

TOWN OF WELLESLEY



MASSACHUSETTS

ZONING BOARD OF APPEALS

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ROBERT W. LEVY
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June 14, 2018
7:30 pm
Juliani Meeting Room
Town Hall

Zoning Board of Appeals Members Present: Richard L. Seegel, Chairman
David G. Sheffield
Robert W. Levy

2018-43, BABSON COLLEGE 16 BABSON COLLEGE DRIVE (CENTENNIAL PARK)

Presenting the case at the hearing was David Grissino, Director, Capital Projects & Planning, Babson College, who said that this is the fifth time before the Board in the past two years, as part of a series of projects leading up to their centennial which begins in 2019. He said that the project before the Board tonight is for Centennial Park. He said that also present at the public hearing were architects from Finegold Alexander, engineers from H.W. Moore, Lee Kennedy, Contractor, and Stephen Stimson Associates, Landscape Architects.

Mr. Grissino said that that origins of this project go back to the late 1940's to early 1950's when Roger Babson, in an effort to highlight his view that his students should have a broad view and understand their place in the world and their opportunity to improve it, constructed the Babson World Globe. He said that since the early 1950's the College has had an interest in global perspective and has had an increasing international presence on campus. He said that, in addition to the globe, Babson has also had the Fountain of Flags that sat in front of the Horn Library and that has also symbolized Babson's global interest and represented the diversity of the campus. He said that they have over 83 countries represented in their student body. He said that they were previously before this Board with a project for an addition at the Horn Library that required the Fountain of Flags to be relocated. He said that the globe has sat in a deteriorating state for many years and has not spun for a long time. He said that the exterior is bleached out by sun. He said that the intention is to take these two symbols and bring them to a single location on campus. He said that the location that was selected is prominent. He said that the first stop sign is a threshold into the core of the campus and the site that was chosen is right there on the right hand side of the road. He said that it is at a major campus crossroads where many students come from the residential quadrangle to the dining hall or to the Weissman Center in the future. He said that it is a major pedestrian crossroad and a vehicular threshold on the campus.

Mr. Grissino said that they began disassembling the globe in March. He said that they lifted the 25 ton sphere off of its base and it is now sitting in the Trim Parking Lot where it is awaiting restoration. He said that they are about to remove the rest of the components in an underground bunker that houses all of the mechanics that make the globe spin and will refurbish them. He said that after it is refurbished, the globe will be moved to the center of the park where there will be space around it for gathering and activities. He said that there will be three large landscape berms, some historic markers that line a walkway, and a bronze statue of Roger Babson. He said that the existing Fountain of Flags has only 16 flagpoles, so they are rotating the flags every few weeks so that everyone can see their flag flying. He said that in the new design, every flag for a country that is represented will have its own flagpole. He said that there will be 100 flagpoles. He said that some of the flagpoles will be used to celebrate other things such as diversity and other groups on campus that have their own flags.

Mr. Grissino said that it is a complex process to move the globe. He said that it takes a very large crane because of the weight. He said that they will need to do tree clearing and site prep. He said that they will take down 35 existing trees on site but the end plan will replace them with 41 new trees that are a mix of taller trees and understory trees to compliment the new layout.

Mr. Grissino said that there will be very little utility infrastructure. He said that the only construction will be to rebuild the concrete bunker that houses the mechanics that make the globe spin and some electrical service to power the globe. He said that there will be a sump pump in the mechanical space.

Mr. Grissino said that they will have a drainage system. He said that the underground detention system was intended to improve the surface runoff.

Mr. Grissino said that there is a lot of ongoing construction on campus. He said that the hope is to begin construction on this project in the fall so that they can have the concrete bunker completed before the weather turns so that they can put all of the mechanics back in and move the globe back in the winter so that the surface can be restored. He said that the Weissman Center will be complete by that time and most of the heavy trucking will be complete for the Horn Library. He said that all of the trucking routes that have been used for all of their other projects will be continued because they have been successful. He said that trucks will come in from Route 128 and follow Cedar and Hunnewell Streets to the campus main gate. He said that they do not use the west gate for any construction activity except when absolutely necessary.

Mr. Grissino said that they will have to excavate a hole for the concrete bunker, level the plaza and create berms. He said that the site will need about 700 cubic yards of fill to be imported. He said that any cut will remain on the site but they will need a little bit more brought in. He said that they can use fill from other projects on the campus.

Mr. Grissino said that they met with various boards and the Department of Public Works (DPW). He said that they had several meetings with the Design Review Board (DRB) and received final approval from them last night, subject to a couple of issues to follow up on concerning lighting design for lighting of the globe and the flagpoles. He said that they would like to have the globe serve as a landmark and beacon on campus. He said that at the top of every fourth or sixth light pole, there will be a fixture at the top that will light the flagpoles in the immediate area. He said that there will be a special fixture in the landscape berms that sit around the globe to wash it with an even glow. He said that DRB was interested in Babson following up with final details and put some parameters on the scale of the fixtures.

