



ZONING BOARD OF APPEALS

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ROBERT W. LEVY
WALTER B. ADAMS
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Thursday, October 19, 2017, 7:30 pm

Juliani Meeting Room
Town Hall

Zoning Board of Appeals Members Present: J. Randolph Becker, Acting Chairman
Robert W. Levy
Walter B. Adams

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

Presenting the case at the hearing were David Grissino, Director of Capital Projects & Planning, Babson College, Stephen Langer, Esq., Jessica Wala, PE, Nitsch Engineering, Stuart Meurer, Windover Construction, Erik Tellander, AIA, William Rawn Associates and Vasso Mathes, Senior Capital Project Manager, Babson College.

Mr. Grissino said that 20 years ago land was broken off from Babson College to found Olin College. He said that written into the charter for Olin College is the aspiration that Olin, as a school of Engineering and Babson, as a Business School would find ways to collaborate with each other and find points of intersection to enrich both of their student experiences. He said that it has been done successfully over the past 20 years but in an ad hoc way. He said that the Weissman Center will be the first real purpose built space specifically designed to enhance that collaboration. He said that the program has expanded to include Wellesley College. He said that a group meets regularly to talk about curriculum overlap. He said that the Weissman Center will be a resource for all of the local institutions.

Mr. Grissino said that site selection was intentional to provide a common ground that is equal walking distance from each campus along Map Hill Drive. He said that the site is currently undeveloped. He said that it is not a large site or building. He said that it will fit comfortably on the site – right size for endeavor –

Mr. Grissino said that the program for the building consists of three main areas, one of which is for ideation or brainstorming where people come together at the early stages to generate ideas. He said that there is a large classroom which is modeled on a classroom that they have in the Olin Building on the Babson Campus that is part of the grad program. He said that the heart of the building will be a large workshop for hands on work. He said that the workshop will have tools, spray paint booths, small electronics, sewing machines, 3-D printers, large format printers and all of the things that the students need to translate ideas to physical form. He said that students can share strategies to bring the products to market.

Mr. Grissino said that this is a very forward looking and innovative building. He said that the Babson Campus has a set of design guidelines and standards that were developed by the trustees which recognize that Babson has a historic tradition on the campus that many would like to enhance and continue. He said that the challenge for the design team was to strike a balance between progressive things that will happen at the Center with traditional architecture and making it feel like a Babson building. – exterior development was important

Mr. Grissino said that development of the site focused on easy access from both campuses. He said that there is one front door. He said that there will be access to outdoor space with patios immediately adjacent to the ideation space, a large patio connected to the workshop space where large fold away doors will connect the interior and exterior. He said that the intention is to keep the surrounding undeveloped landscape. He said that it will not be an irrigated, manicured landscape. He said that they hope to keep things simple. He said that there will be a green roof on a portion of the building that will be easy to maintain.

Mr. Grissino said that they will continue use the main gate for all construction. He said that they will use the Trim Parking Lot for construction parking. He said that working hours will be similar to the other projects on campus. He said that they have had a lot of success in the past. He said that they are about to complete the tennis courts that the Board approved and that project has gone very well. He said that all of the routes to and from major highways will continue to be used.

Mr. Grissino said that there are multiple construction projects on campus now. He said that this project will be happening at the same time as the athletic center which broke ground in September. He said that this is in a distinct location and a lot of the traffic will not overlap except at the gate. He said that the busiest trucking activity will not overlap. He said that they will be done with all of the foundation work at the athletic center before they begin the foundation work for this building. He said that some steel work will happen concurrently but the steel erection at this facility will be very quick. He said that they were cognizant when working with their campus partners to make sure that the campus remains safe when they have multiple construction projects happening at the same time.

Mr. Grissino said that they met with the Design Review Board (DRB) over the summer, got some great feedback that had some influence over the exterior design, circulation around the building and detailing on the stone walls. He said that they received approval on September 27, 2017.

Mr. Grissino said that they met with the Department of Public Works (DPW), who provided a series of comments a few weeks ago. He said that Babson has since followed up with DPW to answer their questions. He said that there were two outstanding issues that involve dealing with an existing drain line that will be displaced during construction and then put back in place. He said that Babson will work with Windover Construction and can submit a plan to the Building Department in advance so that they are aware of the situation. He said that they may not have a solution until they are out in the field. He said that it is the main drain line that comes down through the site. He said that this will be slab on grade construction. He said that they will replace it with a new pipe with all of the proper safety precautions. He said that during the interim, they will have a plan to re-route it.

