

Town of Turner, Maine
Planning Board Minutes
April 19, 2023

1 **CALL TO ORDER**

Called to order at 6:00 pm by Mr. Bill Bullard, Chairman. Those Members present were, Mr. Bill Bullard, Eben Shaw, Shirley Twitchell, Scott Abbotts and Kelvin Youland. Those Absent, Mr. Edward Morris. Also absent, Mr. Ben Smith, Town Planner.

2. **VERIFICATION OF QUORUM**

Mr. Bill Bullard stated that there were 5 Board Members in attendance which constitutes a Quorum.

3. **Approval of Planning Board Minutes March 15, 2023.**

Mr. Shaw made a motion to approve the minutes with changes for March 15, 2023 and it was seconded by Ms. Twitchell (3 Ayes, 2 abstained)

4. **PUBLIC HEARING:**

Rusty Lantern, 1051 Auburn Rd, Turner

Mr. Smith reviewed the project with the Board. This project is to update and relocate an existing structure. There will be 20 additional parking spaces and will be moving the building back on the property. They will also be updating and moving existing fuel lanes. There are permits put into Maine DOT but not received yet.

Brandon Cummings with Paragon Management Group spoke on behalf of the project.

Mr. John Maloney questioned on what DOT did regarding the entrances and exits on the project and the elevations of the structure and what the materials would be. Mr. Cummings provided the grading plans for the project. The new store will be about 12 feet behind the existing structure. There will be a right in and right out only to the project. The two gravel entrances will be eliminated and the traffic will go to Snell Hill. The building will have rock base and will have wood panels above the Rock and will have asphalt roof. There will also have sitting area out front with canopy areas and all landscaping will have flowers. Mr. Maloney stated that the gravel exit was never suppose to be there. He is questioned that Maine DOT did have another project added above them that needed to have additional traffic studies and wanted to ensure that the project will have proper permits.

Mr. Richard Blais questioned the project and the entrances. He owns the business across the street and wanted to confirm if there would be any changes on the traffic.

Chris Pilsbury questioned if there will be any changes in the fuel type. The applicant stated that there will be new dispenser and tanks only.

Mr. Maloney questioned where the fuel pumps will be and if they will be set back for easier access easier access. The applicant stated they will be set back from the road.

There was a snowmobile trail that goes through the area and that will be able to continue to have use.

Bear's Self Storage, Airport Road

Mr. Smith reviewed the application with the Board. This project is for a self-storage use. There are existing buildings being used for storage and the current application in front of the Board to allow the use of self-storage containers. This has been in front of the Board and is phase 1 and the applicant would need to come back for additional phases. At the last meeting screening was requested by the Board.

Mr. Stuart Davis spoke to the Board regarding the project. The first plan had the containers placed 3 feet apart. After the site walk they decided they could be side by side and be 102 feet down the runway. This would be a smaller impact on the site. There is a sign that will be on the property.

Mr. Maloney stated that the Applicant only spoke to the Board but it would be nice to address the Public to be able to explain what the project is and to give background. It would be nice to have more information on the project.

Mr. Bullard stated that this came to the Board because it was a change on use which went to site plan review and the phases of the project would be to add to the storage containers.

Mr. Maloney questioned on if there would be containers for sale as well on the property. These containers will be for rent only and there will be use of the existing containers.

Mr. Maloney questioned how many would be used in phase 1. There would be 48 on the runway.

Mr. Abbotts stated that there are already containers out there so there is some confusion where there are over 30 on the site now.

Ms. Twitchell stated that Mr. Maloney's point is valid and the public must be addressed.

A member of Turner questioned on what the issue was regarding the containers. Is it because they are movable vs a permanent structure.

Mr. Abbotts stated that the issue was that permanent structures must go by certain building guidelines vs storage units. If these are not they need to Turner building guidelines.

Mr. Davis stated that there were conversations early on that these building are considered structures. If these are structures there are guidelines that must be met.

Ms. Susan Shaw questioned on if it would be existing storage for outdoor storage and where those would be stored.

Chris Pilsbury questioned on if this would move the Center St. location to Turner and how many would be approved. As a citizen they are concerned and he does not want a storage yard and if it is there should be screened. He did not mind seeing airplanes but does not want a bunch 300+ storage containers.