Mr. Grissino said that DRB was interested in learning more about the brick coursing. He said that the area around the globe and the plaza is a combination of granite and brick. He said that DRB was interested to know how the two systems will work together and how the patterns will lay out. He said that it is a complicated geometry that DRB was interested in knowing more about.

Mr. Grissino said that they met with DPW on many occasions. He said that DPW granted approval with some minor conditions. He said that DPW would like to understand more about where the globe has been since 1952. He said that Babson is currently in the process of removing the carriage and the access that the globe has been sitting on so that those components can be refurbished. He said that the plan is to demolish the existing concrete bunker and have it removed, fill the hole, cover, seed, and sod it so that it is a blank canvas. He said that Babson is in the process of coming up with a vision for that space. He said that they have an opportunity to create some purposely designed open space. He said that they do not know what the final landscape design will be where the globe has been next to Coleman Hall but they can follow up once they have those details. He said that they hope to demolish the bunker and have it covered before the students arrive in the fall.

Mr. Grissino said that DPW asked for a bar scale on the plans.

Mr. Grissino said that they would like to begin site preparation in the fall so that they can construct the bunker, reinstall the refurbished components of the globe and move the globe over the winter. He said that they will then finalize restoration of the globe and finish the landscaping in the spring, with the hope of having the globe operational for the centennial celebration at commencement in 2019. He said that it will coincide with the dedication of the library addition.

Mr. Levy asked if there are any hydraulics, oils or hazardous wastes involved when they remove the mechanics. Mr. Grissino said that it is primarily electrical. He said that there was a chain drive that was part of the mechanics that made the globe work that has not worked in 20 years. He said that they do not anticipate anything significant in terms of removal other than grease for the bearings. He said that it was primarily electrically driven. He said that they brought in specialists to help with dis- and re-assembly. He said that because the scale of the globe and the mechanics is so large, the closest comparison they could find for the engineers was moveable bridges. He said that they do not anticipate any significant environmental issues with disassembly.

Mr. Sheffield said that the tops of the walls are not horizontal. He asked if they have a slope to them. Mr. Grissino said that there will be monolithic granite slabs in the berms that create the benches are they are level. He said that the concept for this park is a little different. He said that in the winter when it is empty, they did not want it to feel as empty as it might. He said that that the monolithic granite benches become a sculptural element and the landscape will have a monolithic granite base for the Roger Babson statue and historic markers along the major pathway that cuts across the site. Mr. Sheffield confirmed that the benches can be used for seating. Mr. Grissino said that they will be tiered as well. He submitted renderings that had been submitted to the DRB. Mr. Sheffield said that Detail #3 on Plan L 801 lower left is for a retaining wall. He there is a note that says, "razor edge" on the wall. Mr. Grissino said that there will be retaining walls as you go to the backside of the berms. He said that there is some need for retention. He said that those walls are not for sitting. Mr. Sheffield said that he was concerned about skateboarders using them. Mr. Grissino said that the area around these walls is landscaped on both sides. He said that it was all about getting the landscape to work. He said that the retaining walls will be concrete.

Mr. Levy asked about tree removal. He asked if this project will be subject to the Tree Bylaw. Mr. Grissino said that this project will not cross any of the thresholds in the Tree Bylaw. He said that the Building Inspector has determined that the campus is the lot. He said that there will be no construction for occupation, just the underground mechanics. He said that as Babson exits the phase of expansion, they are being mindful of the next phase, which is creating landscapes around the buildings that can fill in over time. He said that they will try to put back as many trees as possible around the campus. Mr. Sheffield said that often a campus like Babson becomes an arboretum.

Mr. Seegel said that a Norway Spruce was listed in the list of trees. Adrian Flores, Landscape Architect, said that there is one regular species spruce. He said that there are no Norway Spruces in the specs.

Mr. Levy asked about signage. Mr. Grissino said that there will be ten historic markers in the park along the walkway that is the major connection between the freshmen /sophomore quadrangle to the dining hall. He said that the markers will celebrate the first 100 years of the college. He said that bronze plaques that sit on granite bases will occur at regular intervals across the park. He said that there will be some interpretive signage about the college's history. He said that there will likely be a plaque at the base of the Roger Babson statue as well as something at the globe to mark its history. He said that there was interpretive signage at the old site but they do not anticipate putting all of that back. He said that they are trying to figure out how they can best convey the history of the globe. He said that they may choose to do that along the historic walk. He said that there will not be a sign that says, "Centennial Park" with the address because there will not be any occupied space that the Fire Department needs to find.

Mr. Seegel said that the project is subject to a special permit for a major construction project in a Water Supply Protection District (WSPD). He asked how the requirements will be addressed.

