Member



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Jeremy Rosenberger
Planning Director

**PLANNING BOARD
MEETING MINUTES**

**TOWN OF DEDHAM
450 WASHINGTON STREET
DEDHAM, MA**

**MINUTES OF THE PLANNING BOARD MEETING
VIA TELECONFERENCE
MAY 6, 2021, 7:00 P.M.**

BOARD MEMBERS:

John R. Bethoney	Chair
Michael A. Podolski, Esq.	Vice-Chair
James E. O'Brien IV	Member
Jessica L. Porter	Member
James McGrail	Member
Andrew Pepoli	Associate Member

PLANNING DEPARTMENT STAFF:

Jeremy Rosenberger	Planning Director
Michelle Tinger	Assistant Planning Director

Minutes prepared by Mary-Margaret Scrimger of Minutes Solutions Inc. from an audio recording.

1. CALL TO ORDER

The Chairman of the Planning Board, Mr. Bethoney, called the meeting to order at 7:00 p.m.

2. PUBLIC HEARING

146, 188, and 216 Lowder Street and 125 Stoney Lea Road—Old Grove Partners, LLC

Requesting for approval of a Planned Residential Development (PRD), as shown on a detailed site development plan submitted under Section 7.1 of the Dedham Zoning By-

Law. The proposed PRD shall have a maximum of twenty-six (26) dwelling units on +/- 62 acres. The properties are located at 146, 188, and 216 Lowder Street and 125 Stoney Lea Road, Dedham MA, situated within a Single Residence A Zoning District, and shown on Dedham Assessors' Map 105, Lots 17, 19, 23 and Map 118, Lot 31. Representative Peter A. Zahka, Esq.

Mr. Rosenberger outlined correspondences regarding the site as follows. Mr. Hooper wrote that there were issues and concerns in April on the site. Mr. Nap noted traffic concerns on April 28, 2021. Mr. Borth wrote about open space and protecting it in May. Mr. Zahka had written responses to some of the letters. Mr. McGrail noted that the Open Space Committee voted unanimously to support the open space being donated to the Town via this project. Mr. McGrail abstained from that vote. The School Committee had written indicating their support of the large land donation, and their desire to continue a dialogue with the town as to how the property would be accessed. Any access through the ECEC would need to maintain safety standards for the children attending the school.

Mr. Zahka, representing Old Grove Partners, noted that a peer review from McMann Associates was received. Nine issues were identified that were all addressed. This is the second time the site has had a peer review. The Town of Dedham Engineering Department provided insight and requests for documents, which were appropriately addressed. Mr. Zahka noted that building projects are under significant scrutiny. There are consequences when they deviate from the plan.

Mr. Zahka addressed comments within the letters. He noted that permits are personally issued to Mr. Zahka's client. One of the conditions is house size, which is frequently inspected by the Town. If the developer does not abide, then occupancy can be delayed. Garbage and recycling collection has been requested to be done at each house. Mailboxes will be at each home if the postal service agrees to this. The Dedham Conservation Commission handles stormwater management and this project is under their review. Existing stone walls and trees will be maintained where possible. Street signs will comply with town standards. Mr. Zahka noted that all of Mr. Hooper's requests will be respected if they are within the power of the project.

Mr. Zahka noted that 20% of the tract of land must be maintained as open space. There will be an attempt to connect this land to the early childhood center. Limiting parking will be considered.

Mr. Zahka recommended two additional considerations when the Planning Board reviews the site application. One is to address the open space in the PRD to clarify that it is 28 acres and that it would be preserved. Another is that access to the second parcel of land will be limited. On behalf of his client, Mr. Zahka offered to donate a portion of land to the Town with some conditions.

Traffic is a consideration for this project. The project has been peer-reviewed and a full traffic report has been prepared twice. Lowder Street has been noted as an issue but not a significant enough point to change the project. Secondary access to the PRD is unnecessary and could not be done as they have already completed the three-step procedure.

The Board discussed the road width and access. For subdivisions, the roads are within requirements. Mr. Findlen, senior project manager at McMann Associates, represents the

Town at the applicant's expense. He noted that the applicant has worked to resolve issues and there have been two reviews. The roadways are sufficient for trucks.

The Board discussed the traffic study. There are various issues within this area and one solution will not fix all the problems. Mr. Zahka noted that the traffic issues existed before this application. His client's offer to pay \$100,000 for the traffic study is extremely generous as the project was not the start of the issue.

