

**Sturbridge Planning Board
Meeting Minutes
Tuesday, December 19, 2023
Town Hall**

Present:

Charlie Blanchard
Wally Hersee
David Bourbeau
Brad Goodwin
Taylor Stedman
Dane LaBonte
Sue Waters
Jean Bubon, Town Planner
Jeneé Lacy, Administrative Assistant



Also Present:

Scott Sargent, Pickleball U
Gary Galonek, Pickleball U
Matt St. Laurent, NBM Realty
Nick St. Laurent, NBM Realty
Ron Mendes, Graves Engineering (Virtual)
Russ Kelcourse, State Street Realty
Scott Mills, 94 Stallion Hill Road
Francis Parisi, Parisi Law Associates, P.C.
David Maxson, Isotrope Wireless (Virtual)
Peter Frei, Holland Planning Board

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

ANR - If Any

No ANRs filed.

Approval of Minutes

Minutes of November 21st will be approved at the next Planning Board meeting.

Town Planner Report

J. Bubon discussed the following:

- Next Meeting dates:
 - January 9, 2024 – Continuation of 200 Haynes Street & 505 Main Street Public Hearings
 - January 23, 2024 – Continuation of 92 Stallion Hill Road Public Hearing

- Noble has not be able to open yet but they will possibly open this weekend, the driveway was done incorrectly and needs to be redone.
 - Pilot Travel is getting ready for close out.
 - C. Blanchard brought up complaints about trucks parking on the side of the road after the 'No Parking' signs end.
- J. Bubon discussed and stated that she would look into the issue further.

Public Hearing – Sign Special Permit – Pickleball U – 178 Main Street

The applicant is requesting a Special Permit to erect an 80 sq.ft. sign on the front of the building.

S. Waters read the legal notice that was posted in the Southbridge Evening News.

J. Bubon stated that the unit that Pickleball U will be taking was not part of the master special permit when the other units had sign size approved originally.
 G. Galonek came before the Board and discussed the request for an 80 sq.ft. sign where 30 sq.ft. is allowed by the Zoning Bylaws. He stated that the sign size is consistent with the sign sizes of AutoZone and Planet Fitness.

Motion: To approve the sign special permit for Pickleball U at 178 Main Street for an 80 sq.ft. building sign.

By: S. Waters

2nd: W. Hersee

Vote: All in Favor (7-0)

Documents Reviewed:

- *Special Permit application;*
- *Certified abutters list;*
- *Legal Notice;*
- *Building sign rendering prepared by View Point Sign & Awning, dated 11/14/23*
- *Plaza sign rendering prepared by View Point Sign & Awning, dated 11/16/23*
- *Multi-tenant sign rendering prepared by View Point Sign & Awning, dated 11/21/23*
- *Town Planner Report;*

Old/New Business

None

Town Planner Report Continued

J. Bubon discussed the Master Plan survey and stated that it has been mailed out to residents.

S. Waters asked when Pickleball U was expected to open. J. Bubon stated that they were hoping to open mid-February.

Public Hearing – Site Plan Approval – STL 505, LLC – 505 Main Street

The applicant is requesting Site Plan Approval to allow the exiting building to be razed and rebuilt to accommodate three (3) apartments and five (5) artist studios.

S. Waters read the legal notice that was posted in the Southbridge Evening News.

J. Bubon discussed the project and stated that 505 Main Street used to be a Subway (restaurant) and has sat vacant for some time now. In 2012/2013 Thai Orchid had applied and been approved to renovate the property but never ended up following through with the project.

The project proposed by the applicant has been approved by ZBA and their hearing with the Conservation Commission has been continued to January 4th and is being peer reviewed.

J. Bubon stated that she recommends that the Board hear testimony from the applicants and then vote to continue the public hearing to January 9th in case there are any changes to the plan requested by the Conservation Commission.

M. St. Laurent and N. St. Laurent came before the Board. Their engineer R. Mendes of Graves Engineering joined the meeting virtually. M. St. Laurent gave a basic overview of the proposed project and R. Mendes presented the site and architectural plans to the Board.