Jim White, H.W. Moore Associates, said that they designed the stormwater system in accordance with State and Town regulations. He said that the system will mediate all peak runoff. He said that stormwater will infiltrate at the rate and quantity that is required. He said that the system will have a stormwater treatment device that will remove more than 80 percent of Total Suspended Solids (TSS). He said that runoff will then go to a detention system that is designed to capture and infiltrate the required volume of water. He said that infiltration system will also clean the water further so that there will be 90 percent TSS removal, which far exceeds the requirements. He said that the system has been reviewed by the Town's Engineer Department and found it to be acceptable.

Mr. Grissino distributed a plan for the Lighting Approach – Flags and Globe (Sides). He said that it is essentially a light pole that at the top of every fourth to sixth pole will have a cylinder of light that will just light the immediate flags around it, instead of having a light on each and every flag. He said that the idea was to have very selective points to illuminate flags in the immediate area around the light source. He said that the regulations for lighting flags at night does not talk about any level of brightness but that they be visible. He said that they will also use the pole fixtures around the globe. He said that they need to get the light source about 18 feet off the ground to hit the equator of the globe for an even wash of light. He said that there will be a light ring under the globe that will shine up. He said that light will be smaller than the circumference of the globe and will be dark sky compliant. He said that they will likely be LED. Mr. Sheffield asked if the fixtures will dimmable. He said that there could be issues with direct glare. Mr. Grissino said that the DRB wants to see the final size. He said that the intent is that the lighting be unobtrusive in the landscape. Mr. Sheffield said that it is another structural device in terms of pattern. He said that the lighting could be directional or way finding. Mr. Grissino said that they want the lighting to blend in with the landscape. He said that the fixture at the top of the pole will be a custom fixture that will

not exceed 18 inches. He said that there will be a couple of lights that will illuminate the Roger Babson statue and they will be full shielded down lights. Mr. Sheffield said that the lighted portion of the poles for the globe will be about six feet.

Mr. Levy asked about rotation of the globe. Mr. Grissino said that they are looking at technology where they can vary the speed. He said that there may be times when they will want the globe's spin to be more obvious. He said that it will be a variable speed motor. He said that the mechanics are complicated but the technology to spin it is not. Mr. Sheffield asked if the globe will be topographical or show national boundaries. Mr. Grissino said that the globe originally showed national boundaries. He said that it was an educational tool that was never designed to be outside. He said that there was supposed to be a pavilion built around it. He said that the original globe had porcelain tiles that deteriorated. He said that when the globe was restored in the 1990's, vinyl was put on. He said that they are now having a campus conversation about which direction to go in. He said that they found a company that will hand paint the globe. He said that they will be able to easily repair it or make changes. He said that the vinyl is not able to be changed. He said that there will be a maintenance program to keep it looking good.

Mr. Levy said that there does not appear to be issues with construction mitigation with a lot of workers and vehicles over a period of time. Mr. Grissino said that the biggest issue will be the site work when they have to dig the hole for the globe and create the berms. He said that a of the globe restoration work will be done by small crews and some of it will be done off site. Mr. Sheffield confirmed that Babson will be using its standard Construction Management Plan (CMP). Mr. Grissino said that they will be using the same team as the Horn Library and they know the rules and how to work.

Mr. Seegel asked if there is a Photometric Plan. Mr. Grissino said that there is no plan. He said that they will work with the lighting company so that there are no impacts. He said that he had a conversation about the lighting with David Walsh, who is a neighbor, and assured him that the globe will not be visible from off campus.

The Board discussed applying standard Site Plan Approval (SPA)conditions, as well as incorporation of the CMP and the DRB condition that the fixture at the top of the flag pole light be no greater than 18 inches.

Mr. Levy moved and Mr. Sheffield seconded the motion to grant Site Plan Approval, such to conditions, as discussed. The Board voted unanimously to grant Site Plan Approval.

Mr. Sheffield moved and Mr. Levy seconded the motion to grant approval of a special permit for a major construction project in a Water Supply Protection District. The Board voted unanimously to grant a special permit.

ZBA 2017-85, BABSON COLLEGE, 9 MAP HILL DRIVE (WEISSMAN CENTER)

David Grissino, Director, Capital Projects & Planning, Babson College, said that Babson will be coming before the Board to make a determination that proposed changes to the landscaping at the Weissman Center are a minor modification to the Site Plan Approval that do not require a public hearing.

Mr. Grissino said that there has been a change to the landscape plans. He said that when the Site Plan Approval came before the Board, Babson did not have a landscape architect for this project. He said that Babson is now working with landscape architects on multiple projects to make the campus more consistent and unified. He said that a series of changes will result in a much richer blending of planting for seasonal

color, particularly with more trees. He said that proposed changes to the Weissman Center plans are improvements that involve only plantings. Mr. Sheffield said that the new plan is far improved and creates fluidity for a total campus feel.

Mr. Seegel asked about construction trucking on the campus. Mr. Grissino said that the construction at the Weissman Center will be done in the fall. He said that there will be no planting until October.

As there was no further business to come before the Board, the hearing was adjourned at 8:20 pm.

Respectfully submitted,

Lenore R. Mahoney
Executive Secretary

DRAFT