Mr. Grissino said that the other issue relates to accessible parking spaces. He said that there are seven accessible spaces directly across the street at the Trim Lot. He said that DPW recognized that but also recognized that Babson should construct a crosswalk. He said that there is no direct crosswalk at the mouth of the Trim Lot crossing the street. He said that there is a sidewalk but you have to work your way a little bit closer to the Trim Dining Hall before you reach that. He said that an alternative would be to do some re-striping within the Hollister Lot to provide two spaces immediately adjacent to the building. Mr. Adams asked about the distance between the front door and the lot across the street in the closest place where they could put the accessible spaces. Mr. Grissino said that most of the buildings on campus do not have parking

adjacent to them. He said that there seven accessible spaces in the Trim Lot, immediately across the street from the project site. He said that there are eight accessible spaces at the Coleman Lot, which is adjacent to the Map Hill residential area. He said that there are clusters of buildings and clusters of parking. He said that they do not assigned spaces to projects. He said that it is seen more comprehensively as a pool. He said that currently at the Hollister Lot there are two spaces that are adjacent to the building, two spaces adjacent to the Reynolds Campus Center, and they could propose to put two spaces adjacent to the Weissman Center. He said that where they are able, they like to locate spaces near the buildings. He said that the campus model for parking typically works as more of a pool. He said that they are investigating this on a campus wide basis to locate accessible spaces adjacent to buildings when they can.

Mr. Adams asked if the Access Board has a 300 foot rule. Mr. Grissino said that the Map Hill residential area has been undergoing systematic rehabilitation. He said that they have been having conversations with the Access Board about developing an overall campus wide accessibility plan. He said that it is in the early stages and has come out because of the work that Babson is doing in those buildings. He said that it recognizes that a campus operates differently. He said that it is an evolving conversation. He said that for this project, they are confident and feel that it is appropriate to those spaces adjacent to the entry of this building.

Mr. Becker asked how they came up with the number two. Mr. Grissino said that there are currently four spaces that are identified as being closest to the building. He said that they identified the area that was closest, knowing that they can re-stripe it to quickly accommodate two accessible spaces. He said that it follows the patterns of having a pair of accessible spaces adjacent to each of the surrounding buildings.

Mr. Levy asked why the Planning Board thought that the Tree Bylaw applied. Mr. Grissino said that he had a follow up conversation with Victor Panak in the Planning Department. He said that when he mentioned that the campus is the lot, Mr. Panak recognized that the Tree Bylaw does not apply. He said that future projects will not have that confusion.

Mr. Grissino said that there was a question about hazardous materials in a Water Supply Protection District (WSPD). He said that anticipated activities will be spray paint, paint, 3-D printers and the like. He said that they built in proper ventilation in the mechanical systems. He said that they do not anticipate toxic materials being flushed down the sink. He said that they have Babson uses Innovative Safety Services Inc. to oversee all the health and safety protocols and work with the maintenance department about products being used. He said that Innovative Safety Services monitors and reports a lot of the activities in the buildings. He said that they will participate in the operations of this building as well. He said that this is an opportunity for Babson to wade into the making of things. He said that it will not be as intense as the kinds of activities that happen at Olin.

Mr. Adams said that the area where paints, solvents, adhesives, etc. will be used will be 10 percent of the total area of the first floor. He said that they could be considered to be accessory uses. He said that it will not eliminate the need to treat flammables, etc. Mr. Grissino said that in the plans they have provided a dedicated sink for those kinds of activities and clean up. Mr. Adams asked if there will be any kind of gas and oil separators or drains in the building. Mr. Grissino said that there will not.

Mr. Becker said that he did not see anything on the plan that corresponded to a spray booth. He said that it is hard to define what will happen in the building. He said that the ideation space where people will try to foster new ideas. He asked the site is located in a WSPD. He asked how they will control what happens in there. Mr. Grissino said that there will be a dedicated staff person to oversee the activities. He said that a lot of that will fall to the faculty who will directing the projects. He said that they can establish protocols for what can and cannot be in the building.

