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Martha's Vineyard Commission

Land Use Planning Committee

Notes of the Meeting of March 11, 2013

Held in the Stone Building, New York Avenue, Oak Bluffs. 5:30 p.m.

Commissioners Present: Brian Smith (LUPC Chair); Doug Sederholm; Linda Sibley; Camille Rose; Fred Hancock; and Ned Orleans.

MVC Staff Present: Paul Foley; Mark London; Chris Flynn.

Documents referred to during the meeting:

- LUPC Agenda of March 11, 2013
- Power Point Slide Show of DRI 89-M3 site and area.
- DRI 89-M3 Staff Report 2013-03-30

1. DRI 89-M3 Stop and Shop Expansion – Pre-Public Hearing Review

Present: William O'Brien (Agent); Geoghan Coogan (Lawyer); Chuck Sullivan (Architect); Dave Taglianetti (VHB Traffic Consultant); Randy Hart (VHB Traffic Consultant).

Applicant: Stop & Shop Supermarket Co.; Bill O'Brien (Agent – Viceroy Dev. Assoc.)

Proposal: To consolidate three abutting properties downtown resulting in the expansion of the Stop & Shop Supermarket and the removal of all other uses on site. The preliminary proposal is a 28,093 s.f. supermarket with 43 parking spaces.

Location: 18 Water Street (Map 7f Lot 6 -Stop & Shop and Midnight Farm) 0.37 acres; 14 Water Street (Map 7f Lot 8 – Chinese Restaurant) 0.128 acres; 15 Cromwell Lane (Map 7f Lot 7 – 4 Bedroom House) 0.17 acres; Total 0.67 acres.

Purpose: To review the project and the proposed scope of the traffic study, schedule a site visit, and discuss when the project will be prepared for a public hearing.

Staff Report:

- Paul Foley outlined the staff report:
 - The proposal is to consolidate three abutting properties downtown resulting in the expansion of the Stop & Shop Supermarket and the removal of all other uses on site. The preliminary proposal is a 28,093 s.f. Stop & Shop Supermarket with 43 parking spaces to be provided below the retail area (street level).
 - The proposal includes the demolition of a historic house. The house at 15 Cromwell Lane was built in the mid-1800's and possibly as early as between 1810 and 1837.
 - The Stop & Shop (originally A&P) front building and the Chinese Restaurant building were built in 1950. The A&P back building (Midnight Farm) was built in the 1960's after demolition of a house built in 1810.
 - In 1978 the Chinese Restaurant Building (aka Harborlight) was reviewed by the MVC when they added the second story.

- Access to the site would be from an enter/exit driveway along Norton Lane off of Water Street, from the public parking lot along Water Street, or from Norton Lane coming down from Main Street. There is also an exit only access to Water Street (right-turn only) from the parking garage.
- Existing Uses include: existing Stop & Shop supermarket and non-food store (13,731 s.f.); furniture store (Midnight Farm - 4,132 s.f.); Chinese Restaurant (2,364 s.f.); house at 15 Cromwell Lane; (4,856 s.f.).
- Some of the key planning concerns at this point are:
 - Construction on Public Property: Is it appropriate that part of the project, namely the entrance stairs and ramps, be located on public property (Norton Lane)?
 - Building Design: Does the building design harmonize with the scale and character of the area? Is the design of the part of the building housing the truck dock and mezzanine, facing Norton Street, Main Street, and Cromwell Lane, acceptable?
 - Historic Preservation: Should the project design around the historic house at 15 Cromwell Lane, move it, or be allowed to demolish an historic structure?
 - Transportation: What will the traffic impact be of doubling the size of the store and adding 43 parking spaces on the already congested area, notably Water Street and the Five Corners intersection? How should the circulation work in and out of the town and Stop & Shop parking areas as well as the truck dock? Can the traffic impact be offset by making improvements to the larger area?
 - Storm-water: The site is partly in a flood zone and what pervious surfaces exist will be built over. How will the storm-water be handled?
 - Economic Impacts: How can this project best serve as a gateway for visitors leading to the Main Street business district?
 - Construction Process: What impacts from the construction process are anticipated?

