CALL TO ORDER:
The August 3, 2016 meeting of the Hopkinton Planning Board was called to order at 7:00 P.M. by Vice Chair Amy Williams.

MEMBERS PRESENT:
Amy Williams, Hazel Douthitt, and Frank Sardone were present. Al DiOrio and Tom Holberton were absent.

Also present were: Josh Bedoya, Planning Board Alternate; James Lamphere, Town Planner; Kevin McAllister, Town Solicitor; Sean Henry, Planning Board Clerk; and John Pennypacker, Conservation Commission.

APPROVAL OF MINUTES:
APPROVAL OF THE MINUTES WAS TABLED TO THE END OF THE MEETING.

NEW BUSINESS:

After provided with a summary of the Development Plan Review process by Planner Jim Lamphere, Ms. Williams turned the meeting over to Attorney George Comolli, who was present for the applicants Dennis and Patricia Plante. Mr. Comolli provided a brief history of the property in the application. The property is one formerly owned by Richard Grills which was not among those donated by him for purposes of preservation. The lot was previously non-conforming, but was reconfigured along with several surrounding lots to become conforming lots intended for economic development purposes. The applicants are purchasing Lot 57, subject to the Development Plan Review and a transfer of a liquor license to the location. This site is a former residence, a pre-existing Dutch colonial house. The applicants plan to use the existing structure as part of their larger commercial structure. The planned building is a 55,000 square foot building, which includes part of the existing house. The property is partially zoned for both Neighborhood Business and Manufacturing. At a previous Town Council meeting, the Council asked that the address for the business be created before the license would be transferred. After outlining the contents of the plan submission, Mr. Comolli called Mr. Plante as his first witness.
Dennis Plante is the applicant for the Village Wine and Spirits plan. He has owned and operated several package stores in Rhode Island. He has recently moved to Hopkinton and does not currently own any other stores. He wants to create a store at this location because there are not any other stores within several miles and there is space for adequate parking. Mr. Plante plans to use the existing building for storage for storage and an employee-only area. He anticipates about ten employees being needed for the store, which will operate 9am-9pm during the week, 9am-10pm Saturdays, and 10am-6pm on Sundays. The Planning Board held any questions for Mr. Plante until after the end of the applicant’s entire presentation.

Mr. Comolli’s next witness was John Patrick Walsh, architect for the project. Mr. Walsh is a registered architect in the State of Rhode Island and Connecticut. He was retained by Mr. and Mrs. Plante for the purposes of designing the proposed package store. Mr. Walsh demonstrated using the plans that they need to remove part of the existing building, but want to retain most of it because it is an iconic building for the area. He showed the Planning Board several angles of the proposed building and pointed out the prominent features, namely the roofline and arch from the existing house. The roof will be sloped and have a parapet, with some sort of shingling. The lighting features are planned to be dark-sky compliant, which will involve down-lighting on the building and downward-facing lights on the walkways and parking area.

Mr. Comolli next called Anthony Nenna, registered engineer who prepared the plans that were submitted to the Planning Board. At Mr. Comolli’s request, Mr. Nenna described the plans to the Planning Board. He explained that the existing building is on the north side of the property with a gravel driveway going to the south of the property. There are currently two wells on the property, of which one will be used for irrigation and the other for the building. The current proposal entails relocating the entrance to parking area to the south of the property, in order to create easier access for trucks to unload. The entrance will be divided by an island, and there will be a truck turnaround behind the building for trucks to use when unloading. There are four points of collection for the stormwater drainage system, which he explained would require permits from DEM. A new septic system would also have to be installed on the northwest corner of the lot. Mr. Nenna explained that the façade of the property will be grass and flower beds, with some existing trees. The project meets zoning setback requirements and exceeds parking requirements by several spaces (15 required, 25 planned). The parking plan includes two handicap access spaces on the south side of the building, and employee parking at the rear of the building. Mr. Nenna said that the next step of the process would be to obtain the required permits from the state. Mr. Comolli closed his presentation and invited any questions from the Planning Board.
Questions from the Planning Board:

