

**HAVERHILL PLANNING BOARD
MEETING MINUTES**

DATE: Wednesday, May 11, 2022

Place: City Council Chambers – Room #202 City Hall

Time: 7:00 PM

Members Present: Member Robert Driscoll
 Chairman Paul Howard
 Member Ismael Matias
 Member Karen Buckley
 Member Carmen Garcia
 Member Bobby Brown
 Member April DerBoghosian, Esq.
 Member Nate Robertson

Members Absent: Member William Evans

Also Present: William Pillsbury, Jr., Director of Economic Development and
 Planning
 Lori Robertson, Head Clerk

Approval of Minutes:

April 13, 2022

After board consideration, Member Robert Driscoll motioned to approve the April 13, 2022 meeting minutes. Member Bobby Brown seconded the motion.

Carmen Garcia – yes

Bill Evans – absent

Karen Buckley – yes

April DerBoghosian, Esq.- abstain

Bobby Brown – yes

Nate Robertson- yes

Robert Driscoll – yes

Paul Howard – yes

Ismael Matias - yes

Motion Passed.

Member Nate Robertson: Read the rules of public hearings

Public Hearings:

Zoning Amendment: The City of Haverhill is requesting that the board review the cited petition and forward a recommendation back to the City Council for its final decision on a zoning overlay business park at map: 465, block 4, lot 5-B-1 and the rezoning of map: 465, block 3, lot 6 to a business park.

Please note at the May 11, 2022, Planning Board meeting held at 7:00 pm in the City Council Chambers the board considered the recommendation of the Planning Director, William Pillsbury, Jr., to forward a favorable recommendation to the city council on the proposed amendment.

Member Nate Robertson read the rules of public hearing into the record.

Mr. William Pillsbury addressed the board. It is with great excitement that I bring forward, I think one of the next important implementation phases of our masterplan that we concluded not too many months ago with the opportunity to create the next business park for the City of Haverhill. We have been working long and hard over the last number of decades to try to identify additional industrial land for the city. At this point we have had a couple of targets in mind over the years. The Dutton Airport has always been a disturbed site. It has always been a site that was been zoned office park which is unique zoning in the city, but it has always envisioned as some type of commercial use or a business use. The problem with that particular site over the years was that it was not accessible for industrial uses or business uses from Route 110. It was not feasible or wise or smart growth planning for us to try to introduce a business park that would have accessed off of Route 108. We worked creatively and long and hard with one of I think the greatest partners that the city has had the occasion to work with over the last many, many years back to the 60's with the Greater Haverhill Foundation. The Greater Haverhill Foundation moved forward with the negotiations with a variety of landowners and were able to get some agreements in place that helped us to move forward with this long-term goal of the city. Again, this partnership with the Greater Haverhill Foundation, I know Ron Trombley is here from the Foundation tonight and will be speaking. The foundation has an amazing track record in helping the city create industrial and commercial space most notably the creation of the Ward Hill East and West Business Park in the 1960's when they stepped forward and created that business park and it's a jewel that it is today. It is almost 99% full. That is really part and parcel of our problem. We as a city need industrial growth so that we can balance out the residential growth. A lot of people feel that there is too much residential growth. One way to balance that out is to create the opportunity for diversification of the city's tax base by industrial and business expansion. That is what we are doing here. I think what we have is a unique opportunity like I said, the Foundation did Ward Hill they moved into another area which was extraordinarily helpful to the City of Haverhill with the creation of Harbor Place. If you look at Harbor Place, it would not be there without the Greater Haverhill

