

**Sturbridge Planning Board  
Meeting Minutes  
Tuesday, April 27, 2021  
Virtual**

**Present:**

Charlie Blanchard  
Sue Waters  
Christopher Bouchard  
Dane LaBonte  
Michael Chisholm  
Jeff Adams  
Russell Chamberland  
Jean Bubon, Town Planner  
Jeneé Lacy, Administrative Assistant

**Also Present:**

Jeff Bridge – Town Administrator  
Dave Faist – CMG  
Joe Deluca – MDA Architecture  
Joe Coan – Landscape Engineer  
James Bernardino – CMG  
Mike Frisbie – Noble Energy  
Matt Wittmer – Phase Zero Design  
Pete Champagne – Saw Dust Coffee House  
Lynn Cormier – Wicked Licks  
Nancy Ferreir-Bixby – Altruist Brewery

**C. Blanchard called the meeting to order at 6:30pm and read the agenda and COVID notice.**

**Approval of Minutes**

April 13, 2021

**Motion: To approve the minutes from April 13, 2021 as written. By: S. Waters**

**2<sup>nd</sup>: C. Bouchard**

**Roll Call Vote: 6-0-1**

**C. Blanchard – Yes**

**S. Waters – Yes**

**C. Bouchard – Yes**

**D. LaBonte – Yes**

**M. Chisholm – Yes**

**J. Adams – Yes**  
**R. Chamberland – Abstained**

### **Town Planner Update**

J. Bubon discussed the following:

- Interstate Towing is proposing to re-locate to 150 Charlton Road – an application is currently pending before the Conservation Commission and then the applicant will be filing for Site Plan Approval with the Planning Board.
- Lucky Mart at 122 Main Street has been granted a Special Permit by the ZBA to locate the canopy within 5' of the front setback. An application is currently pending with the Conservation Commission and then the applicant will be filing for Site Plan Approval with the Planning Board.

### **Public Hearing – Special Permit & Site Plan Approval – 195, 197, 201 & 201A Charlton Road – Noble Energy Real Estate Holdings, LLC**

S. Waters read the legal notice for the public hearing.

J. Bubon stated that the applicant, Noble Energy Real Estate Holdings, LLC is requesting Site Plan Approval for the redevelopment of the properties located at 195, 197, 201 and 201A Charlton Road that will be divided into Lot 1 and Lot 2 to construct an 8,437sq.ft. Travel Plaza consisting of a Noble Energy Filling Station/Convenience Store with Drive Thru coffee/sandwich shop and “Frisbie’s Ice Cream” take out and outdoor walk-up service window. Lot 2 will be developed with the construction of a 16,640sq.ft. 2-story Electric Vehicle Discovery Center which will include a first floor not for profit electric vehicle display showroom and discovery learning center, the second floor will include a 120 seat restaurant and bar, outdoor patio and separate office as shown on the plans submitted.

M. Frisbie started the presentation, introduced himself and his engineering teams, giving a basic background on the operation of the project.

D. Faist presented the Noble Travel Center part of the project to the Board, going through the various site plans of the project.

J. Coan presented the landscaping for the whole premise.

J. Deluca presented design renderings and sign design and locations.

M. Wittmer presented the EV Discovery Center project to the Board, going through site plans and renderings.

C. Blanchard asked the Board if they had any questions or comments for Noble at this time.



R. Chamberland asked where the snow storage would be located in the parking lot, D. Faist showed where the snow storage would be on the site plan and stated that they can make sure those areas are labeled better on the plan.

R. Chamberland asked if there were going to be backup generators for the facilities. D. Faist stated that backup generators would be located at the rear of the Noble Travel Center facility along with some transformer units, there will also be a generator for the EV Discovery building but they are unsure of the location right now. R. Chamberland suggested that they make sure the generator for the EV building is not too close to the side facing the residential area in regards to noise.

R. Chamberland asked if this project would be done in phases or all at once. D. Faist stated that they are planning to do it all at once.

R. Chamberland stated that the Towns elementary school has a rain water system to flush toilets and asked if anything like that has been looked into for this project since it seems like there will be high water use for a complex of this size. D. Faist stated that at this time something like that has not been looked into but it is something they could consider. They have implemented low water usage fixtures to comply with new standards.

