

MEDFORD TOWNSHIP PLANNING BOARD MEETING

November 14, 2022 @ 7:00 p.m.

Police Administration Building-91 Union Street

Chairman Hartwig called the Planning Board Meeting to order at 7:05 p.m. and read the Statement of Conformance with the Open Public Meetings Act and the Municipal Land Use Law.

PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE

ROLL CALL:

Present: Czekay, Hartwig, Herman, Ross, Watson, Perks
Absent: Bielec, Braatz, Juliano, Kornick, Devlin
Professional Staff: Attorney Dan Gee, Engineer Martin Dragan, Planner Scott Taylor, Secretary Kimberly Moore

EXECUTIVE SESSION: None

MINUTES:

October 26, 2022 Regular Meeting Minutes – Ms. Herman made a motion to adopt the meeting minutes. Deputy Mayor Czekay seconded the motion. Mr. Ross abstained. A voice vote of the remaining Board members in favor of adoption was unanimous.

CORRESPONDENCE: Chairman Hartwig announced that the Auto Zone application was being continued by mutual consent of the applicant to the December 28, 2022 meeting, without the requirement to re-notice.

REPORTS: Chairman Hartwig reported that insufficient escrow balances over 6 months would continue to be listed on the monthly agenda. He acknowledged that there are now five escrow balances, which may never be collected, which is unfair to the professionals who are not compensated for services rendered. He thanked Ms. Moore for her continued efforts to collect the arrears.

APPLICATIONS/OFFICIAL ACTIONS:

Auto Zone Northeast, LLC, 404/31, 185 Route 70, SPR-5760

Applicant is seeking Preliminary & Final Major Site Plan with bulk variance approval to construct an Auto Zone building with parking and a drainage basin. **Zone: HC-1**

***See above—further continued to the December 28, 2022 Meeting*

Taunton & Tuckerton Redevelopment Plan Proposed Amendment - Verizon Cell Tower. 200 Tuckerton Road; Block 3201, Lots 32.01, 32.02, 32.03 and 38.

SWORN: Kevin Jones, Esq., Zublatt & Jones, LLC
Stephanie Mulhern, P.E., Colliers Engineering
Andrew Peterson, P.E., D.E.M. Engineering (Radio Frequency Design/Electrical)
Steven Bosque, Site Acquisition Consultant-Verizon, ATT, T-Mobile & Cricket

Mr. Jones opened the testimony by explaining that the Taunton & Tuckerton area represents a "gap area," being that there is no existing infrastructure in close proximity. A map was provided to Board members that showed where cell towers are currently located in and abutting Medford. He went to explain that typically a monopole is 150' in height to allow multiple carriers space, which is a FCC mandate; but the Pinelands Commission has approved a height of 123', the minimum to allow for multiple (x3) carriers. An area of 2500sf is required to accommodate the ground equipment of three carriers.

Mr. Jones continued by stating that the Medford emergency services (Police, Fire & EMS) all use Verizon Wireless, and the availability of 5G will enhance their communications capabilities. The monopole will have back-up power for maintaining cell service for public safety.

Exhibit A-1 was shared amongst Board members, which was a series of photos of existing cell towers in and around Medford. He detailed how the finishes are typically galvanized steel, and not reflective.

Exhibit A-2 was also distributed; an enlarged (11" x 17") set of photo simulations of what the cell tower will look like at this location from multiple vantage points. (An 8.5" x 11" set of the same photos had been given to Board members at the October meeting.)

Ms. Mulhern was next to testify. She and Mr. Taylor discussed various colors, design elements (pine tree look), and how they will blend with into the sky. It was stated a blue/gray color is best to make the monopole less visually obtrusive, however that requires the pole to be painted every 15-20 years as is done with water towers. A galvanized finish requires less maintenance, as confirmed by Mr. Dragan.

Mr. Peterson was next to testify. He referred to display maps that had been distributed at the October meeting that showed coverage areas as well as gap areas. The area in vicinity of the Taunton & Tuckerton intersection is clearly a gap area per this mapping. He explained how tall structures and trees affect gap areas, and further explained that this is the reason that towers of at least 120' in height are needed to meet coverage objectives and reduce impacts (i.e. additional cell towers) This is defined as line of sight technology.

Chairman Hartwig asked why the site in Marlton that is 1.5 miles away could not serve this area. Mr. Peterson responded that with the available antenna technology the 1.5 miles is the average coverage service area.

Chairman Hartwig next asked Mr. Jones if there are any legal impediments to building this cell tower. Mr. Jones responded that the FCC legally requires Verizon to address service area gap complaints; which is what prompted Verizon to seek a site in this gap area. Mr. Jones added that any contract with the property owners would include an abandonment clause requiring the cell tower and affiliated ground mounted equipment to be removed if it is ever taken out of service.

PUBLIC: None present

Ms. Herman made a motion to close the public portion. Deputy Mayor Czekay seconded. The voice vote in favor was unanimous.

Mr. Taylor distributed a draft amendment to the Taunton & Tuckerton Redevelopment Plan dated November 11, 2022 that includes language on page 21 to permit telecommunication towers and facilities as a conditionally permitted use; with accompanying standards as drafted to be set forth in Appendix A of the plan.

Board members made several comments to specify a height limitation of 123'; colors, landscaping/buffering requirements and perimeter fencing requirements.

Mr. Taylor concluded that the draft revised Redevelopment plan will be remanded back to Council for approvals. Once that process is complete, Verizon will be required to make a site plan application to the Planning Board in accordance with the amended Redevelopment Plan.

Ms. Herman made a motion to approve the amendments to the Taunton & Tuckerton Redevelopment Plan Zone District requirements as drafted by Mr. Taylor (dated 11/11/22) with the changes proposed by Board members. Deputy Mayor Czekay seconded the motion.

Recorded Vote:

Ayes:	Czekay, Herman, Ross, Watson, Perks, Hartwig
Nays:	None
Abstentions:	None
Motion carried:	6 - 0 - 0

The Board took a brief recess from 8:52 pm until 8:56 pm.

GENERAL PUBLIC: No one was present to speak.

MEMORIALIZATION:

The Estaugh/Medford Leas, 805/various lots, SPR-5762, Resolution # 14-2022

Major Site Plan approval to expand its existing Nature Center and Berm parking areas.

Zone: GMN

Recorded Vote:


Ayes:	Czekay, Hartwig, Herman (M), Watson (2), Perks
Nays:	None
Abstentions:	None
Motion carried:	5- 0 - 0

ADJOURNMENT:

Ms. Herman made a motion to adjourn the November 14, 2022 Planning Board meeting at 9:00 pm. Mayor Watson seconded. A unanimous voice vote in favor carried the motion.



Kimberly Moore, Planning Board Secretary



Beth Portocalis, Planning Board Recording Secretary