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Foundation. The willingness of the foundation to engage with these property owners at these locations to serve as a catalyst for the creation of significant industrial space adjacent to route 495 again the key is the opportunity to access it from Route 110. We will also be going forward with extensive traffic analysis. We will be creating a signalized intersection at Elliot Street, which has long been discussed as it represents access into Northern Essex, we have already talked with Northern Essex and they are excited about the opportunity to signalize the intersection at Elliot Street. We will be conducting a significant amount of traffic analysis. We will be undertaking all the environmental controls that are required. We will be making sure that we pass everything through the proper channels with Conservation Commission, DEP and Natural Heritage Group. All of those things would be required of a project ultimately will result in as much as 700,000-800,000 s/f of space potentially as new industrial space for the city. Again, it was major goal of the masterplan. It was talked about at length that we need to create a diversity. We have been engaging in our complimentary strategy of growth in the business parks to create densification. We have a couple of properties underway with that in terms of densification. Again, this is an opportunity and probably the most exciting aspect of it is to create jobs. We have been very successful in the city in the last couple of years, companies like Monogram Foods, Rapid Coating, Edwards Vacuum. Those are all really very critical companies to Haverhill that are now here. They are occupying space that no longer exists for any other companies. It is time for us to create space for new companies so there are more opportunities for jobs for our residents of Haverhill. There are many groups that are working to try to promote these jobs. We are excited about that, and we encourage them to work with us to bring new jobs to this particular park. Again, it's a vital opportunity for us in terms of creating an inventory. The market is responding extremely well to this opportunity. We have had conversations; the foundation has with people in the marketplace about the viability of space of this nature at this time. While we fully understand that there are cases and occasions where there is land to be preserved and watershed land to be preserved and open space to be preserved this particular site is disturbed and has been disturbed for decades. It is in a situation where it has always been zoned for business and we are believing that this is a great site and the people that have looked at it have confirmed that it is a great site, smart growth site for business development and I am excited about that. So, with that Mr. Chairman, I will take any questions and we can proceed with the hearing, hearing from the public ultimately my request to the board would be a favorable recommendation to the council.

Chairman Howard asked if anyone from the public wishes to speak.

Ron Trombley, Greater Haverhill Foundation addressed the board. This is truly very exciting to us. We have been a little busy the last few years relative to Harbor Place which was really an initiative a little bit out of the direct history of what the foundation

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has been involved in but it was so important as you recruit companies, an important ride; part of that is bringing them through your downtown and the vibrancy thereof and to show something that makes such a positive statement, beautiful city on this beautiful river. We look at this as the next opportunity for the Ward Hill of the future, and the chance to attract high quality companies into that location. It's a wonderful opportunity as Bill said to see this dormant site brought forth into a first-class manufacturing/industrial whatever the proper best quality companies that we can attract. We would be working directly with Bill and his team. We are actively involved in trying to bring this thing forward, but this zoning is absolutely critical to part of this initiative. We are bringing our support and enthusiasm for this initiative.

Chairman Howard: Anyone else wish to speak on this?

Christine Kwitchoff 14 Colby's Lane addressed the board. I can't say that I am opposed to this project, but I definitely have questions about it. What will be interesting to hear is how this dormant damaged site actually comes to fruition in a way that can still protect some of the research that I have done that shows this area is critical for Haverhill's inland flood mitigation. I am questioning what the outcome will be when this gets developed. It's also critical, priority, high priority and a mixture of priority for Haverhill's drinking water source. Again, I am sure all this will be vetted as it goes through the process. It is obvious that it is adjacent to Kenoza Lake. Again, these are just questions that I think will be interesting to hear.

William Pillsbury: That is not Kenoza Lake, just FYI. That's Tilton's swamp.

Christine Kwitchoff: Yes, I understand that. Across 110.

William Pillsbury: That is not Kenoza Lake.

Christine Kwitchoff: Yes, across 110.

William Pillsbury: About a mile away or more. Not directly across, I am just pointing that out for fact.

Christine Kwitchoff: Yes, I should say its adjacent to is really the word I was using.

William Pillsbury: Not really.

Christine Kwitchoff: I think seeing this and understanding where the buildings will go is helpful. They hadn't been marked out I believe in the documentation that I had seen. Is that the airway strip, that's in the middle of that?

William Pillsbury: Yes. Just to point out to you regarding where the buildings are. It's still a work in progress. Obviously, we need to go through and get all the environmental

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approvals. Everything has to be passed through Conservation and DEP. It has to make sure that we preserve the wetlands and preserve any watershed issues, handle groundwater and all the environmental considerations. This is going to be a first-class business park. I think one of the things that occurred to me in thinking about a site like this and how it can...what could be an example that we could point to where you could do preservation of open space within the site and still have great industrial growth is exactly Ward Hill because you have the Roger's Farm. I think originally the Roger's Farm was all of Ward Hill. You have a very tasteful and well done business park done by the foundation still preserving some of the pristine areas of the Rogers Farm. Its very doable in terms of smart planning, smart growth planning for business parks. That is what we intend to do here we intend to seek resources, for water, sewer and the road, infrastructure, broadband. We want this to be a first-class business park that will service Haverhill for a long period of time and employ the workers that are in some your area.