Mr. Adams said that some of the doors roll up in the resource and printing areas. He said that a roll down door does not constitute a legal exit. He said that someone should speak with the Building Inspector about that.

Mr. Grissino said that Babson has not had a 24/7 center on campus before. He said that Olin does have that. He said that Babson does not have a culture of leaving things out. He said that Olin does leave its project materials out. He said that these conversations are happening now with the faculty and administration. He said that this is an experiment for Babson. He said that the workshop is a space that students will occupy for a term or length of a project. He said that it will be more like an architectural studio where you have a space for an extended period of time and you leave your project material out. He said that having the rolling doors open is part of that culture. He said that they anticipate the small tools area having more noise, so it has more acoustic separation. Mr. Adams asked if the spray booth will be in the resource areas. Mr. Grissino said that it will be and it will be vented directly up. He said that all of the mechanical equipment will be located in a mezzanine directly above the resource areas, so there is no outdoor equipment.

Mr. Adams asked how many people, including students, faculty and guests will occupy the building at its highest use. Mr. Grissino said that occupancy may hover around 60 people if there is a full class in session. He said that there is a Babson, Olin, Wellesley advisory group, comprised of provosts, faculty and faculty from each institution who are developing the program. He said that it is difficult because all of the colleges have different schedules. He said that the classroom is not intended to be part of the general pool for the campus but for strategic class work that is about the collaboration. He said that they do not envision a random class in there.

Mr. Adams asked about the proposed water retention system. Ms. Wala said that the stormwater system will address the increase in impervious area and peak runoff rates associated with this project. She said that they designed the system to comply with Wellesley and Massachusetts Stormwater Standards. She said that the systems to store water and release it slowly through a control structure. She said that it will either meet or reduce the peak runoff rates. Mr. Adams said that the test pits indicated that there is some water that is less than five feet from the surface. He asked how the retention system will interface with other water close to the surface. Mr. Becker said that the WSPD has requirements. He said that the first requirement relates to the impervious till and what constraints there are for re-injecting to groundwater. He said that the second requirement relates to earth work at the front where there will be less than five feet to groundwater. He asked how those issues will be dealt with under the bylaw.

Ms. Wala said that the groundwater that was encountered, similar to other locations on the Babson campus, it is expected that the groundwater levels are perched above glacial till, so it does not reflect the actual groundwater table. She said that once the soil is excavated, the groundwater elevation will flow to a more natural state. She said that based on geotechnical data, they do not anticipate that the water will make its way into the system and back out. Mr. Becker said that the requirements in the bylaw that are intended to protect groundwater is not the water that is being talked about here because this water is perched.

Ms. Wala said that there is minimal area where the elevation will be excavated to less than five feet. She said that it is not a concern because some of those areas will be paved the stormwater will be collected in the system and treated before it is discharged. Mr. Becker said that the five feet is to the perched water table not to groundwater.

Mr. Grissino said that the Bay filter system will be the fourth bay filter on campus. He said that is something that have tried to incorporate into their projects because it has been effective. He said that they have maintenance programs for each of them, it is a system that they know, and they will follow all of the protocols as they do with other building systems. Mr. Becker asked if there will be on staff people trained to do the heavy work with the system or will it be done by a third party. Mr. Grissino said that he was not sure. He said that they are committed to keeping them maintained.

Mr. Adams asked about plans for exterior lighting. Mr. Grissino said that there will be some recessed lighting in the canopies that extend on either side of the building to provide lighting at the building entry. He said that the existing street lighting provides the balance of the background lighting. He said that the photometrics show that lighting will be at the proper levels around the site and along the pathways. He said that because this will be a 24/7 facility, there will be additional security cameras, so they will make sure that the lighting and the cameras are well coordinated. He said that the Babson Public Safety Department will monitor the cameras.

Mr. Becker said that there will be a lot of glass on the building. He asked about interior light that will be visible. Mr. Villander said that there will be a lot of high bay lights, not pendants. He said that the intent is to provide task lighting. He said that there may be some pendants in the kitchen to give it a more homey feel. He said that they plan to keep most of the lighting up high that downlights for tasks. Mr. Grissino said that the primary elevations that face out will be glass. He said that it will be a beacon that is welcoming. He said that there is some safety by having some light spilling out. He said that the people who will see it are cars that are parked in the Trim Lot. He said that in this case, the glow is positive for safety, given the 24/7 nature of the building. Mr. Adams said that there seemed to be a lot of students during the day around Mandell Family Hall. Mr. Grissino said that is a residence and there is a parking lot there. Mr. Adams said that the idea of a beacon is a good idea.

