

PLANNING BOARD PUBLIC MEETING MINUTES  
DEFINITIVE SITE FOR ALL PURPOSE STORAGE GARDNER, LLC  
SEPTEMBER 19, 2023 - 7:00 p.m.

Members present: Mark M. Schafron/*Chairman*, Robert Swartz/*Vice-Chairman*, Robert J. Bettez, Sr., Paul A. Cormier, Stephen Cormier-*Members*, and Trevor Beaugard/*Director-City Planner*.

Absent: *None.*

Also present: Rob Oliva-City Engineer, Charlie Ritchie-Fieldstone Land Consultants for All Purpose Storage Gardner, LLC, and Christine Martines Fucile-DCDP.

ANNOUNCEMENT - Any person may make a video or audio recording of an open session of a meeting, or may transmit the meeting through any medium, subject to reasonable requirements of the Chair as to the number, placement and operation of equipment used so as not to interfere with the conduct of the meeting. Any person intending to make such recording shall notify the Chair forthwith. All Documents referenced or used during the meeting must be submitted in duplicate to the Director of Community Development & Planning pursuant to the Open Meeting and Public Records Law. All documents shall become part of the official record of the meeting.
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***Mr. Schafron, Chairman called the Public Meeting to order at 7:00 p.m.***

***Mr. Schafron read aloud the Public Meeting Notice for All Purpose Storage Gardner, LLC, located at 143 Colony Road, Gardner, MA.***

Chuck Ritchie from Fieldstone Land Consultants introduced himself and gave a presentation for the proposed expansion of the existing self-storage facility located at 143 Colony Road. The property is zoned Industrial 2 and currently has approximately 61,900 square feet including the storage units and other buildings, as well as large areas of gravel, an outdoor storage in the back of the buildings and a utility easement in the center of the lot. Mr. Ritchie noted they are proposing to construct an additional 25,050 square feet of self-storage warehousing buildings within those gravel areas that are currently being used for outdoor storage. Mr. Ritchie explained he attended a conceptual meeting for this project back in February which provided some feedback from a number of departments and have made some changes since then which includes providing a center aisle between the existing buildings and the proposed buildings for fire access so they have no buildings over 7,500 square feet. Further, moved some buildings around in the back to stay out of the wetlands and the easement due to some comments from the Conservation Commission and other staff member comments. Mr. Ritchie noted they also submitted a NOI (Notice of Intent) to the Conservation Commission for next week's meeting and there is also a Site Walk for that application (NOI) tomorrow with Conservation Commission.

Mr. Ritchie stated overall it is a pretty straightforward expansion of the site and the only utility improvements would be for electrical for the lighting and since no one will be living in these units, there is no need for additional septic or wells, and will use the existing ones on site for the buildings that are already there. The lighting will be downcast and shielded for security reasons just like the other existing buildings. Landscaping is really not a major issue since expansion will be located in the back of the site and is well off the road, however, may receive comments from the Conservation Commission with some plantings near the wetlands but do not see much of an issue there. Drainage is kind of an issue on the site since there is nothing there right now, therefore

proposing to the best of their ability limiting working on the site. There is a little leaching catch basin to capture the runoff from the buildings and the existing surfaces and on the north side of the stormwater basin to collect all that runoff as well. Also, will improve the site since they are proposing curbing along the northern side and can have a definitive edge of pavement there as well as a swale and drainage improvements along the wetlands on the front side. Mr. Ritchie stated the only comments he received for this application were from the City Engineer and Mr. Ritchie believes there is nothing too major there from his perspective that they could not work through with the Engineering Department as well as address all of those concerns for this project.

Mr. Ritchie commented overall this project is a benefit to the City since it increases tax base as well as improves the lot.

Mr. Schafron pointed out the City Engineer's memorandum and commented it is a pretty extensive list and directed to Mr. Ritchie how he plans on addressing all of this. Mr. Ritchie explained he has not had time to make the changes since only receiving this list the other day. Mr. Schafron asked if he is aware a lighting plan is required and will need a professional engineer's stamp, etc. Mr. Ritchie replied yes and mentioned they have the lighting, but just need the photometrics which essentially will tell him what to anticipate and noted the lighting will be downcast and it going to be very minimal especially where it is located and does not think it will change the lighting. In addition, Mr. Ritchie stated he is aware of the need for a professional stamp and noted the project engineer is a licensed engineer in Massachusetts, therefore will get the stamp on it and should not be an issue.

