

Chelmsford Planning Board
Town of Chelmsford
50 Billerica Road Chelmsford, MA 01824

Meeting Minutes

DATE: February 23, 2022

TIME: 7:00 pm

LOCATION: McCarthy School, 250 North Road Chelmsford, MA – Auditorium

Present: Tim Shanahan, Michael Raisbeck, Nancy Araway, Deirdre Connelly, Henry Parlee, Mike Walsh, Paul McDougal, Erica Clifford via Zoom

Others Present: Community Development Director Evan Belansky

ADMINISTRATIVE REVIEW:

52 / 54 Bartlett Street: Request to endorse Form J

<https://www.townofchelmsford.us/DocumentCenter/View/13841/BartlettDefinitve-Subdivision-approval>

<https://www.townofchelmsford.us/DocumentCenter/View/13842/BartlettPlan-Def-Subdivision>

<https://www.townofchelmsford.us/DocumentCenter/View/13843/CommonDriveway-Covenant-52-Bartlett-Form-J>

The new owner of 52 Bartlett St. recently found out this form expired in June, 2021 and was never endorsed. As the new owner of the project, he needs to finish executing the Board's decision so he can pull permits to build his house. The Board was familiar with the project, and had no further questions.

Motion: by Mr. Raisbeck to endorse Form J for 52 Bartlett St., as presented. Seconded by Mr. Parlee. **Motion carries, unanimous 7-0.**

CONTINUED PUBLIC HEARING(S):

The Davis Companies on behalf of DIV Riverneck, LLC, for properties located at 191, 195, 199-201 Riverneck Road for the demolition of the existing structures and construction of a 247,860 +/- square feet industrial warehouse building with integrated surface parking, loading facilities and on-site infrastructure improvements. The site is in the IA and RB zoning districts and is shown as parcel Id Map 64, Block 275, Lots 4, 5, 7 and 16 and consisting of approximately 21.03 acres. The applicant requests approval under Article XXIV, Route 129 Business Amenities Overlay District (BAOD) and Article XXI, Community Enhancement and Investment Overlay District (CEIOD) sub-sections 195-111 D, 195-115, 195-116, and associated Special Permits per Article XIV Aquifer Protection District, sub-section 195-74, Article XV Floodplain District, sub-section 195- 82, Article XI Major Business

Complexes, and any other permit relief, including but not limited to Articles V and IX, as may be required under the Chelmsford Zoning Bylaw to allow the proposed use/project.

This meeting will focus on Traffic. The project engineer will provide a presentation. The Board's Traffic peer review consultant will also provide a presentation. The Board will ask questions of both consultants. Public Input may be taken on traffic. Next steps related to traffic review will be identified. Below is the link to the Peer Review Consultants review.

<https://www.townofchelmsford.us/DocumentCenter/View/13844/RiverneckRd-Warehouse-Traffic-Review-021622-002>

The below project document links are from the original submission.

https://www.townofchelmsford.us/DocumentCenter/View/13726/Riverneck_Road_Application_Package

https://www.townofchelmsford.us/DocumentCenter/View/13727/Chelmsford_DD_Drawings_12-13-2021

https://www.townofchelmsford.us/DocumentCenter/View/13728/Chelmsford_List_of_record_permits

https://www.townofchelmsford.us/DocumentCenter/View/13729/Chelmsford_Narrative

https://www.townofchelmsford.us/DocumentCenter/View/13730/Chelmsford_Special_Permit_Application_Form

https://www.townofchelmsford.us/DocumentCenter/View/13731/Chelmsford_Waivers

https://www.townofchelmsford.us/DocumentCenter/View/13732/Chelmsford_Cover_Letter

https://www.townofchelmsford.us/DocumentCenter/View/13733/Chelmsford_Environmental_Standards_Form

https://www.townofchelmsford.us/DocumentCenter/View/13734/Stormwater_Management_Report_Full

https://www.townofchelmsford.us/DocumentCenter/View/13735/Riverneck_Road_Traffic_Impact_Assessment_Full

<https://www.townofchelmsford.us/DocumentCenter/View/13844/Riverneck-Rd-Warehouse-Traffic-Review-021622-002>

<https://www.townofchelmsford.us/DocumentCenter/View/13844/Riverneck-Rd-Warehouse-Traffic-Review-021622-002>

Atty. Robert Buckley summarized items that have been addressed since the previous meeting, as well as basic information about existing conditions on the site itself. Proposed development was also summarized. Most of the building will be hidden from view by landscaping. The number of loading docks was reduced from 52 to 42, buffers have been expanded along the road. Neighborhood residents were invited to join in a subcommittee with the applicant to discuss their concerns.