Mr. Findlen confirmed that there are traffic issues outside of the applicant's development and that the 26 developments would not negatively impact the traffic. Mr. McGrail noted that the traffic has been an issue before this application. The pedestrian signal, which would alleviate some of the problems, costs approximately \$15,000 and positively impacts traffic issues. There are issues now and they need to be addressed now, not just after a study. Also, Mr. McGrail felt that all the issues are being convoluted into one when there are many. Mr. Joyce agreed to contribute \$115,000 to the traffic study and pedestrian signal after the approval of the PRD.

Mr. O'Brien agreed with Mr. McGrail that traffic issues are being convoluted into one issue when there are many. Mr. O'Brien noted that there is road rage within the area. Also, he thanked Mr. Joyce for his generosity regarding the traffic issue, as he realized this was not Mr. Joyce's responsibility. Ms. Porter noted that after this PRD, the PRD approval process should be reviewed as the current bylaw is constrictive.

The floor was opened to the public. Mr. Hooper of 0 Wampatuk Road noted that he has talked to approximately 70 people who have discussed the traffic issues. He confirmed that the traffic issue predates the PRD. There have been informal conversations with the Select Board, the Planning Board, Police, and the engineering department. Formally, this issue has been bounced between different committees and Boards. The time to act is now.

Mr. Hooper disagreed with Mr. Findlen that the PRD will not negatively impact traffic because it doubles the houses in the area. He also noted that the \$115,000 from Mr. Joyce is only one percent of the \$40 million project. It is the cost of doing business and will benefit the project. Mr. Bethoney added that Mr. Mammon, the town engineer, has identified this as an issue beyond the Town's capacity and would need to be addressed by a larger engineering firm. This has been rejected twice by the Select Board due to costs before the PRD project began.

Mr. Pepoli agreed with Mr. McGrail's comments. He requested citizens to attend the Select Board, but more importantly Town Meeting. Mr. Hooper asked that all stakeholders, such as residents, schools, police, and Boards, become involved in this public safety issue. This is a time-sensitive issue as Lowder street is dangerous and he does not want to see a child dying from a car incident.

Mr. Brefini at 136 Stoney Lea Road thanked the Board for its effort. However, he is concerned about the access and the traffic. He suggested students from Ursuline Academy use Highland Street for buses to reduce traffic and increase safety.

Mr. Bethoney moved the conversation to the open space. Ms. Porter noted that it is strange that access to Town-owned land would be limited. The Board discussed access

via Stony Lea. Mr. O'Brien asked if there was a plan for trash, overnight camping, and wondered if a study for park logistics might be included. Mr. Bethoney and Mr. Rosenberger noted that the property's recipient decides how it is used. Ms. Porter stated that the open space should be accessible on foot to decrease traffic and parking needs.

It was requested that this continue to be discussed on May 26, 2021. Mr. Zahka requested that this be voted on at the next meeting. He will prepare a draft of the proposal. The Board agreed.

A motion was made by Ms. Porter to continue the public hearing of 146, 188, and 216 Lowder Street and 125 Stoney Lea Road on May 26, 2021, at 8:00 p.m. The motion was seconded by Mr. Podolski. A roll call vote was taken:

James McGrail:	Yes
James O'Brien:	Yes
Jessica Porter:	Yes
Michael Podolski:	Yes
John Bethoney:	Yes
Andrew Pepoli	Yes

Motion passed unanimously, 6-0.

80 Bridge Street, Petruzzello Properties, LLC:

Request for a Special Permit for a Mixed-Use Development Project, Special Permit for work within a Flood Plain Overlay District, Major Site Plan Review, and any associated waivers to construct a four (4) story, 41 dwelling unit Mixed-Use Development and 66 off-street parking spaces. The subject property is located at 80 Bridge Street, Dedham MA, Assessors Map/Lot 14-54, and is located within General Business (GB) and Local Business (LB) Zoning Districts and Flood Plain Overlay District (FPOD). Dedham Zoning By-Law Section 3.1, 4.1, 4.2, 5.1, 5.2, 7.4, 8.1, 9.2, 9.3, 9.5, Table 1, Table 2, and Table 3. Representative Peter A. Zahka, Esq.

Mr. Bethoney noted that his place of work has an ongoing relationship with the Petruzzello family. He recused himself, handed the role of Chair to Mr. Podolski and departed the meeting.

Mr. Podolski noted that 80 Bridge Street was a restaurant, then a medical facility, and has been empty for the last ten years. The current intent is to be a mixed-use building. There will be commercial use on the bottom and then approximately three stories of 41 apartments above.

Mr. Zahka noted that Mr. Petruzzello will own and run this property. He has done this with all his properties. Mr. Zahka confirmed that a special permit and site plan review will both be needed. There is a flood zone that is a consideration. While work is not intended in the flood zone, this is requested if work needs to be done. There have been various meetings with residents.

A scoping session on this property was done and changes were made to the building based on the Board's request. For example, the number of apartments has decreased to allow some of the units to be two bedrooms, rather than the one-bedroom originally proposed. A variance to exceed the story limitation has been approved. Abutters have been notified and notice of the hearings were published in the Dedham Times. Peer review questions have been addressed.

The Dedham engineering department requested small changes to signage and engineering approval, which have been addressed. This project has not been filed with the Conservation Commission as the previous owner received approval and there will be no change to the building footprint. Mr. Zahka and Mr. Petruzzello are aware that they may need to do this in the future.

Wayside Realty Trust owns the building, but Mr. Petruzzello will have ownership after the permits and approvals are confirmed. The current owner attempted a major renovation but decided to discontinue work. The existing drawings have five two-bedroom apartments and 36 one-bedroom apartments. Initially, the plans had 46 one-bedroom apartments, but at the request of the Board, the units were reduced to 41 to accommodate five two-bedroom apartments.

There will be a common space that will only be accessible to residents. The parking lot will have 66 parking slots. The existing parking lot will be used. It is required to have at least 61 parking slots for a building within these specs. There will be 15% of the apartments set aside to be affordable apartments. There will not be a design difference between units.

Mr. Mike Carter from GCG, provided insight regarding the project. There are two entrances to the building and the current pavement footprint is roughly the same. Turning radius for garbage trucks and fire trucks have been considered. There are three handicap spaces in compliance with legislation. There is a lighting plan that has been submitted. The utility plan allows for improvements in stormwater management. There will be a sidewalk and a curb along the road.

Mr. Podolski asked for photos of the back of the property for the next presentation. Mr. Zahka noted all parking slots are within size requirements except for the accessible parking spots, which will require a waiver to allow them to fit into the ADA requirements.

Mr. McKay, the project architect, discussed changes made to the plans based on the last meeting. The aesthetic is to make it look like a converted warehouse. The brickwork detailing has been simplified, and the top-level balconies are now Juliet balconies. The landscaping in the photos now reflects the actual intent. There are setbacks on the top two levels to improve the aesthetic.

Mr. Cram, a traffic engineer, did a traffic study of the area. A question previously raised was the signal on Bridge Street and Spring Street, which has been added to the study. Volumes were adjusted based on seasons and COVID-19. The study measured speed, noting that most cars were going above the speed limit. This study was done before the construction on Bridge Street and recorded minimal crashes in the area. There are two improvement projects: one is resurfacing and minor widening with bike lanes at Route 109. The other is installing rapid flashing crosswalk beacons near the building. The growth rate in the area is expected to be half a percent.

Mr. Cram continued by explaining land use codes have been used and evaluated. The building in and out traffic trips were evaluated as a mixed-use building, commercial and residential, and commercial alone. A trip is defined as cars in and out. The capacity ratio, volume, and demand are well below one, indicating enough capacity for this development.

Mr. Podolski asked Mr. Findlen for his insight. Mr. Findlen has reviewed this project at the applicant's expense. The Planning Board retained him, at the applicant's expense, to identify issues with the plans and work with the applicant to resolve them.

There was discussion regarding safety in the community and ensuring that the Board is proactive.

Mr. Scott McFarland, the owner of the property across the street, stated concerns with the development. He is very supportive of the project but not the size. The parking lot has flooded at least three times in the last forty years. He asked about snow storage for 80 Bridge Street. He wanted more information on parking because of residential needs and the possibility of flooding. Also, guest

parking could be a challenge. He does not want people parking in his lot if there are no spaces available. These questions will be addressed at the next meeting on May 12, 2021.

A motion was made by Mr. McGrail to continue the public hearing of 80 Bridge Street, Petruzzello Properties, LLC on May 12, 2021, at 8:45 p.m. The motion was seconded by Mr. Pepoli. A roll call vote was taken:

James McGrail:	Yes
James O'Brien:	Yes
Jessica Porter:	Yes
Michael Podolski:	Yes
Andrew Pepoli	Yes

Motion passed unanimously, 5-0.

3. NEW/OLD BUSINESS

The Board discussed scheduling. There are many projects coming down the pipeline and there is little time for them to be presented.

4. ADJOURNMENT

A motion duly made; it was resolved to adjourn the meeting at 10:46 p.m. A roll call vote was taken:

James McGrail:	Yes
Jessica Porter:	Yes
James O'Brien:	Yes
Michael Podolski:	Yes
Andrew Pepoli	Yes

Motion passed unanimously, 5-0. The meeting was adjourned.

DISCLAIMER

The above minutes should be used as a summary of the motions passed and issues discussed at the meeting of the Board of the Planning Committee. This document shall not be considered a verbatim copy of every word spoken at the meeting.

Commented [1]: Please confirm