Christine Kwitchoff: Yes.

William Pillsbury: The Mount Washington area that we would love to see a partnership with those groups.

Christine Kwitchoff: Sure. I'm all for business, trust me. I can totally get behind that. I guess my other question that might tie in with it would be potential zoning changes that would be further down 110, i.e., the conversation that is out there putting a storage facility across from Biggarts and next to Ross the new HVAC place. I guess I am just questioning is that the beginning of what will end up happening to 110 and that we will lose whatever rural character still remains on that road.

William Pillsbury: Every project stands on its on merits. What you are describing is not anything that has been filed with the city to my knowledge. I haven't seen it. We would want that to be fully vetted in the same way. Every project stands on its own. You know, if they come before the City Council people get interested, they come and have their opinion. I can tell you from the prospective of how long it has taken us to procure access to a site like this that this is not the beginning of an attempted slippery slope to take every piece of land on 110 and make it a business park. I believe there is a clear distinction between this property and others that do warrant environmental protection, like watershed and things that should even be acquired by the city in which you have been very much involved in some of that to your credit, but this is not one of them.

Christine Kwitchoff: I was thinking bigger picture when I posed that question about what might happen with 110. I recognize that it is a case by case. I do understand that. I am just trying to you know adhere to some of the principles of the masterplan which was instead of having all these separate stand-alone buildings to create more of that village

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center where things were more consolidated and walkable rather than a separate building and a separate building and you kind of lose character with that.

William Pillsbury: This approach here you can see the multiplicity of the buildings it would really be more orientated towards a campus approach. There will be sidewalks, trails between the buildings. Its going to be that type of sensitivity as the park goes forward. Again, its not a village center.

Christine Kwitchoff: Right.

William Pillsbury: Because its not amendable to that. It's a business park as we have laid it out. Again, we are not in a final definitive layout of buildings. That will...and users will want certain things. They will want certain configurations; pad sizes and we will work with them along those lines.

Christine Kwitchoff: I have a question going back to Ward Hill and the efforts that have been underway in trying to improve the buildings there. There has been a lot of conversations about the process of going up instead of out. I am just curious if the Haverhill Foundation would add any incentives to any of the current buildings that are there to try to get them to say yes to that.

William Pillsbury: The last thing I want to do is speak for the foundation. I know they have been very active. For them to get active on this project is a return to their roots. They have said that to us and Ron you can speak to that if you feel you want to. I think the idea being that they are very tactical in terms of what to do. The Ward Hill is something...we have changed the zoning to facilitate a lot of that. That is in an incentive in of itself. They are putting their money into this project, and I would think they would want to keep it focused on what they are creating as opposed to doing some other things. I can't speak for the foundation whether you guys get involved in making loans to Ward Hill businesses. You always have been very active in the industrial base of the city.

Christine Kwitchoff: Thank you.

Chairman Howard: Anyone else from the public who wishes to speak? Questions from the board?

Member Robertson: I would like to make a comment I guess before we vote. This is a site that I have had my eye on for a long time as a planner. I work often with a lot of businesses in the region. We work a lot with land use policy throughout different municipalities. One of the big questions, and this isn't just a question in Haverhill, or even a question in the region but a question in eastern Massachusetts is where are the next generation of those large sites for businesses going to be. We are seeing record

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low vacancies in industrial parks throughout the commonwealth. We see that here in the Merrimack Valley and we see it in Haverhill. At this point we have businesses that want to come to Massachusetts, we have businesses in Massachusetts that want to keep growing in Massachusetts. We are in the position now where we simply don't have the land for them because it's not appropriately zoned. We are bottlenecking our own growth with our lack of inventory. A move like this to go from an office park to a business park something that is more amendable to what the market is demanding for which is large acreage parcels for large users that will provide high wage jobs for the city is exactly the kind of land use policies and I think would benefit the whole Merrimack Valley. It's a project that I am very excited by. I can't think of a better site it's a flat airstrip with no abutting neighbors. You can count on one hand how many sites are like this in Massachusetts. There's not many left. This is a perfect opportunity.