5. **New Business**

Rusty Lantern, 1051 Auburn Rd, Turner

Mr. Smith reviewed the application and checklist with the Board. This is new project in an existing location where there will be a demolish and rebuild of a building.

Mr. Bullard questioned on if the MDOT has approved the application. At this time the letter was sent and is included as a draft but a final letter has not been approved.

This project came to the Board last December and again in April and the Board has discussed the project.

Ms. Twitchell made a motion to find the Checklist complete and it was seconded by Mr. Abbotts (5 ayes)

Mr. Smith stated the property is 1.6 acres and conforms with the set-back and with the Land Use Map. There will be a new well for the site and there will be a dumpster added to the building and will be screened. There are finish contours and grades and they were provided to the Board. The sidewalks and the parking shown on the Plan and a traffic pattern has been presented to the Board. The Applicant also discussed the existing snowmobile trail will be allowed to use access.

The Board may want to consider a condition regarding the DOT access and traffic pattern. They have provided a financial capacity for the project.

A Landscaping plan was provided for the project and will have native non invasive species. There will be 28 parking spaces and drainage will go towards Route 4 as it does now and it is not in a watershed and will not need a study. A lighting plan was presented to the Board. There will be a new septic system added to the site. This project is in a commercial zone at this time so no buffers will be needed.

The Applicant stated that they will be using the existing septic that will have a pre-treatment.

Ms. Twitchell made a Motion to Approve the Findings of Fact and Conclusion of Law with the Condition of the MDOT Permit prior and it was seconded by Mr. Shaw (5 ayes)

Bear's Self Storage, Airport Road

Mr. Smith reviewed the checklist

The Findings of Fact that is drafted for the Board is from the last update from the Applicant that was submitted in March.

Ms. Twitchell questioned on if a simulated drawing was provided to the Board for how the project would look like.

Mr. Smith stated that there is no photo simulation on what it would look like from the road but there was a diagram provided to the Board on what it would look like.

At this time the Applicant is looking for more direction. He stated that after the site walk it was determined that the containers do not need to be spaced as far apart because if they do people would put things next to them.

Mr. Bullard questioned on how the Board viewed the structures.

Mr. Abbotts stated they he feels that if it is permanent there are design standards if it is like a storage yard it will need screening.

Per the Town's Ordinances there is a definition on what the screening must be.

Mr. Shaw stated that there is a mobile home park next door. There is a wooded area and rock wall next door and is that enough to be a buffer.

Mr. Smith stated that his planners have looked into the Town's ordinance and the storage units meet a definition of a building that is prefabricated so do not need to meet the guidelines but they are storage units and the Board will need to look to see how to meet the standards and what screening would be adequate to make the Town and the abutters happy as well as the Applicant.

Mr. Bullard stated that the Board feels it should be screened someway. There are two different ends of the property the Board may want to look at the ends differently.

Mr. Abbotts stated that you can see the whole runway so why would it make a difference.

The Applicant stated that the area was already a storage yard there with the building and the airplanes were out so this is no difference.

Mr. Abbotts stated that the runway was not a storage yard prior. Conant road is a public way so they should also be screened.

Mr. Schaub stated that the Board has a difficult decision to make at this time. He would like to see that there would be some softening of presentation. He understands what people will want to see that there is a Storage business there but a reasonable landscaping plan would help meet the intent of the Ordinance but would make it look nice.

Mr. Bullard stated that his concerns that if they go with a landscaping route what is to say more will not show up.

Ms. Twitchell stated that it is not a permanent structure what it to say that is more boat and cars showed up on the runway what

Mr. Davis stated that the Applicant is looking to add to both ends of the runway. There are other issues in the Town that are not enforced why is this being looked at. The CEO Officer would be able to go to inspect the project.

Mr. Abbotts said that the other containers on site never came to the Board so there are concerns on additional units not approved prior.

Ms. Twitchell stated that it was never a storage yard. It was an airport and the storage was for planes so it is foolish for the applicant to call it a storage yard that was already there.

Mr. Shaw stated that it is in front of the Board because this is a new use which would make the prior uses irrelevant. He also read from the Ordinances regarding the screening component.

There have been a lot of changes to the Plan which showed different landscaping.

Mr. Smith reviewed the Commercial guidelines with talks about fixed structures but these are not fixed structures so do not need to meet those guidelines.