Presentation:

- Bill O'Brien noted that in this plan they are trying to maximize the footprint of Stop and Shop on the site.
- Dave Taglianetti of Vanasse Hangen Brustlin, Inc. (VHB), the traffic consultants, began with a point of clarification. Their numbers are based on the square footage of the retail and office space versus the existing square footage.

Access:

- The plan includes 43 parking spaces beneath the store on the ground level.
- They are proposing an entry and exit from Water Street onto Norton Lane. The two-way section on Norton would only be the part between Water Street and the entry to the garage. The rest of Norton would be one-way downhill from Main Street.
- Trucks would enter the public parking lot through the current entry off of Water Street then circle back to Norton Lane and then back into the proposed loading dock area next to Cromwell Lane.

Storm-water:

- They will be adding a vortex water quality unit in the garage with an oil water separator that will also remove sediments and TPH (Total Petroleum Hydrocarbons).
- The amount of impervious surfaces will be increasing. They want to work with the town to mitigate the storm water on the town parking lot. They would take the square footage of the impervious surfaces and treat an equal amount on the town lot which has no infiltration or treatment at this time.

- Alternatively they could do something inside the garage such as a holding tank or a cistern to hold back peak runoff (a storm-water memo was included in the traffic study).
- They are also considering a green roof, though that is premature until the building size and architectural design are finalized.
- Water Street is at elevation 5'. The back edge of the garage would be at 7' which would make for a 1% slope from the back of the garage to Water Street. The mechanical room in the garage would be one foot above flood level.
- They feel the garage could be an area where in a big storm event water would go and thus possibly alleviate the situation on the street a bit.

Pedestrian Issues:

- A commissioner asked whether there was an area along the building for pedestrians. The applicant responded that they do not want to encourage pedestrians along the building because of the garage which limits visibility.
- Several other commissioners and Henry Stephenson suggested throughout the meeting that pedestrians need to be better accounted for in the plan.

Landscape:

- Dave Taglianetti said that they will be removing a utility pole and transformer and putting the utilities on Norton Lane underground. At the next meeting they will present a landscaping plan.
- In response to a question about whether the stairs to the building are in the public way Geoghan Coogan responded that currently there is an easement between the applicant and the town for the loading area. That easement with the town would have to be amended.

Discussion:

- Henry Stephenson, Co-Chair of the Tisbury Planning Board, listed a number of issues that he thinks need to be addressed and/or changed.
 - The applicant should consider looking at re-routing Union Street.
 - The town is adding 20 parking spots at the site of the old fire station around the corner. The applicant should consider decreasing the number of parking spaces they provide in favor of improving the pedestrian situation.
 - Cromwell Land is planned to become a key pedestrian and bicycle link that should be considered in their plans.
 - The proposal to make Norton Street an entry way does not seem to work. Norton already backs up. This is going to be a problem. They should consider accessing the garage from the middle aisle that cars would reach by entering the public lot exactly where they do now.
 - The current proposal for the corner of Norton and Cromwell being a truck loading area is not ideal. That is an important public interface with Main Street.
 - The Water Street façade should be more welcoming as well. It would be good to have a more graceful entrance to the store.
- Dave Taglianetti responded that there is a memo in the traffic study about reversing Union Street which is beyond the scope of this project. The point about the garage entry is well taken but noted that they are dealing with a grade issue as well. The conceptual finished floor elevation of the store is elevation 18'.

Traffic:

- Randy Hart added that the reversal of Union Street would need a detailed assessment that is beyond the scope of this project. They took a look at it and from a volume perspective it is not a problem. But there

may be other issues that affect other parts of town. One byproduct would be an increase of traffic on residential streets.