Member Buckley: So, you are going to vote yes?

Member Robertson: I haven't decided.

William Pillsbury: comments, questions from the board?

Chairman Howard: We are going to close the public portion of the hearing and are there any comments, questions from the board? This is a great opportunity for the city.

William Pillsbury: With that Mr. Chairman I would recommend...I would strongly support a favorable recommendation to the City Council on the proposed amendments to zoning to enable this business park to move on to the next planning stages which are critical to making it viable.

After board consideration, Karen Buckley motioned to forward a favorable recommendation to the City Council as recommended by the Planning Director William Pillsbury, Jr. Member Nate Robertson seconded the motion.

Member Robert Driscoll-yes

Member William Evans- absent

Member Bobby Brown - yes

Member Carmine Garcia- yes

Member Ismael Matias- yes

Member Karen Buckley - yes

Chairman Paul Howard -yes

Member April DerBoghosian, Esq.-yes

Member Nate Robertson-yes

Motion Passed.

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City department reports are attached to and considered part of this board's decision and notice of decision. Any appeal of this board's decision and notice of decision shall be taken in accordance with M.G.L. Chapters 40A and 41 within twenty (20) days of the board's filing of this decision/notice of decision with the city clerk.

List of all documents and other exhibits used by the public body during the meeting:

An ordinance relating to zoning
Email, William Pillsbury, 5.18.22
Letter, Andrew Herlihy, 5.4.22
Letter, Thomas Bridgewater, 5.9.22
Letter, Eric Tarpy, 5.3.22
Email, Rob Moore, 4.29.22
Email Rob Moore, 4.29.22
Letter, William Pillsbury, 4.22.22
Letter, William Pillsbury, 5.20.22
Map: 465, block 3, lot 6
Map: 465, block 4, lot 5B1

Definitive Plan for 687 Hilldale Avenue:

William Pillsbury: We have a request from the applicant of 687 Hilldale Avenue to withdraw the application. Upon filing the applicant received a significant number of issues received by the city departments; comments and concerns. We received a letter today requesting that the application be withdrawn. With that Mr. Chairman I would recommend withdrawal. We would need a motion and a second to allow withdrawal.

After board consideration, Member Karen Buckley motioned to withdraw the plan for 687 Hilldale Avenue as recommended by the Planning Director William Pillsbury. Member Ismael Matias seconded the motion.

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CARMEN GARCIA-yes
BOBBY BROWN-yes
ISMAEL MATIAS-yes
NATE ROBERTSON-yes
BILL EVANS-absent
KAREN BUCKLEY-yes
APRIL DERBOGHOSIAN, ESQ.-yes
ROBERT DRISCOLL-yes
PAUL HOWARD-yes

Motion Passed.

City department reports are attached to and considered part of this board's decision and notice of decision. Any appeal of this board's decision and notice of decision shall be taken in accordance with M.G.L. Chapters 40A and 41 within twenty (20) days of the board's filing of this decision/notice of decision with the city clerk.

List of all documents and other exhibits used by the public body during the meeting:

Online application
Withdrawal letter, email 5.10.22 – Matias Capital

Sylvan Hill Endorsement of Agreement:

Please be advised the Planning Board at its 5-11-22 regular scheduled meeting at 7:00 pm, in Room 202, City Council Chambers considered your request to endorse the agreement for the above cited development.

Please note, a properly executed performance guarantee agreement was submitted and approved as to form by the city solicitor. Said agreement will be required to be recorded at the Registry of Deeds and a recorded copy provided to the board that shows the registry's recording stamp.

After board consideration, Member Karen Buckley motioned to endorse the agreement approved as to form by the city solicitor. Seconded by Member Robert Driscoll. All members present voted in favor. Member absent: William Evans. Motion Passed.

List of all documents and other exhibits used by the public body during the meeting:

Escrow materials

Reminders for escrow:

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Form A Plans: Princeton Development, LLC/David Diburro 887 Boston Road:

Member Karen Buckley motioned to approve and endorse the Form A for 887 Boston Road. Seconded by Member Ismael Matias. All members present voted in favor.

Member Absent: William Evans. Motion Passed.

Endorsement:

Any other matter:

Meeting adjourned.

Signed:

Paul B. Howard

Paul B. Howard

Chairman