Exposed storage areas must have screened areas from the public way. The east side is an exposed storage yard where there could be boats and should have some landscaping for screening.

Mr. Smith stated that from the contained storage containers they are not open storage so they should not be held to the same landscaping standards. The Board will also need to take into consideration of the property abutters and if there should be additional screening but there is no real guidance on what that screening should be.

Mr. Davis stated that the line is in the woods between the Applicant and the adjacent property owner.

Mr. Davis stated that the Applicant would like to know what type of screening and how much.

Mr. Bullard stated that the east end should be fencing and opaque. Mr. Youland questioned how tall it the screening should be?

Mr. Shaw would like to look at the residential area that is next to the proposed site. Mr. Bullard stated that it would be nice to have staggered tree planting to be able to create a better buffer.

Mr. Shaw said the south side should be opaque fencing that is 6 ft.

Mr. Bullard stated that it would be nice to see the design with the phasing so that there is some visual to be able to go by.

Screening on the Conant side and on the east end with Mr. Mike Twitchell on the East end on Airport Rd. The Outdoor screening should be fenced in on all 4 sides. The fencing should be 6 ft tall fence that can be screened in.

Ms. Twitchell stated that the Board cant require it to be 4 sides where the requirement is for screening purposes so it will be 3 sides Conant road and up both sides.

The Applicant stated that the fence was talked about the last meeting and that the fence wasn't going to stay up per his conversations. He stated that it is reasonable to ask for screening. He is proposing that that he put in some small trees he has a Commercial property that he wants to use for commercial use it should not have to be screened in everyway.

The Board looked at the West Side this will be on Route 4. The Board discussed what options should be looked at. Mr. Abbotts is concerned that it will grow beyond what is provided where there are already containers on the site.

The Applicant would like to plant trees every 30 feet that will grow in.

Mr. Abbotts stated that his concern is that it is already growing with storage containers that without approval and that what he is doing now without approval what will stop him moving forward.

The Board can approve what is being presented now and if the extent of storage is expanded it can become an issue. The major impacts for this project is screening at this time but later on could be a traffic concern.

If there are complaints or a violation the Code Enforcement Officer would inspect the same.

The Applicant questioned on how they can come to an agreement with the Town.

The proposal is for 40 units at the end of the runway. If more are added than it will need to come back to the Board and will need additional information from the Applicant.

Mr. Abbotts questioned on how to address the 40 units already on the property. Mr. Abbotts stated that the Board gave approval for the hangers being used but not for the Storage units on the property now.

The Applicant it is a Commercial piece of property and to be able to find a way to have screening and have visibility.

Mr. Smith stated that there has been good feedback on how the screening should be. The plan has 75 feet apart and the Board did not feel that would be enough. There was another conversation on 30 feet and the Board will need to decide what would be reasonable. This is not where opaque fencing would be reasonable based on the topography.

Mr. Smith there was a conversation of a tree every 30 feet with a double row. This would be \$40,000 a year and that's not reasonable.

The Board would like to see south west and easternly. The Board would like to see a rendering on what the Street view. The Board would like to see Evergreen trees planted on the South side between airport road and the runway. Mr. Shaw's stated that there should be evergreen trees planted no more than 15 feet apart.

Mr. Youland stated that in a prior project they planted them 25 feet staggered and that the trees have grown in a lot.

South side no more than 25 feet apart staggered row and should go beyond the containers some to allow additional screening.

Mr. Shaw questioned on if the Board would need to require a buffer where it is a residential area next door would that open them up for a complaint if there is another Applicant later on who wants to do the same.

The Board would like to see a photo simulation of what the street view would for the screening.

Ms. Twitchell questioned on how big the screening would be on the East side

The Applicant questioned on if the screening really needed to be done on the East Side or if he wanted to not go forward with that phase.

The Board will meet May 3rd for the next workshop date and the Applicant will submit renderings as soon as possible with the Plan, Landscaping plan and the visual impacts.

7. **Other Business**

Mr. Schaub updated the Board on upcoming projects coming to the Town.

8. **REPORTS**

None

9. **PUBLIC COMMENTS**

None

10. **ADJOURNMENT**

Ms. Twitchell made a motion for adjournment and it was seconded by Mr. Abbotts the Board unanimously accepted. The meeting adjourned at 8:15 pm.

Respectfully submitted by, Megan L. Ricker, Secretary.