Jeffrey Durk, transportation consultant for the Town (peer reviewer) described the process used to analyze traffic volumes and patterns, which were impacted by the recent pandemic, as well as any conditions that existed in 2019, prior to the pandemic. Average speed on Riverneck Rd, is 13 MPH faster than the 30MPH posted speed. About 60% of the traffic from this project will be going through the intersection of Rt. 110 and Golden Cove Rd., and a road safety audit has been recommended for this

intersection. General traffic growth of .75% over the next seven years is also being recommended, as opposed to the .5% being proposed by the applicant. There will be employee traffic as well as truck traffic; and the applicant has been asked to analyze the distribution of each type of traffic further.

Warehouses are increasing all over the Commonwealth. At this time, it is not known who the company that will use this building will be. For instance, a parcel delivery hub is very different than a cold-storage warehouse or a high-cube fulfillment center. Parking requirements will vary by the type of use. Some facilities use robotic technology, others require more people. Parking will limit what can be done at this site. At this time, this appears to be a standard warehouse. The applicant has been asked to provide more data in several categories of the analysis. There should be a request from the applicant for the re-timing of several traffic signals. Speed reduction measures should also be considered, as the site lines are short for trucks exiting the site. Overall, they felt the site plan was well prepared, and several suggestions were made to provide more accommodations. The intersection of Riverneck Rd. and Billerica Rd. does not meet the state requirements for the installation of a traffic signal at this time. Adding sidewalks was recommended as a traffic control measure. The traffic numbers presented by the applicant are reasonable based on the details in the site plan.

The applicant will provide written responses to the peer review comments.

Public Comments:

Chris Lavalley, Town Meeting Representative, hopes the recommendations are enacted in full. He believes that UPS traffic will impact additional traffic generated by this site, and thinks that should be added into the traffic analysis. The physical conditions of the roads now are in really bad shape, and will get worse because of all the truck traffic. Mr. Lavalley disagrees with the land use case assessment, and cited data from similar sized buildings, and he requested a broader range of data be presented for a wider array of potential tenants.

The applicant's traffic engineer responded, stating they will be separating truck data from regular traffic data for further analysis. They will also be addressing traffic calming issues and comparable site concerns. Atty. Buckley added that parking constraints will be a controlling factor in what kind of tenant will move into the site.

Armand Jeknavorian, 5 Bailey Terrace, measured Riverneck Road by Bailey terrace, and it is only 8' 7" wide on the south side, and 9' 4" by the north side, and by the Fire Station it is 10 feet wide. It widens a bit further down the road, and narrows again by Rt. 129. The average tractor trailer is 8 feet wide. The trucks will have a very difficult time turning, as there is no room. He thinks some of the trucks will go toward Gorham St., to get to the Lowell Connector and Rt. 495, as that could be easier than making the right turn onto Rt. 129 to get to Rt. 495.

Paul Sevigny, 35 Golden Cove Rd. , noted that trucks have been allowed on his road, and it is already busy and very tight on the corners. Curbs are commonly being hit. This project will not help the traffic situation on Golden Cove Rd.

Judy DeAngelis, 217 Riverneck Rd., requested to know the impacts from the proposed 21 townhouse development at 243 Riverneck Rd. and this project. There is a blind corner near the development. There is not enough room for sidewalks, as the houses are close to the road.

Brian Delaney, 24 McFarlin Rd., stated that the sidewalks are important to him, as there are many children in the neighborhoods around Riverneck Rd. He was concerned about the impacts to school buses and student safety. He asked whether there was an alternate route in the event of a major accident at one of the intersections. He noted that previous traffic studies did not consider other businesses on Rt. 129 that are being encouraged to locate there, and that will also increase traffic.

Eric Finney, 8 Clark Ave., asked whether there would be hours of operation on weekends, as there is more pedestrian and bicycle traffic on weekends, and whether this impact could be added into the traffic study . He noted a trend where large e-commerce companies sometimes look to have a series of smaller warehouses to help with distribution, and whether the Board could look into this. Steadman St. is used as a cut-through to Drum Hill, and to avoid the Rt. 3 congestion. Traffic from multi-family units should also be considered.

Bruce Tramwell, McFarlin Rd., felt there are issues with this road that you will not find in a report. There are many blind spots on Riverneck Rd. There are telephone poles right near the pavement on “S” turns, and blinding sunlight in the fall. He listed other hazards on this road as well that should be looked into, as some of these conditions are not safe for the truckers.

