

**TOWN OF NORTHFIELD
PLANNING BOARD
May 4, 2015
MINUTES**

Members present: Jason Durgin, Doug Read, Kim Robichaud, Wayne Crowley, Mike Murphy and Glen Brown.

Minutes: Wayne Crowley moved, seconded by Glen Brown to accept the minutes of April 6, 2015 as read. Motion passed.

Marc LaLiberte: Application for a Minor Site Plan Review for the Compass Classical Academy, a K-12 School at 466 Shaker Road (Tax Map R19 Lot 2) in the R1 and Conservation zones: Judy Tilton, representing the applicant, explained that the Department of Education has approved a K-12 Charter School. She plans to start with K-5 in phase 1 of the plan which includes a 24' x 120' building for 4 classrooms for 120 students. The existing building does not meet fire department regulations and would be used for offices. The Fire Department will allow offices on two floors with fire alarms rather than requiring fire suppression. The new building would be stick built or an Epic Home rather than a temporary school building. The building will be located behind the existing home in order to maintain the abutter's view.

Wayne Crowley noted that the application includes a hand drawn plan without any engineering and accurate measurements. As the property includes wet areas, it will be necessary to have them delineated to determine location of well, septic and parking for the school. As there will be buses as well as cars delivering students, the parking area will need to include space for vehicles to be completely off the road for pick up and delivery. Jason Durgin asked if the parking lot is to be paved and if so a drainage plan will be required. Wayne Crowley stated that this application is not complete as a detailed plan will be required with the location of the buildings, setbacks, location of parking, lighting, egress and ingress of traffic, wetlands delineations, etc. A site visit by the Planning Board would be required also.

Public hearing: Dennis Chase, abutter, informed that board that he is downhill from this proposal and he expects he will have runoff onto his property. He was required to have fire suppression in his home and believes it should be required in a school. He also expressed concern about his ability to sell his home with the abutting school which will not be paying taxes but reducing the value of abutting homes. Lance Turgeon stated that he believes in a Charter School but does not think this is a good location because of increased traffic on Shaker Road and the probable need to make improvements to the road. He also questioned the financial ability of the school to complete the plan. Lance asked if the school has reached out to other residents on Shaker Road for input. Fay Burke stated that the corner of Shaker Road and Twin Bridge Road is the most hazardous in town and she questioned the wisdom of having buses and parents dropping kids off at this location. She also expressed concern about property values, noise and traffic. Mary Segelski asked whether this school is part of the School District and who owns it. Greg Hill explained that a Charter School will have no cost to the town as it is paid through an Education Fund from the state. Ken Gorrell spoke in favor of the school stating that traffic has

increased over the years due to increased development on Shaker Road. He added that the property is not generating much property tax now and that the loss of tax revenue will be offset by reducing the town's number of students sent to the Winnisquam School District. He also suggested that it could actually increase property values as there would be educational choices available in the District. Ken continued to say that the Shaker Road School in Concord is in a residential area and traffic has not been an issue there.

Greg Hill commented that he has visited all charter schools in the state and they are very popular and successful at half the cost of the public schools. He stated there has never been a traffic problem at Shaker School in Concord, having a Charter School in town will attract real estate buyers, every Northfield student that attends the school would save the town \$2200 and all funding comes from the state. Judy Tilton stated that she has a \$525,000 Federal Start up Grant and outside investors are purchasing the property and will lease it to the school.

Vicki Chase, abutter, commented that she had moved to Northfield to be in a country location and did not want fencing, noise, lights and traffic next door. Greta Cote, abutter also objected to loss of the quiet neighborhood and her view. She suggested that the entire neighborhood should have been notified as it will impact property values and quality of life. Geoff Ziminski commented that he believed that an engineering study will show that this project will not fit on the property. Delia Southern expressed concern about increased traffic. Judy Tilton responded that there would be no extra traffic on weekends and summers. Trish Beckwith spoke in favor of the school saying it gives parents another choice for education and would increase property values.

Kevin Sturgeon pointed out that this is a permitted use in the R1 zone and that if the engineering shows that it can be fit on the property the Planning Board will have to approve it. Wayne Crowley agreed, but added that the plan will have to meet all requirements. He suggested that the applicant meet with abutters and neighbors before engineering is done to work out issues of concern. Jason Durgin submitted a letter from Donna Bouchard who expressed concerns about traffic, noise, the condition of Shaker Road and the impact to the rural area.

Public hearing closed.

After determining that it will take time for engineering, Wayne Crowley moved, seconded by Mike Murphy to continue the application until July 6, 2015. If the engineering is not ready by July, a new application will be required. The applicant is to pay for public notification for the newspaper assuming that the engineering plan is submitted in time for the July meeting. Motion passed.

Meeting adjourned at 8:06 PM.

Respectfully Submitted,
Eliza Conde, Secretary

Minutes approved 06-01-2015