- They also took a quick look at reversing Norton Lane. Reversing Union would not have any benefit for downtown whereas reversing Norton might. Either scenario would require a detailed study.
- Randy Hart said that there are three phases to the traffic study:
 - Existing conditions: They did an operational analysis of the existing condition.
 - 5 Year Future – No Build: They looked at what other projects are planned in the area and any other road improvements as well as population growth and projected trip generation and LOS at nine intersections in five years if this project is not built.
 - 5 year Future – Build. Then they projected trip generation and LOS at nine intersections in five years if this project is built.
- They project that at the peak evening weekday hours (4:00pm – 6:00 pm) the project will increase the number of trips by 45 trips. That would lead to a total of 87 trips in the weekday peak and 95 on the weekend peak. They then took those numbers and spread them through the neighborhood.
- They found that the impacts of the project on the neighborhood are minor. The new volume to the intersection is less than one an hour.
- Brian Smith noted two Steamship Ferry boats come in between 4:00 to 6:00 pm and suggested that the increased number of trips is like adding a third boat during that time.
- Linda Sibley asked that traffic consultants if they found that trips to the store are actually more than the Institute of Traffic Engineers (ITE) rates. Randy Hart responded no, exactly the opposite. He added that they have done a lot of comparable studies.
- Linda Sibley said that in the past when the MVC has looked at both the A&P and Cronig's they found that the Martha's Vineyard stores trip generation numbers were significantly higher than the ITE rates.
- Mark London asked if they calculated the Level of Service (LOS) at Five Corners.
- Randy Hart responded that Five Corners is already at LOS F. If you compare the Build versus No-Build scenarios this store is only adding 5 trips an hour more to Five Corners.
- Ned Orleans questioned that assertion noting they are doubling the retail space and saying they are only adding five trips. It defies logic. He also questioned the trip generation numbers they have assigned to the existing restaurant and house.
- Randy Hart said that the current store has narrow aisles and shelves and no storage. The new store will have wide aisles and shelves and more storage.
- Mark London noted that the new store could become a regional draw. Chuck Sullivan countered that it's a regional draw now due to its being the cheapest grocery store on that side of the island.
- Randy Hart finished the traffic study report by noting that they conducted LOS Analysis at 9 intersections. They are not changing the LOS at any of the other intersections.
- They are planning mitigation:
 - They will improve the site access and increase parking.
 - Currently there is no formalized Transportation Demand Management (TDM) plan. They will have one onsite.
 - They will have a carpool and vanpool program for employees and customers.
 - They will incentivize use of transit for employees.
 - A lot of traffic control on Water Street is faded. They would refresh that as well.
- Geoghan Coogan added that it will be a bigger and nicer store so it may draw more people but they are adding 43 parking spots and the town is adding 20 spots nearby. The increase in downtown parking may very well eliminate a lot of unnecessary circling.

Design:

- Mark London had some questions about the ramps and entry.
 - Chuck Sullivan said that the design is still being fine tuned. The wall along Cromwell Lane would screen the view of the trucks, transformers, and trash compactor. The mural would be relocated to this wall. There is a mezzanine level over the truck dock with office space. On the Water Street elevation they are breaking up the volume with gables. As for the entry ramps they could work with the grade but they would still need a ramp. They could alternatively have a retaining wall. A ramp can only go a certain distance before it needs a landing to be compliant with A.D.A. Another possibility would be if the town wanted to re-grade the street.
 - Bill O'Brien noted that the elevator is for shopping carts. They looked at an inclinator (an escalator that accommodates shopping carts) but they don't have the room.
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- Historic House:
 - Mark London noted that MVC Staff recommended that an independent professional historical analysis of the house at 15 Cromwell Lane be done.
 - Geoghan Coogan said that the Applicant was fully okay with paying for that. Mark London said that staff would proceed with having that done so that it would be ready for the next LUPC.

Conclusion:

- Brian Smith asked if there were any other outstanding issues that they applicant should be aware of.
- Chris Fried said it seemed no consideration for sea level rise was being considered and asked the Applicant if they would design the building to withstand accelerated storm growth.
- LUPC will wait to schedule the next meeting until the Historical Study is finished.
- Fred Hancock added that the pedestrian flow down Norton lane is important and that he does not think that the current plan addresses the amount of pedestrian traffic.
- Brian Smith asked how the parking garage would be managed. Can anyone use it? What hours will it be open? Who will clean and maintain it?
- Mark London wanted more information on the Water street interface. Will there be any retail or window displays?
- Henry Stephenson asked if they had any plans for solar or renewable power. The site presents a good opportunity for solar power. Are they considering LEED Certification?

The meeting was adjourned at 7:00 pm.