Mr. Grissino said that the Planning Board commented about a Construction General Permit, which is a new federal regulation. He said that this project will not cross the threshold. He said that there will be less than an acre of redevelopment. He said that they are going for LEED certification, so a lot of the metrics and requirements will be ultimately met through a different process

Mr. Adams said that some of the issues that DPW commented on concerned the connections for domestic and fire water. Mr. Grissino said that they kept them separate. He said that they enter the building in two locations there are immediately adjacent to where they are being used. He said that the first spur goes in at the northwest corner for the fire protection systems and the other goes around to the small toilet corridor that is in the middle of the building. He said that separation was seen as a positive from Babson's perspective.

Mr. Becker said that the Planning Board commented on the permeable pipe. He said that the glacial till is impermeable, so why is there permeable pipe. Ms. Wala said that the purpose of the pipe and the stone is to mitigate for peak runoff rates. She said that to make the system more efficient, they will use the storage that is provided in the stones. She said that the soils here are too impermeable to account for infiltration. She said that under the new condition there may be some reduction in runoff that gets to the Map Hill Drive drain main. She said that Nitsch did a conservative analysis but in good conditions there may be some infiltration.

Mr. Adams asked about roof drains. Ms. Wala said that roof drains will connect to the infiltration system.

Mr. Adams asked about maintenance of the green roof. Mr. Grissino said that there is a stair that goes up to the mechanical mezzanine. He said that there will be a doorway out for maintenance only. HE said that it will be a low tray system that hopefully will require very low maintenance, possibly twice a year. He said that the green roof will be at the mezzanine level. He said that it will sit on the roof for the lower level. He said that access will be from the mezzanine level. He said that it is the first green roof on the Babson Campus. He said that ultimately the Building & Grounds Department will be responsible for its maintenance. Mr. Levy said that there is no barrier at the end, which could be a safety concern. Mr. Grissino said that it will be trays of sedum on the roof membrane. He said that it will not be a deep system. Mr. Adams said that the Building Inspector may require a guardrail system.

Mr. Becker said that the Tree Bylaw does not apply. He said that the existing conditions plan shows the trees. He said that Plan 0.01 shows the completed trees but it is hard to figure out how the two fit together.

He asked how many trees will be taken out and how many will be replaced. Mr. Grissino said that the revised drawings from October 12, 2017 show an update to Plan C2.00 that highlights the trees that will be taken out. He said that the site is currently undeveloped. He said that a number of trees will be removed. He said that they tried to strategically leave some mature trees at the corners to frame the building. He said that some trees will be added back in but will not be completely balanced. He said that there will be more trees removed than will be added back in. He said that they tried hard to minimize the visual disruption by leaving groupings of large trees at the corners and also providing an opportunity for the new plantings to come in and mature over time. He said that the area at the rear where they will cut into the hill will return to a natural state. He said that it is important to Babson to maintain the character as a wooded New England campus. He said that when they do projects, they look to other parts of the campus where they may add landscaping and trees. He said that they took out a number of trees for the tennis courts but they created a new open space in its place. He said that the Weissman site is a small limited area. He said that they only take down the trees that they need to. He said that they are trying to keep the site unirrigated, very easy to maintain, local native plantings so that it returns to more of a natural state over time.

Mr. Adams asked if they anticipate using the site exclusively for materials storage or will they use the parking lot across the street. Mr. Grissino said that they anticipate being able to operate within the fence line. He said that the updated materials included information about how the construction site will work. He said that there may be limited times when they will have to use the Trim Lot for staging. He said that the hope is to keep everything within the site perimeter.

Mr. Becker discussed vehicular circulation. He said that the thought is that the lot is the campus, so there is no change because this is internal. He said that there will be no new driveways. He said that circulation, queuing and parking will stay the same. Mr. Adams said that the construction vehicles will be following the same routes that were used for the last three or four projects.

Mr. Becker said that the DRB supported the Applicant's contention that the project will be compatible with its surroundings.

