



TOWN OF WEST BOYLSTON PLANNING BOARD planningboard@westboylston-ma.gov
140 Worcester Street ** West Boylston MA 01583 ** Phone 774-261-4073

PUBLIC HEARING MEETING MINUTES

**Bethlehem Bible Church
307 Lancaster Street, West Boylston
June 16, 2021**

Members Present: Paul Anderson (Chair), Marc Frieden, Vincent Vignaly, Sarah Miles, Barur Rajeshkumar

Members Absent: None

Others Present: See attached Sign-In Sheet

The public hearing was opened at 7:05 p.m. and the notice read into record. Scott Goddard (Bethlehem Bible Church) and Randy Miron (Bohler Engineering) were in attendance. They purpose to make improvements to the parking lot in order to resume church activities. An application for the same work was before the board 10± years ago and was put was on hold. The ingress and egress location are close to the existing building and interfere with pedestrian traffic causing a safety issue; there are also drainage problems as well as compromises to the septic system; the number of parking spaces are not sufficiently marked.

Mr. Miron said the lot is approximately five acres; a 100' wide National Grid easement runs through the property. The existing catch basins collect little stormwater; it sheet flows away from these. They want to expand the parking lot and stripe 136 parking spaces (previously there were 86); and add a new drop-off area in the front. They do not intend to expand the building. A new stormwater management system is being proposed (deep sump catch basins and manholes; there will be a new infiltration basin). They plan to replace the septic system; all utilities will remain as they are today. New parking lot lights are being proposed as well as new landscaping. The driveway will be moved further from the building. Mr. Goddard said there will be some limited tree removal in the rear. It will require review by National Grid and MassDOT.

Mr. Vignaly commented that proposals for over 30 parking spaces, shade trees are required in the parking area every ten spaces. There is also a requirement for any non-residential use that abuts a residential district that there be a 30' landscape area buffer; that will be waived because they are existing, but the applicant was asked to do as much screening as possible on their property to block the view of the parking area from the abutters. Mr. Vignaly said it needs to meet the DEP standards for pre- and post-drainage calculations. He was concerned because they created the gravel parking area where it was only previously permitted as grass. The previously approved conditions for that area were the paved parking area, the septic in the grass, and all grass behind that. The use has expanded and has become a gravel parking area on the septic and expanded further because there is erosion along the slope to the north; it needs to be corrected. There is no berm to direct flow to the drainage catch basins off the northwest corner of the building.

Mr. Frieden commented that it's a steep slope and asked if there were grade changes proposed. Mr. Miron said there is one gradual grade across the parking lot and it will remain that way. Mr. Frieden also asked how they plan to get the runoff to the stormwater basin since it is graded to the right and the stormwater basin is up to the left. Mr. Miron said there will be a series of catch

basins scattered throughout the parking lot. Mr. Rajeshkumar asked how far away the driveway was from Lancaster Meadows and was told approximately 200'. Sight distance was not checked but needed.

Emily Donovan (26 Lancaster Meadows) asked if the overflow basin in the back would overflow into the wetlands when it reached 4.5' of water and was told it would. She said trees would be cleared within the 100' buffer to the wetland and currently that area is covered with trees which absorbs a lot of water; the wildlife will be impacted by the tree removal. She also asked where the snowplowing is going because it could be potentially dangerous for the wildlife. Mr. Miron said they could add snow storage to the plans. He said they will be filing with the Conservation Commission and they will comment at that time as to work within the buffer zone. Mr. Vignaly said the wetland delineation is not defined until it is reviewed by the Conservation Commission. Her concern is the tree clearing and was told it will probably be returned to a grassy/woody state as it was in the past.

Ronda Farraj (21 Lancaster Meadows) remembered the driveway going as far as it could in respect to the 100' buffer zone ten years ago and asked where the extra land with this application is coming from. If the wetlands are affected, it affects their property and wildlife. She said that DCR abuts their land. With that just being said, Mr. Vignaly realized the appearance of a conflict of interest as an employee of the DCR and recused himself from the hearing.

Warren Heller (6 Lancaster Meadows) asked if the site plan review should come after the wetlands were delineated. Ms. Miles explained that the hearing tonight will not be closed because the board does not have all the answers.

Ms. Donovan asked the seating capacity in the church. Mr. Goddard said from the Board of Health's perspective it is 600; the physical number of chairs is approximately 400. She asked what is the legal capacity of the building; Mr. Goddard said approximately 400; he was asked to get a more definite number.

Wayne Amico (VHB) commented on his June 15, 2021 review letter which was provided to the applicant today. Mr. Miron asked about 3.6.D.1.m regarding a traffic study and 3.6.D.2.c regarding projected traffic flow patterns. Mr. Amico said if they provide some information projecting traffic flows, etc. on the plan or respond to the memo, it may give the board enough information to decide if a traffic study is warranted. Mr. Amico mentioned landscaping based on the number of parking spaces. There were comments regarding the adequacy of the walkways from the church out into the parking area. More clearly defined pedestrian pathways would be helpful. Relative to stormwater, Mr. Amico said they understand some test pits were done for the septic, but normally there are 2-3 provided for each detention basin; that did not appear to be done. Mr. Amico said they cannot fully understand the stormwater report until they receive existing soil conditions and know what the characteristics are.

The applicant needs to demonstrate how the trash truck will pick up the dumpster to make sure it has adequate access/navigation. Comments were received from the Board of Health; it appears their comments were based on the old system and they requested a design review. Coordination is also needed with the Fire Department regarding fire access. There were questions about the grades being proposed near the front of the building; it appears some may exceed 2%. The need to make sure they are in compliance with 521 CMR.20.00 Section 20.2. Mr. Amico was not sure

if a walkway should be proposed towards Route 110 (there are no sidewalks on Route 110) to make the property more accessible. The applicant was asked to reconsider the location and the way the proposed handicap parking spaces are provided regarding the handicap ramps. Sight distance needs to be verified for the new location of the driveway, etc. One-way signage is recommended. Capacity questions need to be answered.

Ms. Donovan asked about the traffic study; the addition of 55 parking spaces is an impact to traffic. Mr. Anderson said the capacity being larger does not guarantee there will be more vehicles there. Mr. Frieden asked if they would put the snow storage in such a way that it would melt and go into the drainage system rather than washing into the wetlands. Mr. Miron will check but believes it will be on the non-paved areas outside of the parking spaces. Mark Babson (35 Lancaster Meadows) asked if the lighting will be on 7 days/week or only during services; Mr. Goddard did not have that answer. Mr. Anderson said there are regulations about where the light can go; it is not allowed to shine on neighboring properties. Mr. Amico commented that a photometric plan was received and the lighting does not exceed the regulations. Mr. Frieden said the sight lines need to be addressed regardless of a traffic study because it is a hard driveway to see around the corner. Mr. Amico did ask for it to be shown on the plan.

Mr. Goddard asked for a continuance. Ms. Miles made a motion to continue the public hearing to July 14, 2021 at 7:05 p.m.; Mr. Frieden seconded; all voted in favor; motion approved (Mr. Vignaly was recused).

Date Accepted: _____

By: _____

Vincent Vignaly, Clerk

Submitted by: _____
Melanie Rich