Ms. Douthitt: Will the new building have a basement?
Mr. Walsh: The existing house has a basement; the addition will not have one.
Ms. Williams: Where is the river in relation to the property?
Mr. Nenna: According to the map, I estimate the river is about 500-600 feet away.
Ms. Williams: What is the reason for the extra parking?
Mr. Nenna: There is extra parking in the rear for the customers and employees.
Ms. Williams: Is there any other type of planned future use for this property?
Mr. Comolli: There are no intentions for any other kind of use on this property.
Ms. Williams: I think the traffic study needs another look. Being a good neighbor, it would be wise to inform the other nearby neighbors that are outside of the required notice area, including the people that live down Grills Lane.
Mr. Comolli: We’d be glad to give additional notice for the meeting before the Town Council for the license, if directed by this body.

Questions from the public:

Ms. Capalbo: I have a couple of questions. I have concerns about drainage into Routes 91 & 216, so I just want to make sure the drainage is looked at very carefully. We have a couple of large package stores within a few miles of each other, with HLD expanding as well. And the building is very large, and I have concerns about the size of the impervious extra parking areas. I’d like to see fewer spaces to reduce the impervious surface areas. I’d also like the building to be aesthetically pleasing and not box-like in the neighborhood business zone.
Mr. Lilly: My name is David Lilly, my brother and I are land owners across the street, 21 Alton Bradford Road. I have three concerns, which you’ve mostly addressed. Lighting was one, which was answered. Also there are traffic considerations, it can be hard to get out there in the summer. And the other thing is the reconfigured Lot 58 is directly across the street from me, so I was wondering what the use for it was.
Mr. Comolli: The lot in question is about one acre of vacant land. It’s owned by a Mr. McCormick, who I believe has no immediate plans for the land. He may put a small nursery there at some point, but he would have to appear before this Board.
Mr. Lilly: Ok, that’s fine. Thank you.
Mr. Buford: I can add that the state will see to it that there isn’t any runoff onto the highways. They won’t allow any runoff onto the roads.
Mr. Nenna: The drainage pattern is made up of four areas. There are two catch basins that will collect the water before it can get to the highway. They’ll be underneath the parking lot, so there will be no drainage discharges to the south. For any system, a permit would have to be approved by DEM.
Mr. Sardone: Are there catch basins in the parking area?
Mr. Nenna: Yes, with underground infiltration areas. (Indicates on plans)
Mr. Sardone: Are you keeping the slope in the parking area?
Mr. Nenna: The lot is approximately four feet higher than the entrance. The relocated entrance to the lot was done to increase the sight lines and give better access for the trucks to get to the unloading area in the back of the building, and prevent them from having to make an S-turn.

Ms. Williams: I think the applicant really tried to preserve the character of the house.

Mr. Comolli: We will assure that no drainage will go onto the highways, and the ten extra spaces above the number required can be a pervious surface.

Mr. Walsh: The software program that we used on this project projects an actual scale image on the plans. This is what the building will look like, aside from colors and finishes that can be changed. The applicants wanted to restore and maintain the existing house, and with the addition, do something that complements it. We didn’t want to do a box store or anything like that. The cost comparison is 1;1, it becomes more of a maintenance issue. The goal of the project is to create a really nice and inviting business that will complement the area. We talked about exposed beams and interesting lighting fixtures, and give it a rustic look. Although the building is big, when you see the parapet and the roof lines, from the street those features will make it unique.

Mr. Sardone: One of my concerns is the vertical siding.

Mr. Walsh: It could be changed to something else. We could use a fiberglass shingle or clapboard.

Ms. Douthitt: Maybe you could bring some samples to the Board.

Mr. Walsh: We could put a materials board together. We talked about doing a vertical pattern to break up the appearance. The finishing is not final yet, and the goal is to prevent the property from becoming a strip mall.