Bob Delaney, 22 McFarlin Rd., stated McFarlin Rd. is already used as a cut-through when traffic backs up on Rt. 495. Trucks will have a hard time turning because of all the other traffic already in place. He does not agree with the numbers presented in the study.

Anita Tanini, 8 Columbus Ave., explained that Riverneck Rd. is used as a pass-through road, and the intersection of Carlisle St. and Riverneck Rd. has at least one major accident annually. The combined traffic impacts from this proposed site and UPS needs to be considered, as it will impact the 4,000 people living in East Chelmsford. The site on Riverneck Rd. was zoned as an office park with limited hours in the 1980’s. It was never intended to be used as a 24-7 operation. Ms. Tanini suggested limiting the number of docks as an additional traffic control measure, in addition to the limit on regular parking spaces. Ms. Tanini also requested that another listening session be held on this topic, as many people were not available for this meeting due to the public school’s February vacation.

Marlene Cote, 28 Sprague Ave., via Zoom, noted that her street is already impacted by UPS truck traffic, and they regularly travel on Carlisle St. If the future tenant relies on robotics, there may be fewer employees, but could be more large trucks.

Cana Kalf, 23 McFarlin Rd., via Zoom, felt the map showing traffic patterns presented by the applicant is inaccurate, as it does not consider school bus traffic in residential areas. There are many students living in this area, and this will create issues.

Tony Arguello, 9 Clarke Ave., requested more information on how traffic could be predicted for this site when the tenant is unknown. Mr. Durk acknowledged that robotics could create efficiencies, and that the building size, nature of use, and conditions imposed by the Planning Board will limit what can be done at this site. Mr. Arguello asked whether future growth of a business moving forward 5-10 years is figured into the projections. He was advised that future growth is not factored into the proposed projections.

Atty. Buckley advised they would review all the comments and suggestions made tonight. He would also like authorization to have neighborhood discussions. Atty. Buckley clarified that there are no plans to partner with UPS. Chair Shanahan requested that they also address any impacts with school buses.

Mr. Belansky recommended the Board discuss how to organize a subcommittee, and to research more on whether sidewalks are feasible in all areas.

Dr. Connelly suggested a discussion on what parameters can be used for this project to minimize negative impacts. Atty. Buckley cautioned against prohibiting all e-commerce, as many existing businesses, especially restaurants, are using this method now.

Motion: by Mr. Parlee to continue the Hearing for Riverneck Rd. to March 9, 2022. Seconded by Mr. Walsh. **Motion carries, unanimous, 7-0.**

NEW PUBLIC HEARING(S):

None.

NEW BUSINESS:

- 1. Master Plan Implementation Committee:**
 - Planning Board (TBD) Select board (Ken LeFebvre)
 - Conservation Commission (Chris Tymula)
 - Housing Advisory Board (Deb Taverna)
 - Historical Commission (Deb Taverna)
 - Town Meeting Member or resident-at-large (TBD)
 - Agricultural commission (TBD)
 - Age-friendly Implementation Committee (TBD)

DPW (Advisor)
Town Manager (Advisor)
Department Community Development (Advisor)

Mr. Belansky announced that Fred Bruseau was appointed to represent the Age-Friendly Implementation Committee. The Board will need to decide how to advertise the Town Meeting Representative/Resident at Large spot after the April 5, 2022 election.

MEETING MINUTES TO APPROVE:

February 9, 2022

<https://www.townofchelmsford.us/DocumentCenter/View/13825/2-9-22-PBMinutes>

Motion: by Mr. Parlee to approve the Meeting Minutes of February 9, 2022, as presented. Seconded by Mr. Raisbeck. **Motion carries, unanimous, 7-0.**

Old Business:

Dr. Connelly requested that the Board add an agenda item on future agendas to discuss Zoning Bylaw updates so they are prepared to address them at 2022 Fall Town Meeting. Mr. Belansky recommended posting work sessions for these discussions.

ADJOURN

NEXT MEETING DATE(S): March 9, 2022 and March 23, 2022

Motion: by Mr. Raisbeck to adjourn the meeting at 8:55PM. Seconded by Mr. Parlee. **Motion carries, unanimous, 7-0.**

Respectfully Submitted,

Vivian W. Merrill
Recording Secretary

Supporting Documents:

- Form J for 52-54 Bartlett St.
- Traffic Study materials for Riverneck Rd.
- Draft Minutes