

Walpole Planning Board Minutes
October 10, 2023
Town Hall
7 pm

Present: Board members: Chair Jeff Miller, Vice-Chair Dennis Marcom, Clerk Jason Perron, Joanna Andros, Trevor MacLachlan, Select Board Representative Steve Dalessio. Alternates: Travis Adams and Bill Carmody. Absent: Board member Jeff Harrington.

Call to Order: Mr. Miller called the meeting to order at 7 pm. He asked Travis Adams to sit in for the absent board member.

Minutes: Review minutes of September meeting and September workshop meeting. Mr. Marcom made a motion to approve the September meeting and workshop minutes as written. Mr. Perron seconded the motion and the motion passed.

Old Business:

Public Hearing:

Site Plan: NGP Management LLC/Walpole Properties, LLC, proposes 1815 square-foot Dunkin coffee shop with drive-thru at intersection of Route 12 and Upper Walpole Road.

Mr. Jason Hill, project manager for TF Moran on the Dunkin in Walpole proposal, submitted some changes in response to comments made at the initial meeting last month. To repeat, the location of the Dunkin coffee shop is at the point on a piece of property that is bounded on the east side by Upper Walpole Road and on the west side by Route 12. Mr. Hill said the parking lot has 16 parking spaces for customers who want to go inside. There are also two handicap spaces. The truck parking for unloading Dunkin products will remain the same at the upper northeast side parking lot. It may also be for employees. There is room for 13 cars to queue up in the drive-thru lane. According to Mr. Clifford, in terms of the average time in the queue per vehicle, that is typically about 30 seconds.

There are two windows on the pick-up side of the building. The purpose of the second drive-thru window is entirely to speed up the rate that cars get serviced and exit the property. All ordering and payment happens at the first window. If someone has an order that is taking longer than usual, that person can pull up to the second window allowing cars behind to continue being serviced at the first window. The second window is only there to provide efficiency. The second window is primarily there to maintain the average flow.

The picture of the landscaping shows that more trees and plants have been added to the property – more trees along Route 12 and additional plants by the transformer, cooler and along the drive thru. There is going to be signage at both the Upper Walpole Road and Route 12 entrances to the property.

Mr. Hill had spoken with Mark Houghton and it was agreed that the movement of fire trucks through the property was approved. Mr. Hill and Mr. Houghton still have to get together on other safety measures as well as water and sewer issues.

Regarding the actual building, the trim has been painted white and will have gray siding. Board members asked about the picture they received of the building with a cupola and Mr. Hill said he didn't know about that. It will probably be discussed further with the architect.

Mr. Miller asked about trucks entering the property for service. He noted that at Dunkin's current site, which offers diesel fuel for large trailer trucks, there are drivers who go into that building for coffee. Mr. Hill said that there is no parking for large trailer trucks and Mr. Clifford said they have 120 Dunkins and not a single one is designed for truck parking.

Mr. Hill has also spoken with NH Department of Transportation and expects approval soon of the driving pattern. The third lane, which will act as a turning lane and is still part of the project. He will contact the Department before the next meeting to see where approval for the cut stands.

Traffic Report

Mr. Robert Duvall, also an employee of TF Moran, spoke about traffic. He said traffic from Upper Walpole Road will be for parking patrons only and not will allowed have access to the drive-thru lane. On the Route 12 side of the property, there will be one lane in and one lane out. Drivers come into the property may go to the parking lot or access one of two lanes. The inside drive-thru lane is for service. There is an additional lane that bypasses the pick-up window and goes directly to the exit on Upper Walpole Road or back through the parking lot in order to exit onto Route 12.

He has the numbers on the amount of traffic that visited the current Dunkin, which is located further north on Route 12 on the opposite side of the highway at the Jiffy Mart and gas station. Traffic was calculated in the morning from 7 to 9 am, in the afternoon from 4 to 6 pm and on Saturday 11 am to 1 pm. On weekdays there were 150 trips in the morning, 75 in and 75 out. The afternoon peak hours were less than the morning hours at 71 trips and Saturday tallies were a tad higher than peak morning hours at 160 trips. Of people traveling on Route 12, 90 percent passed by and 10 percent turned into Dunkin.