Ms. Capalbo: Is there adequate space for the wine tastings you talked about doing?

Mr. Plante: There is enough room, yes.

Mr. Comolli concluded the proposal by asking if the Planning Board would find that the project should move forward with Development Plan Review subject to the stipulations discussed previously. He stated that they’re prepared to move forward subject to obtaining ISDS and drainage permits from DEM, a signage permit for the sign, and submitting the application to the Town Council for the liquor license. When asked for the Planner’s opinion, Mr. Lamphere suggested that the sign be moved back from the road to increase visibility, that the applicant provide more detail for the traffic study, and told the Board about his concern for the split zoning of the lot. A split zone lot can extend a use up to 30 feet into the other zone. However, the zoning line goes through the middle of this lot and the addition is more than 30 feet from the line. The town may need to be moved or the issue be evaluated by the Zoning Official, or it could mitigated through obtaining a variance from the Zoning Board.

Ms. Williams stated that she would like to see the project come back before the Planning Board for further review, and that she’d like to see the split zoning issue resolved, because the plan may not be able to legally proceed as presently constituted. The plan also needs several approvals from state agencies. Since the Planning Board appears to be supportive of the plan, the outstanding details can be worked out within the Development Plan Review process.
MR. SARDONE MOVED THAT THE APPLICATION CONTINUE TO DEVELOPMENT PLAN REVIEW, SUBJECT TO THE APPLICATION BEING REVIEWED BY A ZONING OFFICIAL TO EVALUATE THE SPLIT-ZONE USAGE, THE NECESSARY PERMITS BEING OBTAINED, THE SIGN BEING MOVED BACK FROM THE ROAD, THE CURB CUT BEING APPROVED BY THE DEPARTMENT OF TRANSPORTATION, AND FURTHER NOTICE BE PROVIDED TO NEIGHBORING PROPERTY OWNERS (VIA CERTIFIED MAIL) OF THE MEETING AT WHICH LIQUOR LICENSE WILL BE CONSIDERED BY THE TOWN COUNCIL.

MS. DOUTHITT SECONDED THE MOTION

ALL MEMBERS APPROVE. MOTION PASSES.

At this time, 8:00pm, Chair Al DiOrio arrived to the meeting and joined the Planning Board.

OLD BUSINESS:

Development Plan Review – Plan Submission -- Construction of proposed addition to Hopkinton Plaza – Plat 25, Lot 155A – 229 Main Street

Attorney Vincent Naccarato was in attendance to present for the applicant, KSL Realty. He explained that the proposed project was an expansion of the Hopkinton Liquor Depot package store at the Hopkinton Plaza in Ashaway. The project was last before the Planning Board in January of 2016, where the Board moved to continue to the next phase of Development Plan Review. Mr. Naccarato explained the applicant has since obtained the required variance for the property. He then called on the project’s engineer, Sergio Cherenza to present the plan to the Board: The applicants were seeking a 3720 sq ft. addition to the front of the existing liquor store, which will create a total of 10,620 sq ft, 9000 sq ft of which will be designated for retail space. The expansion area will displace about 10 parking spaces, which will be relocated to the north side of the parking lot. The plan also calls for the addition of painted traffic symbols and landscaped islands in the lot, in order to help direct traffic, but will not change the traffic configuration. The septic system is currently on the north side, but does not need any expansion because no new employees will be needed as a result of the expansion. For the same reason, the current well will require no upgrades either. The restaurant next door to the liquor store will not be altered during this expansion. Mr. Cherenza also informed the Planning Board that the project required a Physical Alteration Permit from the state and they had an approval pending at the time of the meeting. He also received a permit from the Department of Health stating that the well would still be adequate for the property.
Questions from the Planning Board:

Mr. DiOrio: Can you walk me through the pedestrian traffic flow from the ADA spaces?
Mr. Cherenza: From those spaces, you’d use ramp and the door on the front of the building.
Mr. DiOrio: Is that also accessible from the parking spaces to the east?
SC: We tried to keep the parking elevation level with the building. Because of the changing grade, we’ll have to have some steps up to the building from that side.
Mr. DiOrio: Folks that use those spaces can’t step directly onto the concrete pad, and have to circle around and use the stairs?
SC: That is correct, that’s why we put the ADA spaces on the other side.
Mr. DiOrio: That configuration seems complicated, but I’m sure you had a reason for doing it. My second question has to do with the existing detention areas. In your recommendation for cleaning those areas of sediment, is there a long-term program for removing this sediment, or was it a one-time thing?
SC: I’ll have to consult with my client, but typically we’ll come up with a maintenance program to keep those facilities up to speed.
Mr. DiOrio: I think it’s great that you made the recommendation, and I’d like to see that continue.
Mr. Sardone: What does the elevation look like on the east side of the property?
SC: The plans themselves will look the same as they do now. The architect can address the building’s design.
Mr. Sardone: What about the lighting plan?
SC: The applicant has reached out to National Grid. The plan will probably involve three light poles, all of which will be Dark Sky-compliant LED.
Ms. Douthitt: Is there anything you can do to improve ingress and egress from the north side of Route 3? The bushes there obstruct lines of sight.
Mr. Naccarato: Unfortunately, that property on the other side of the plaza is not owned by the applicant.
Mr. Sardone: The sign on the south side of the entrance also obstructs vision.
Mr. DiOrio: Unfortunately, the Planning Board has lamented that intersection often. I applaud your attempt to improve the entrance with the traffic symbols.
Ms. Williams: Will the islands obstruct drainage at all?
SC: The existing catch basins will service the parking lot.
Ms. Williams: There is no lighting plan included with this.
SC: I have a preliminary plan now. I can provide it if you like, or it can be made a stipulation of approval.

Questions from the public:

Mr. Pennypacker: Is the amount of new impervious surface offset by pervious surfaces?
SC: The square footage of the impervious area will not be changing, so it balances out with the pervious areas.
JP: I would also like to see a long-term maintenance plan for the basins.
Ms. Capalbo: Are more spaces going in the back after those ten are removed. Also, that parking lot is very busy, and the fact that it’s open allows people to move about quickly. I would prefer the plan without the additional spaces.

SC: The regulations allow for more parking than required. Calculations indicate that the amount of impervious surface has been balanced. The islands channelize the traffic, and make it more orderly. The islands will be curbed with landscaping.

Mr. Naccarato next called John Herronian, Hopkinton Liquor Depot. When asked what the purpose of the expansion was, Mr. Herronian stated that the expansion would provide for increased retail area. Once displays are brought in and larger shipments can be accommodated, it will be easier to manage; therefore no new employees will be needed after project completion. He also stated that the siding that faces Main Street will be reviewed, and that they will talk to the neighboring property owner about visibility from the intersection. They would also be willing to create a maintenance plan for the detention basins. There were no questions for Mr. Herronian.

Mr. Lamphere explained to the Board the findings that would need to be made in order to approve the project under Development Plan Review. He said that, like the previous application, conditions can be attached to the motion for approval. Mr. DiOrio stated that he was satisfied with the plan and would not be inclined to have the applicants reappear before the Planning Board, and the other members of the Board concurred.

MR. DIO RIO MOVED TO APPROVE THE DEVELOPMENT PLAN, SUBJECT TO THE STIPULATIONS DISCUSSED DURING THE MEETING: THE PHYSICAL ALTERATION PERMIT BEING APPROVED, A MAINTENANCE PLAN FOR DRAINAGE INFRASTRUCTURE, A FINAL LIGHTING PLAN, AND THAT THE PROJECT IS GENERALLY CONSISTENT WITH THE HOPKINTON COMPREHENSIVE PLAN. FINAL APPROVAL IS TO BE PERFORMED ADMINISTRATIVELY BY THE TOWN PLANNER.

MS. DOUTHITT SECONDED THE MOTION

ALL MEMBERS APPROVE. MOTION PASSES.