C. Blanchard asked if the Board had any questions.

- D. LaBonte – Asked about exterior lighting.
 - M. St. Laurent – Lighting will be off of the building.
- D. LaBonte – Asked about current utilities of the property and if they would need to be increased based on increased in apartments?
 - M. St. Laurent – They will tie in to the existing water & sewer.
- D. LaBonte – Asked if a transformer would be installed?
 - M. St. Laurent – no power will be tied in from the installation of a new national grid pole that will be across the street.
- D. LaBonte – Asked if the applicant has authorization from the current owner?
 - J. Bubon – The authorization came in after the application, the original is filed in the Planning Office.
- D. LaBonte – Discussed and asked about the drainage on the property.
 - R. Mendes discussed pipes, drainage and filtering on the property.
- D. Bourbeau – Asked if the architectural plans were conceptual.
 - M. St. Laurent stated that they were.
- C. Blanchard asked if there were any questions or comments from the public.
 - There were none.

Motion: To continue the Public Hearing for STL505, LLC - 505 Main Street to January 9, 2024 at 6:50pm located at the Town Hall.

By: S. Waters

2nd: W. Hersee

Vote: All in Favor (7-0)

Documents Reviewed:

- *Site Plan application;*
- *Certified abutters list;*
- *Legal Notice;*
- *A Site Plan set entitled (C001, C101-C103, C501-C502) "Multi-Family Residential Project 505 Main Street Sturbridge, MA 01518", prepared by Graves Engineering (100 Grove Street, Worcester, MA 01605) dated 12/22/22 Rev. 2: 11/3/23;*
- *Stormwater Report prepared by Graves Engineering dated 12/22/23 Rev: 10/30/23;*
- *Hand drawn untitled Architectural plans;*
- *Project Outline, prepared by STL505, LLC, dated 10/15/23;*
- *Revised untitled Architectural Rendering received 12/11/23;*
- *Town Planner Report;*
- *Departmental Memos.*

Public Hearing – Special Permit & Site Plan Approval – Vertex Towers, LLC – 92 Stallion Hill Road

The applicant is requesting a Special Permit and Site Plan Approval and an average tree canopy Waiver for the construction of a wireless communications facilities consisting of a 130' monopole style tower with antennas and related equipment and improvements.

S. Waters read the legal notice that was posted in the Southbridge Evening News.

J. Bubon discussed the following:

- Background information on the non-conforming property at 92 Stallion Hill Road, the applicant has applied for a Variance from the ZBA, that meeting will be January 17th.
- A balloon visibility test was conducted on December 16th.
- The filing has been submitted for staff comment.
- Jon Eichman (KPLaw) has submitted Standards for Consideration for the Board.
- Quotes have come back for Peer Review, the Peer Reviewer will be David Maxson of Isotrope Wireless.

J. Bubon recommended that the Board take testimony from the applicant, ask questions and hear questions and comments from the public and then vote to continue the public hearing to January 23, 2024 at 6:35pm at the Center Office Building.

F. Parisi came before the Board and presented a slideshow. He discussed the Wireless Overlay District and stated that he was requesting a Special Permit to install a wireless facility in a Commercial District and an average tree canopy Waiver.

F. Parisi discussed the following:

- Background of Vertex Towers.
- Other towns in MA that have permitted the same type of project.
- Stated that the proposed facility was a better use of land than a large development.
- Vertex's partnership with Verizon Wireless and how this new tower will fill in gaps in the current network coverage.
- The application packet and what was submitted.
- The need for wireless coverage and current gaps in coverage.
- Location of the proposed tower and why it was chosen.
- Topography of the site.
- Driveway will be created for construction purposes.
- Tower will be unmanned.
- Property will be fenced.
- Low powered facility that is below FCC limits for EMF emissions.
- Visibility demonstration/balloon test, presented images of test, visual impacts are very minimal.

C. Blanchard asked if the Board had any questions.

D. LaBonte stated that he had concerns regarding the drainage on the access driveway, asked what would be added for material to the driveway and that it could become an erosion issue. F. Parisi stated that they will not be increasing impervious surface and that gravel will be added to the driveway.

T. Stedman asked about safety lighting regarding aircraft. F. Parisi stated that he has worked with the FAA to make sure that the tower was below regulations so lighting wouldn't be needed. J. Bubon stated that she has received the FAA certification.