R. Chamberland brought up concerns with trucks taking a left hand turn out of the facility, bypassing the proposed traffic light. D. Faist stated that he will bring that concern to their traffic engineers who will be present at the next meeting.

M. Chisholm asked J. Bubon if the facility had enough parking and if the flow in the traffic area was sufficient because it seems chaotic. J. Bubon stated that the parking does meet the zoning requirements and that the internal traffic flow is something that will be looked at during the staff and peer review so that is something that will be gone over at the next meeting.

D. LaBonte asked if there was a status with DOT yet. D. Faist stated that they have made initial contact with MassDOT and as part of the process; the project will require a MEPA permit because it exceeds the traffic threshold for that area.

D. LaBonte asked if the extra parking area on the grass in the back of the facility were for periodic peaks of parking for overflow parking. D. Faist stated that that area would be mostly used for special event overflow parking. Overflow parking was discussed between D. Faist and D. LaBonte regarding leaving the area as an undeveloped area until they solidify the special event scheduling.

D. LaBonte suggested a location for the generator that would lose some parking spaces would keep the noise away from the residential area.

The number of the property and easement between the properties was discussed.

D. LaBonte asked if it was possible, only one side of the development would be created and in that case what would happen to the other side of the development. M. Frisbie stated that that plan is not to build the travel plaza without the Discovery Center.

D. LaBonte asked if they were considering solar panels. M. Frisbie stated that they are looking into using solar panels.

D. LaBonte commented on the fact that he is personally not in favor of having the electric car showcase facing Rt. 20, he also asked about the non-profit programing. M. Frisbie stated that he would be programing and running the EV Discovery Center as well as the other educational pieces of the building.

S. Waters suggested that concrete pillars be put into place to protect the seating areas that are near the parking and travel areas. She also asked about handicapped parking because there didn't seem to be any parking close enough to the buildings. D. Faist showed on the site plan where the handicapped parking would be located in relation to both buildings. He also mentioned that they could add some bollards to protect the seating area. M. Frisbie stated in lieu of fencing around the seating areas they may instead put a stone wall.

S. Waters had some questions regarding clarifications of the landscaping plan. D. Faist discussed the landscaping plan and went over plantings.

S. Waters asked where the dumpsters would be located and if they would be screened in. D. Faist showed on the site plan where the dumpsters would be located and that they would be fenced in.

C. Blanchard asked if there was any one on the public line that had comments or questions. There was no one from the public present.

C. Blanchard stated that the Noble Energy Public Hearing would be continued to May 25<sup>th</sup> at 6:40pm and asked for a motion.

**Motion: To continue the public hearing for Noble Energy to May 25<sup>th</sup> at 6:40pm. By: S. Waters**

**2<sup>nd</sup>: C. Bouchard**

**Roll Call Vote: All in Favor (7-0)**

**C. Blanchard – Yes**

**S. Waters – Yes**

**C. Bouchard – Yes**

**D. LaBonte – Yes**

**M. Chisholm – Yes**

**J. Adams – Yes**

**R. Chamberland – Yes**

*Documents Reviewed:*

- *Application for Site Plan Approval dated March 26, 2021;*
- *Site Plan Approval Checklist;*
- *Certified list of abutters;*
- *CMG Project Narrative and Summary Letter & CMG Sewerage Flow Estimate Calculation Letter;*
- *Site Plans entitled "Noble Energy Proposed Travel Center & E.V. Discovery Center – 195, 197, 201 & 201A Charlton Road (Route 20)" – prepared by CMG Engineering Services – 67 Hall Road, Sturbridge, MA 01566 – Plan date March 26, 2021;*
- *Stormwater Management Submittal and supporting documentation for general Stormwater design and sound engineering practices in accordance with the MassDEP Stormwater Management Standards and the Town of Sturbridge Planning Board Stormwater Management Regulations, revised date 9/12/17. CMG Engineering Services – 67 Hall Road, Sturbridge, MA 01566 – Plan date March 26, 2021;*