NEW BUSINESS:

Discussion – Rhode Island Senate Bill 2591 SUBSTITUTE A, AS AMENDED – Legislation signed into law on 7/6/2016 stating that wetland buffer areas shall be included in the calculation of minimum lot area for parcels of land.

Mr. DiOrio said that he added this item to the agenda last month in case any members of the Board or the public wished to discuss the bill’s implications. The Board conversed about how this would affect Hopkinton’s lots. Mr. DiOrio noted that Hopkinton does not have many rectangular lots, so using traditional measurements has limited applicability to the town. With two acre lots being the standard, the change will not impact the number of lots to a significant degree. Ms. Williams agreed that this change would have little effect on the town. Mr. Pennypacker stated that he felt the law change subverted some local control. This instance may be benign to Hopkinton, but it was
probably passed with some specific places in mind. Mr. Buford agreed with Mr. Pennypacker that the bill eats away at local control of zoning, similarly to the steep slope bill. Mr. DiOrio noted that any changes could be tracked in future projects and examined with the other data in the town. Ms. Capalbo shared that she would approve of some smaller lots being available in the town for starter homes, because younger people are not able to move into the larger lots as easily. She felt that in order to get people to stay here, the areas where more density would be desired should be identified. Mr. Lamphere said that any improvements would still have to be built upland, and this bill doesn’t allow anyone to build in the wetlands buffer areas. He thought that an area like Charlestown would be more affected than Hopkinton, because their zoning ordinance previously excluded these areas from development.

SOLICITOR’S REPORT:
Discussion – Posting of Planning Board meeting videos to the Town of Hopkinton website

Mr. McAllister brought this to the Board’s attention because the town’s policy on meeting record availability is currently being reviewed. He explained that the state’s Open Meetings laws require that the minutes from public meetings be posted online. The Town Manager is making an effort to implement uniform procedures for the three major entities: the Town Council, Planning Board, and Zoning Board. Since the town would have to field requests for meetings information, it would be easier to have the information available on the town’s website instead, including the video recordings that are currently only available for the Town Council meetings. He added that he thought it was a good idea from a legal point of view, and would be good to have a policy of transparency.

Ms. Douthitt and Mr. Sardone had no objections to the policy. Mr. DiOrio stated that he would be happy to oblige if the other bodies participate as well. Ms. Williams had concerns that people could use the information in a fashion that goes beyond freedom of information. She also pointed out that the Town Council is elected and the Planning and Zoning Boards are appointed. Mr. DiOrio added that he thought it would be beneficial for applicants to know exactly where the Board stood. No vote was taken, but all members consented to the meeting videos being posted to the town’s website.

PLANNER’S REPORT:
Murre-Lorenson Administrative Subdivision – Plat 11, Lots 5 & 5B

CORRESPONDENCE AND UPDATES:
The RI Statewide Planning Program was still informally reviewing the town’s Comprehensive Plan Update. The plan’s maps have been completed by IT/GIS Director Ed Vazquez, and would be transmitted to the state for review soon. Mr. DiOrio asked that the Comprehensive Plan be kept on the agenda so that the Planning Board can stay up to date on the project.
APPROVAL OF MINUTES:

The Planning Board voted unanimously to approve the minutes from the June 1, 2016 meeting. The minutes from July 6, 2016 would be held until the next meeting.

PUBLIC COMMENT:

Mr. Harvey Buford said that he would like to review a copy of the Comprehensive Plan draft sent to the state.

Mr. DiOrio asked that, going forward, if an agenda item is moved to the top of the meeting, that for clarity it be indicated in the agenda.

DATE OF NEXT REGULAR MEETING: September 7, 2016

ADJOURNMENT:

Mr. DiOrio moved to adjourn the meeting
Mr. Sardone seconded the motion
All members approve. Motion passes.

The meeting adjourned at 9:40.

Attest: ________________________________
Sean Henry, Planning Board Clerk

Approved: