

**SOMERSWORTH PLANNING BOARD  
MINUTES OF SITE WALK  
MARCH 8, 2012**

**MEMBERS PRESENT:** William Sweeney, Chairman, Bob Belmore, City Manager, Dave Witham, City Council Representative, Dan Proulx, Paul Robidas and Paul Maskwa, Alternate.

**MEMBERS ABSENT:** Anthony Delyani, Vice Chairman, Ron LeHoullier and Erwin Grant.

**STAFF PRESENT:** Dave Sharples, City Planner and Tracy Gora, Planning Secretary.

The site walk began at 5:00 p.m. on the westerly side of the property along Route 108.

Representatives of the application that were present were: Tobin Farwell, Jeff Caley, Daniel King and Josh Gagnon.

Caley stated that the landscaping that they are proposing is resistant to road salt and the layout is based on not moving the pavement.

Farwell stated that the existing green space is about six feet in width. Stated that they are working with the NHDOT and they need a 35-foot wide entrance. Stated that the existing curbing will be moved.

Robidas asked why it wasn't done originally.

Sharples stated that it was shown on the plans but that it wasn't built that way.

Witham stated that the State has talked of widening the right of way so he wants the applicant to keep that in mind.

Farwell stated that the prior use got a certificate of occupancy (CO) even with the pavement being installed as it is. Stated that it is in good condition.

Robidas asked if there can be a happy medium with the pavement width.

Gagnon asked about the lights that exist at the edge of pavement.

Farwell stated that they could remove the pavement but leave the lights.

Witham stated that emergency apparatus wouldn't be able to make it into the parking lot.

Farwell stated that it will be widened.

Witham stated that he would like the turning radius to be verified by the Fire Department.

Gagnon stated that the State gave permission for a 35-foot opening.

King mentioned having the option for a half-fence.

The site walk attendees moved to the south side of the property.

Farwell showed where the proposed pavement would be extended. Stated that the edge of pavement would be 15 feet from the property line.

Sweeney asked about additional parking.

Gagnon stated that they received preliminary permission from Gulf (the abutting property to the south) to use their property for additional parking. Stated that they are not going to need it though. Stated that their calculations are based on the Fire Chief's numbers for their occupancy.

Sweeney asked what the occupancy load is.

King replied 300, including the classrooms.

Farwell stated that the number is in-line with requirements.

King stated that they would never fill the structure to capacity because of comfort.

Witham stated that they have to keep in mind that they are not just approving this site specifically to Next Level Church but also to future uses. Asked if there will be any landscaping along the southern property line.

Caley showed on the plans.

Witham stated that he would like landscaping.

The site walk attendees moved to the southwest side of the property.

Farwell showed the edge of pavement and where the drainage would be. Showed the markings on the pavement that depict where the edge of the addition will be.

Sharples asked if there are any wetlands.

Farwell stated that there are none on the property.

Sharples asked if there are any within 100 feet of the proposal.

Sweeney asked if there will be a walkout basement.

Proulx asked how high the roofline of the addition will be.

King stated that it will match the existing structure and that the addition will be 5000 square feet in size.

Sweeney asked about access to the walkout area of the basement.

Caley stated that it will just be a grass area. Stated that the basement will just be used for storage and will not have any classrooms.

Sweeney mentioned that they could fill in more and add more parking.

Farwell stated that they are extending the parking as much as they can.

Witham asked what they are going to do about snow storage.

Gagnon stated that there is 15 feet on each side.

Witham stated that he would like snow storage noted on the plans. Asked if the building will be sprinklered.

Farwell replied yes.

The site walk attendees moved to the northwest side of the property.

Farwell showed the original edge of pavement.

Sweeney pointed out the property line.

Witham stated that he would like to see the location of the bike rack be closer to the building.

King stated that they can move it.

Gagnon pointed out the evergreen trees on the edge of the property and stated that their northerly side property line is on the other side of the trees.

Farwell stated that he thought that the existing trees and vegetation already met the landscaping regulations. Pointed out that this is the area where the abutter requested that a fence be installed.

Discussion ensued on installing a fence between the two properties.

Farwell stated that the intent of the letter that the abutter submitted was to keep people out but that he doesn't think a fence is a good idea. Stated that the existing landscaping would need to be removed to install the fence.

Gagnon stated that the parking is deceiving because the building is in the middle.

King stated that, regarding traffic flow, there will be one lane onto the property and two going out of the property.

The site walk attendees moved to the inside of the building.

Gagnon stated that the ceiling will be opened up.

Sweeney mentioned the water runoff.

Farwell stated that they are withdrawing their waiver request from parking.

Caley stated that the egress will be able to handle emergency vehicles.

Robidas stated, regarding the pavement setback, that this property would look out of place if they had to move the pavement back, based on other properties in this area.

Sharples stated that they would have to abandon the front entrance to the building if the pavement got moved back.

Belmore asked about the type of landscaping they would have.

Caley stated that they got a quote from a landscaper.

Discussion ensued about landscaping.

Witham stated that part of his concern with having the pavement close to Route 108 is the safety of the children. Stated that he would probably be okay with allowing a compromise for the amount of pavement at the front of the property. Suggested half.

Maskwa mentioned tree planting.

Witham stated that he would be more interested in low, decorative shrubbery.

Maskwa stated that regarding the setback waiver; they would need rationale to approve that to handle similar requests along Route 108 in the future.

Witham stated that he agrees with consistency but that you have to consider the use. Stated that there would be families coming here whereas it is an industrial use across the road.

Gagnon suggested white, picket fencing. Stated that they could bring it in six feet but that if they bring it in anymore then they would lose parking.

Caley stated that it would be 12 feet from the property and that they would lose a row of parking.

Sweeney stated that he is not comfortable with losing a row of parking.

King mentioned parallel parking.

Sweeney mentioned angled parking.

Gagnon suggested six feet of addition pavement instead of eight feet.

Robidas stated that he would be okay with that.

Witham stated that this is an intensive use of the property and that they have to be cognizant of landscaping. Stated that it makes sense to meet halfway. Asked if the sign can be placed in the setback.

Sharpley stated that freestanding signs have to meet a ten-foot setback.

Sweeney stated that, regarding the number of people arriving per car, in his experience, he sees a lot of vehicles arriving with only one or two people inside.

Gagnon stated that they have a young staff and a lot of families that attend their church.

Sweeney asked if they are going to do anything with the abutting gas station for parking.

Gagnon stated that they don't intent on using it. Stated that they don't want problems either but that there is more parking on site than it looks like.

Belmore mentioned that more events are held at certain times.

Gagnon stated that they are not asking for a waiver for parking.

Witham stated that he has seen other business where people park along the State road.

King stated that no one can park on the State road. Pointed out the COAST bus stop nearby.

Witham stated that it has been mentioned that they would use traffic detail if there is a special event.

Caley concurred.

Gagnon stated that they have designated times for service and that they are not random.

Robidas stated that he thinks these site walks are valuable and that he would like the Board to do this more.

Witham asked if there should be a guardrail in the back because of the steep slope.

Farwell stated that there will be a guardrail.

Caley stated that they want the siding of the addition to match the existing building and that it is not out of the norm for this area.

Witham stated that the business across the street had to get a waiver and that the Board had them add windows and a color band to the outside.

Caley stated that it will be an attractive building and that they will have casement windows.

Witham suggested adding a color band to break up the blank façade.

Sharples pointed out the concept design.

Witham stated that when they have granted waivers in the past, embellishments were added.

Site walk adjourned at 5:55 pm.

Respectfully submitted:



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Tracy Gora, Planning Secretary  
Somersworth Planning Board