Accident Evaluation

One table in the Traffic Reports shows that the crash frequency by intersection over a 6-year period. There were 17 total accidents at the North Meadow Plaza location, four with injuries and no fatalities. At the Upper Walpole Road there were 12 accidents over the same period of time, two with injuries and no fatalities. The accidents mainly occurred at the afternoon peak hours and some with Saturday hours.

Speed Study

The traffic report study was conducted at the location of the Diamond Pizza driveway. The observed speed on a weekday was 44 mph in the northbound lane and 47 mph in the southbound lane. On Saturday it was 44 mph in the northbound lane and 49 mph in the southbound lane. The posted speed is 35 miles per hour. However, it was noted that speeds in excess of 70 mph have been clocked on this highway.

Sight Distance

Opinions on sight distance differed greatly from the experiences expressed by members on the Planning Board and what Mr. Duval reported. The largest discussion focused on driving north on Route 12 and up the hill to Upper Walpole Road and seeing the entrance to Dunkin. Mr. Duval said it is 460 feet from Upper Walpole Road to the Dunkin Driveway. But, according to board members it is uphill and you cannot see the Dunkin driveway until you get to the crest of the hill. Another complaint was that if a driver were coming out onto Route 12 from Upper Walpole Road and wants to turn left there is a problem with vegetation growth on the west side of the road that blocks the driver's line of sight making it harder to turn left. DOT is responsible for maintaining this space and should be notified of the problem, one board member said. There is also a larger wait time at this location than other locations entering onto Route 12. It's about a 39 second wait time in the am peak time if you are turning left.

Regarding cars exiting Dunkin onto Route 12 and then heading north and south are as follows:

WBL means westbound left turn to head south onto Route 12 and WBR means westbound turn right heading north on Route 12:

AM Peak : WBL is 17.7 seconds and WBR is 10.5 seconds.

PM Peak: WBL 21.6 seconds and WBR 10.8 seconds.

Saturday Peak is WBL is 21.4 seconds and WBR is 10.8 seconds.

Several people at the meeting spoke about their experiences with driving this portion of Route 12 and Upper Walpole Road. The people who spoke live in the Upper Walpole Road area, Huntington Avenue or travel the road daily to and from work or to Alstead or Fall Mountain High School. All said they were worried about an increase in traffic in this area and the speed of some of the cars and possibly additional of trucks. One woman ended her passionate statement about additional traffic saying that even one more accident is one too many. Another suggested that Police Chief Justin Sanctuary come to the next meeting and give his opinion of traffic regarding both roads. A state trooper, who lives on Upper Walpole Road, was at the meeting and he said while he doesn't cover this territory he's seen speeds of 55 to 60 mph.

Mr. Dalessio asked about the cars turning into Dunkin from Upper Walpole Road. The people driving those cars cannot get to the coffee shop unless they park in the parking lot because there is a barrier for that lane to turn into the drive-thru lane. He predicted this will become a popular cut-thru for those drivers wanting to head north on Route 12

Snowmobile Trail

There is a snowmobile trail that cuts through this property, north of where the proposed Dunkin will be. The members of that group maintain that trail during the winter. Mr. Miller reminded Mr. Clifford to get in touch with the leader of the snowmobile group and discuss their trail. Mr. Clifford said he would.

Mr. Miller closed the tonight's public hearing. It will be continued next month. Mr. Dalessio asked Mr. Hill for a lighting plan at this meeting. The architect will probably present his change and. Mr. Hill will hopefully have more information on where the project stands with the NH Department of Transportation.

Workshop this month: Tuesday, October 24: Carol Ogilvie – Continued discussion of Natural Resource section of Master Plan.

Adjournment

Mr. Adams made a motion to adjourn the meeting. Mr. Perron seconded the motion and the motion carried.

The minutes of this meeting are unapproved will be reviewed at the November meeting for corrections, omissions and additions.

Respectfully submitted,
Marilou Blaine
WPB Recording Secretary

Posted: Inside the Town Offices, on the bulletin board outside the Post Offices, The Walpolean.

cc: WPB, ZBA, Town Officers, www.walpolenh.us.