Mr. Becker said that innovation will not be a noxious use. He said that intensity of use is not an issue with regard to the totality of the campus.

Mr. Becker said that most of the conditions of approval will relate to the WSPD. He said that given the flexibility in the use of the building, there should be a condition that requires that what goes into the building meets the standards of the bylaw for a WSPD. Mr. Levy said that staff or teachers will be regulating any potential hazardous material on the site. He asked how they will be trained. Mr. Grissino said that they will make sure that there is an understanding about how Babson, Olin and Wellesley College groups will oversee products and regulate activities in the building. He said that ISSI maintains and records health and safety across the campus. He said that this will be part of their regular program. Mr. Becker said that beyond recording activities, there has to be control so that bad stuff does not come into the building. Mr. Langer said that Olin has experience and will be part of the process. Mr. Becker said that he anticipated a condition that requires that there be a process in place that protects the materials used, stored and disposed of in the building. He said that another condition would relate to training for the contractor for the O & M. He said that people performing the maintenance must be qualified to do so, whether they are trained by Babson employees or outside contractors.

Mr. Becker said that his draft conditions contained a lot of the same conditions as for other recent Babson projects concerning refueling on site, work hours, parking in the Trim Lot and wheel wash.

Mr. Adams said that the Board had not seen the updated plans. He asked about the change list. Mr. Grissino said that on October 11, 2017, Babson submitted via email, a set of drawings that clarified a number of things there were part of the DPW letter. He said that he dropped off a full sized hard copy on the following

day. He said that the design of the site, the building or the utilities did not change. He said that Mr. Saraceno had commented that a third benchmark should be added to the surveys. He said that they erroneously said on the Cover Sheet that there was a Plan C5.03. He said that they have removed that label. He said that on the civil site Plan C.20 there were a number of cuts in the streets for utility tie ins that were consolidated and clustered the utilities more tightly. He said that repeated over several drawings. He said that on Plan C.20 they added an X on the trees to be removed. He said that on Plan A0.01 site plan there is an L shaped retaining wall adjacent to the accessible parking spaces. He said that it separates the parking from the accessible path that goes up to front door. He said that DRB suggested that it be moved by about a foot or a foot and a half away from the parking spaces to allow for proper snow clearing. He said that the wall was moved about a foot and a half toward the entrance of the building. He said that DRB also suggested that the south terrace be connected to the pathway that comes down along the side of the site. He said that it is about a three to four foot section of sidewalk. He said that they added that connection. He said that on Plan A0.07 there were three stone wall details shown. He said that they removed the one that showed an integrated bench on the upper left. He said that they now only have the loose laid dry stone walls. He said that they simply removed a detail and instead of having an integrated bench in that area, for maintenance and snow clearance, they will have a bench that can be removed in the winter weather.

Mr. Becker said that the Board has to make findings related to the WSPD. He said that the soil conditions preclude reinjecting the runoff to groundwater. He said that the depth of groundwater at the cut is less than five feet because it is to perched groundwater rather than to the water table. He said that the bylaw is intended to protect the groundwater table not perched groundwater because perched groundwater is not the water supply.

Mr. Grissino said that they hope to be able to remove the trees during the January recess. He said that the plan is to apply for a building permit in early December to give the Building Department time to review and grant the full building permit before any tree removal. Mr. Levy said that the Applicant can proceed during the appeal period at its own risk. Mr. Grissino said that Mr. Grant would like to have everything complete before there is any tree removal.

Mr. Grissino said that they held a neighborhood meeting a couple of weeks ago at the Executive Center on campus. He said that it was attended by residents of Wellesley and Needham and there were no issues with the project. Mr. Becker asked if the Needham Zoning Board of Appeals was notified. Mr. Grissino said that he was not sure of that. He said that the project site sits entirely in Wellesley.

Mr. Levy moved and Mr. Adams seconded the motion to close the public hearing. The Board voted unanimously to close the public hearing. The Board said that it will hold a business meeting on November 2, 2017 at 7:15 pm to vote approval of Site Plan Approval, a Special Permit for a Major Construction Project in a Water Supply Protection District and associated conditions.

As there was no further business to come before the Board, the hearing was adjourned at 8:46 pm.

Respectfully submitted,

Lenore R. Mahoney
Executive Secretary