- *Town Planner Report;*
- *Transportation Impact Assessment – Proposed Travel Center prepared by Mr. Jeffrey S. Dirk, P.E., PTOE, FITE Managing Partner, Vanasse & Associates, Inc. – 35 New England Business Center Drive, Suite 140, Andover, MA 01810-1066 dated April 2021 and received on April 13, 2021.*

### **Waiver of Site Plan – 371 Main Street – Saw Dust Coffee House**

J. Bubon stated that the applicant, Pete Champagne, was requesting a Waiver of Site Plan to allow outdoor seating established during the Covid exemption period to remain as permanent seasonal outdoor seating. J. Bubon stated that she recommends the Board grant the Waiver of Site Plan to allow the outdoor seating on the patio to be used as permanent seasonal seating with the following conditions:

1. No more than 74 seats be used at any time unless additional parking can be created or leased from a neighboring property owner;
2. The applicant shall return to the Board for approval of any additional parking and any increase in capacity;
3. Permits must be obtained from the Fire Department for any outdoor heaters.

**Motion: To grant the Waiver of Site Plan for Saw Dust Coffee House at 371 Main Street to allow permanent seasonal outdoor seating with the conditions discussed. By: R. Chamberland**

**2<sup>nd</sup>: D. LaBonte**

**Roll Call Vote: All in Favor (7-0)**

**C. Blanchard – Yes**

**S. Waters – Yes**

**C. Bouchard – Yes**

**D. LaBonte – Yes**

**M. Chisholm – Yes**

**J. Adams – Yes**

**R. Chamberland – Yes**

*Documents Reviewed:*

- *Application for Waiver of Site Plan Approval;*
- *A plan entitled: "Old Sturbridge Village Parking Lot Plan 369 – 371 Main Street Sturbridge, MA" Prepared by Sherman & Frydryk, LLC, 3 Converse Street, Suite 203, Palmer, MA 01069, dated 9/19/19, revised 10/14/19, with hand drawn location of proposed outdoor seating;*
- *Town Planner report;*

### **Waiver of Site Plan – 380 Main Street – Wicked Licks**

J. Bubon stated that the applicant, Lynn Cormier, is requesting a Waiver of Site Plan to operate an ice cream shop in the premise of 371 Main Street. The property was last used at the Visitor Information Center and Chamber of Commerce Offices and prior to that is was

used as a coffee shop operated by Old Sturbridge Village. At this time there is no indoor seating proposed, but they do plan to add picnic tables outside that will have a capacity of 36 seats. The site will require 15 parking spaces and there are 15 spaces and 2 handicap parking spaces on site.

L. Cormier presented to the Board a site plan of the location to show where the picnic tables, signs and landscaping would be located. She also presented to the Board a layout of the existing building and how the ice cream shop would be set up and operate.

J. Bubon stated that she recommends the Board grant the Waiver of Site Plan to allow the operation of an ice cream shop on the premise with the following conditions:

1. All State and Local Zoning Bylaws and Building Codes be adhered to;
2. All necessary permits be obtained prior to opening;
3. The parking lot be striped to delineate the parking;
4. Lighting shall be added if deemed necessary to safely illuminate the parking lot (Condition added after discussion);
5. The dumpster shall be screened (Condition added after discussion).

R. Chamberland asked if the shop would be open at night. L. Cormier stated that she was planning to stay open until 8pm. R. Chamberland stated that he was worried about the lighting in the parking lot. The current lighting in the parking lot was discussed among the Board, J. Bubon stated that the lighting could be evaluated and a condition could be added to the approval.

D. LaBonte asked about trash removal and where the dumpster would be located. L. Cormier showed the Board where she was planning on putting the dumpster, this was discussed and suggestions were made on better locations for the dumpster. J. Bubon stated that they would need to look into the location and update the Board accordingly and that the dumpsters would also need to be screened and will add that as another condition to approval.