D. Bourbeau stated that it seemed that the applicants request for a height of 130ft. was a compromise and asked if the tower would be more beneficial if it was higher. F. Parisi stated that the original request was for 150ft. but that would trigger the need for a Height Variance.

C. Blanchard asked if there were any questions or concerns from the public in the audience.

Russell Kelcourse (State Street Realty representing client Peter O'Connell) stated that he sold land to Peter O'Connell on Douty Road a few years ago. He stated that he is concerned and believes that this project will decrease the property value of his client's property on Douty Road.

Scott Mills (94 Stallion Hill Road) – Stated that he believed the tower would decrease the value of his property and that after he purchased his property a piece was given to the Soper property, making this project possible. He stated that he is also concerned about high EMFs and visibility. He believes that it is illegal to build a tower on the property at 92 Stallion Hill Road because a piece of that property was taken from his property.

C. Blanchard asked F. Parisi if the tower would be visible from Stallion Hill Road. F. Parisi stated that it was not visible.

D. LaBonte asked about the non-conforming frontage. J. Bubon stated that the property only has 100ft. of frontage and the Zoning Bylaws require 150ft. for that District. F. Parisi discussed the existing cart path, the survey of the property and the need for a Variance.

Motion: To continue the Public Hearing for Vertex Towers, LLC – 92 Stallion Hill Road to January 23, 2023 at 6:35pm located at the Center Office Building.

By: W. Hersee

2nd: S. Waters

Vote: All in Favor (7-0)

Documents Reviewed:

- *Special Permit & Site Plan application;*
- *Narrative;*
- *Deed;*
- *Letter of Authorization;*
- *Antenna Structure Registration;*
- *RF Report Proposed Wireless Facility;*
- *Dewberry Engineers Bond Information;*
- *Equipment Information;*
- *Certified abutters list;*
- *Legal Notice;*
- *A Site Plan set entitled (T1, Z1-Z7) "Vertex Towers Sturbridge MA VT-MA-3155D Stallion Hill Road Sturbridge, MA 01566" Prepared by Dewberry Engineers, Inc. (99 Summer Street Suite 700 Boston, MA 02110) Dated 11/1/23;*
- *Site Analysis packet entitled: "VT-MA-3155 – ASA Overview Map", "Alternative Site Analysis for Proposed Tower at 92 Stallion Hill Road, Sturbridge, MA", "VT-MA-3155 – Existing Site Overview Map", "VT-MA-3155 – Existing Site Overview Map – TOPO";*
- *A document entitled: "Statement of Brendan M. Gill Vertex Tower, LLC"*
- *A document entitled: "National Technical Systems Test Report for Environmental & Dynamic Testing of the Battery Cabinet"*
- *A document entitled: "P/N: 80-94890-02 Tel.X-Plus 180 (5x8 Cell Block) Environmental Overview";*
- *A document entitled: "Tel.X – Plus 180 Key Features";*
- *A powerpoint presentation entitled: "Town of Sturbridge Planning Board December 19, 2023" Prepared by Franic D. Parisi, Esq. of Parisi Law Associates, P.C.;*
- *A document packet entitled: "Photographic Simulation Package Proposed Wireless Telecommunications Facility: VT-MA-3155D Sturbridge MA 92 Stallion Hill Road Sturbridge, MA 01566" Prepared by Virtual Site Simulations, LLC (24 Salt Pond Road Suite C3 South Kingstown, RI 02879);*

- *Town Planner Report;*
- *Departmental Memos.*

Other Business

An audience member came before the Board and introduced himself as Peter Frei from the Holland, MA Planning Board. He stated that Holland was looking at changing their Zoning Bylaws to decrease the maximum lot coverage from 30% to 15% and wanted to know how Sturbridge created the current lot coverage bylaw. J. Bubon discussed the Town's lot coverage criteria, that it excluded the driveway and only considered the structure footprint. She stated that if Peter had more questions or would like to discuss he could call or stop by the Planning Board office and she would be happy to help him.

Adjournment

Motion: To adjourn meeting.

By: W. Hersee

2nd: S. Waters

Vote: All in Favor (7-0)

Meeting adjourned at 8:00 PM

Minutes prepared by: Jeneé Lacy