Mr. Schafron noted there is also stormwater calculations that also need to be made. Mr. Ritchie said he did provide stormwater management which was commented on and due to the site there is only so much they can realistically do to improve it and are willing to work with the Engineer to address any comments he has regarding the stormwater report.

T. Beauregard asked if the lighting will be on the poles or on the structures. Mr. Ritchie replied they will be building mounted and thought they typically have them every 60 feet along the building which is just for security. T. Beauregard asked if the lighting will be motion censored, or does it go on at night like a dawn/dusk type of lighting. Mr. Ritchie stated that is a good question but believes it is dawn/dusk but will confirm.

T. Beauregard asked if Mr. Ritchie could show a copy of the landscape plan. Mr. Ritchie displayed the landscape plan and stated right now they are very minimal on landscaping since there is quite a limited area they could plant along the front. Mr. Ritchie pointed out the NOI (Notice of Intent) area which is the 100 foot wetland setback. In addition, did not see any regulations that require industrial use buffering as far as he is aware, therefore did not propose much other than to loam and seed the areas they are restoring that are currently gravel and what will become a grassed area.

T. Beauregard stated he would recommend considering landscaping up in front of the roadway area where it can be fit in as well as any edges along the site because right now the view is open gravel, bituminous concrete and buildings and landscaping will add to the site. Mr. Ritchie commented he will also wait and see what the Conservation Commission is thinking as well.

T. Beauregard asked what the two buildings out front are used for. Mr. Ritchie believes the site has four buildings and noted the previous expansion of the site in 2016/2017 has a four-bay garage and believes it is rented out, another building has two bays in the back and the other building is the office for the site for customers.

T. Beauregard asked if the site right now is asphalt where the existing buildings are located. Mr. Ritchie replied yes it is abruptly 20 feet from the edge of building is asphalt. T. Beauregard asked

what the condition of the asphalt is. Mr. Ritchie answered fair. T. Beauregard asked if he knows when the original project was permitted. Mr. Ritchie replied he does not but can find out.

T. Beauregard commented on the number of vehicles on the site and asked if these vehicles are in storage or abandoned. Mr. Ritchie believes it is storage. T. Beauregard asked if a specific type of license is needed to store vehicles outdoors. Mr. Ritchie was not sure and will have to look into it.

T. Beauregard directed to Mr. Schafron the Planning Board should conduct a site walk.

T. Beauregard spoke of the rear of the site going underneath the power lines and noted what seems to be a narrow passageway and wondered if it is a culvert. Mr. Ritchie replied he does not think there is a culvert there. T. Beauregard asked what the width is. Mr. Ritchie said 24 foot standard two-way kind of access.

S. Cormier noted the rear of the site is quite full with trailers, campers, trucks, etc. all lined up and thought this needs to be addressed because there will be no room for the vehicles with the proposal as is. T. Beauregard asked if there are plans to remove those vehicles from the site if this project is approved. Mr. Ritchie stated he cannot say for certain and right now this plan does not propose a specific outdoor storage, but may store construction vehicles while work is being done and hope to just be indoor storage when completed. T. Beauregard asked if Mr. Ritchie could confirm this and Mr. Ritchie replied yes and will see what their plans are for those stored trailers. T. Beauregard commented he believes there is a license needed in order to store those vehicles and will look into it.

T. Beauregard stated he believes there is an extensive amount of information that still needs to be presented to the Planning Board given the comments of the City Engineer as well as the landscape, lighting, and drainage, therefore the Planning Board might want to consider keeping the meeting open until the next meeting so that it can be presented in a public forum.

Mr. Ritchie confirmed the Planning Board is looking for lighting with the photometrics and landscaping plan. T. Beauregard added they need 15 percent open space and noted from an aesthetic standpoint, he believes it is in their best interest to show something that is presentable showing some landscaping in it. P. Cormier spoke of the black fence on the property and asked if some type of landscaping could be inside or outside of the fence.

R. Oliva will work back and forth with Applicant/Engineer to settle some of the technical issues and will provide a response letter.

T. Beauregard noted the next meeting is October 10, 2023, so would need something submitted on Monday, October 2, 2023, to give everyone time to look over, and October 9, 2023, is a holiday.

T. Beauregard asked the Planning Board to decide on what day next week to set up a Site Walk.

Mr. Schafron stated the Public Meeting will be continued until the next meeting or such time as the Planning Board has completed the Site Walk as well as more input on the plans from the Proponent's Engineer and the City Engineer.

**The Public Meeting closed at 7:25 p.m.**

All documents referenced or used during the meeting are part of the official record and are available in the Department of Community Development and Planning pursuant to the Open Meeting and Public Records Law.