**Motion: To grant the Waiver of Site Plan for Wicked Licks at 380 Main Street to allow the operation of an ice cream shop on the premise with the conditions discussed. By:**

**S. Waters**

**2<sup>nd</sup>: R. Chamberland**

**Roll Call Vote: All in Favor (7-0)**

**C. Blanchard – Yes**

**S. Waters – Yes**

**C. Bouchard – Yes**

**D. LaBonte – Yes**

**M. Chisholm – Yes**

**J. Adams – Yes**

**R. Chamberland – Yes**

*Documents Reviewed:*

- *Application for Waiver of Site Plan Approval;*



- *Old Site Plan layout for 380 Main Street, with hand drawn locations of seating and parking;*
- *Hand drawn interior layout of ice cream shop at 380 Main Street with equipment locations and measurements;*
- *Town Planner report;*

### **Waiver of Site Plan – 559 Main Street – Altruist Brewery**

J. Bubon stated that the applicant, Nancy Ferreir-Bixby, is requesting a Waiver of Site Plan to allow outdoor seating established during the Covid exemption period to remain as permanent seasonal outdoor seating, in 2016 the Planning Board approved the opening of Altruist Brewing with a maximum capacity of 85 seats inside and 20 seats to be added in a Beer Garden at a later date for a total of 105 seats. The current proposal for the Beer Garden is to have a maximum of 36 seats outside, this would mean that during the outdoor season, the maximum seats inside would need to be reduced so that the total seating does not exceed 105. The applicant is proposing to create a formal deck in this area when the budget allows.

J. Bubon stated that she recommends the Board grant the Waiver of Site Plan to allow the outdoor seating in the Beer Garden to be used as permanent seasonal seating with the condition that no more than 105 seats be used at any one time on the premise.

D. LaBonte asked about protecting dining areas from vehicles and asked if there were any vehicle incidents in the last year.

N. Ferrier-Bixby stated that there has never been an incident with vehicles and the dining areas and that cars very rarely end up in the area of the Beer Garden or entrance to the location.

R. Chamberland asked about a modified liquor license for outdoor dining. J. Bubon stated that both Altruist and Saw Dust were applying for amended liquor licenses for outdoor locations and that the ABCC is also working to possibly create Covid protocols.

**Motion: To grant the Waiver of Site Plan for Altruist Brewing at 559 Main Street to allow the outdoor seating in the Beer Garden to be used as permanent seasonal seating with the conditions discussed. By: R. Chamberland**

**2<sup>nd</sup>: D. LaBonte**

**Roll Call Vote: All in Favor (7-0)**

**C. Blanchard – Yes**

**S. Waters – Yes**

**C. Bouchard – Yes**

**D. LaBonte – Yes**

**M. Chisholm – Yes**

**J. Adams – Yes**

**R. Chamberland – Yes**

*Documents Reviewed:*

- *Application for Waiver of Site Plan Approval;*
- *Currently photos of the Beer Garden located at 559 Main Street;*
- *Town Planner report;*

**Town Planner Update Continued**

J. Bubon discussed the following:

- Next meeting dates:
  - May 11<sup>th</sup> and May 25<sup>th</sup>.
  - May 11<sup>th</sup> – Nothing yet
  - May 25<sup>th</sup>
    - Continuation for the Fiske Hill East project which will be continued again to June 8<sup>th</sup>
    - Continuation of the Noble Energy project
- The proposed Zoning Amendments were supported by both the Finance Committee and the Board of Selectmen

**Old/New Business**

D. LaBonte asked if there was a water shortage in Town in regards to the water discussion during the Noble Energy discussion.

Town water protocols were discussed.

C. Blanchard mentioned that the rain water system at the elementary school mentioned during the Noble Energy discussion, has never been used.

**Adjournment**

**Motion: To adjourn meeting. By: R. Chamberland**

**2<sup>nd</sup>: S. Waters**

**Roll Call Vote: All in Favor (7-0)**

**C. Blanchard – Yes**

**S. Waters – Yes**

**C. Bouchard – Yes**

**D. LaBonte – Yes**

**M. Chisholm – Yes**

**J. Adams – Yes**

**R. Chamberland – Yes**

**Meeting adjourned at 8:08 PM**

**Minutes prepared by: Jeneé Lacy**

On behalf of

Clerk of the Board: Juan M. Bubon

Date signed: 5-18-2021