

Background Materials – September 20, 2021 – Planning Board Meeting

Prepared by Anne Capra, Director of Planning and Conservation, 9/17/21

Cable Access Channel 15 – There will be a live public forum on the mold remediation at the High School from 6:30-7:30pm which will be aired on Channel 15. Therefore, the Planning Board meeting will not start live streaming until this forum has concluded. The entire Planning Board meeting will be recorded and available for public viewing within 48 hours of the meeting.

AGENDA ITEM #1 Open Comment Period

This 10-minute period is set aside for the public to offer comments on items not on the posted agenda, in accordance with the adopted policy posted on the Town of South Hadley Planning and Conservation Department webpage here: [Policy-on-Open-Comment---As-Adopted-2021-03-08 \(southhadley.org\)](https://www.southhadley.org/Pages/Policy-on-Open-Comment-Period---As-Adopted-2021-03-08.aspx) As of today, one request to address the Board has been received.

Action Needed: Allow members of the public to offer comments to the Board.

AGENDA ITEM #2 Correspondence

A list of correspondence received is attached.

Action Needed: No action needed.

AGENDA ITEM #3 Special Permit Public Hearing - 84 Willimansett Street, Bank of America ATM

Application and project plans are online here: [Willimansett Street\(84\)- Proposed Bank of America ATM | South Hadley, MA - Official Website](https://www.southhadley.org/Pages/Willimansett-Street(84)-Proposed-Bank-of-America-ATM-South-Hadley-MA-Official-Website.aspx)

Project Summary

Stonefield Engineering and Design, LLC (“Stonefield”) has submitted a Special Permit application on behalf of Bank of America for a double walk-up ATM kiosk to be located in the northeast corner of an existing parking lot at 84 Willimansett Street (Route 33) within the Business C Zoning District. The applicant has described the proposed use as a bank with drive-thru facility. In the Business C zoning district, “drive in services” are not permitted, with the exception of a drive-in bank and drive-in pharmacy being allowed by Special Permit. Within the existing parking lot, three existing parking spaces will be converted into one ADA accessible parking space (see Sheets C-3 and C-4). Lighting is proposed based on Bank of America’s requirements (see Sheet C-6 thru C-8). A 6’ high vinyl fence is proposed along the eastern edge of the parking lot for a distance of 87 linear feet.

Plan Error Notes:

Sheet C-1 incorrectly labels the Big Y shopping plaza driveway as Baker Street. Baker Street is actually to the west of the intersection at the traffic signal.

The plan set dated 7/29/21 containing sheets C-1 thru C-9 contains the proposed ATM site and parking location. The site plans included in the “Sign” packet, show an alternative parking layout that was part of an original concept and is not what is being proposed. The sign packet was included to show detailed illustrations of the kiosk and signs.

Traffic and Parking Assessment Report

As required by section 255-37 (D) (7) Business C District Development Methods, the applicant submitted a Traffic and Parking Assessment Report dated August 20, 2021. According to the report, the proposed development is anticipated to generate 11 total trips during the weekday morning peak hour, and 12 total trips during the weekday evening peak hour. Based on Transportation Impact Analysis for Site Development published by ITE, a trip increase of less than 100 vehicles per day would likely not change the level of service of the adjacent roadway system or appreciably increase the volume-to-capacity ratio of an intersection approach.

Access is proposed to be maintained via the existing full-movement driveway internal to the Big Y shopping center. The existing parking supply presently supporting the medical office located on the site will be maintained and shared with the proposed ATM kiosk. Three existing parking space will be converted to one ADA accessible parking space in front of the ATM kiosk. Per Chapter 255-86 Off Street Parking Standards ([Town of South Hadley, MA General Provisions \(ecode360.com\)](https://ecode360.com)), 3 parking spaces are required per 1,000 square feet of office space. There are no stated parking requirements for ATMs. The existing 13,850 sq.ft. medical office building and ATM would require 42 spaces. The current parking lot supply of 79 spaces total spaces, included 11 ADA spaces meets this standard.

Special Permit Review Criteria: Zoning Bylaw Section 255-129 <https://ecode360.com/30053888>
See attached spreadsheet to use while evaluating project against Special Permit criteria, and Site Plan Review Criteria, Section 255-148.

2010 Master Plan – Land Use Are Vision Statements: Route 33, from Route 202 to the Chicopee Line (pgs. 1-16 and 1-17)

Route 33 from Route 202 to the Chicopee Line is a mixture of residential, retail, and commercial land uses. This area is transitional between the more intense commercial uses in Chicopee and the more residential character which dominates Lyman Street north of Route 202. Particular characteristics and considerations relevant to this corridor include:

- Standards should be developed so that changes to the South Hadley Square Shopping Center (Big Y complex on Willimansett St.) make the plaza more green, landscaped and safe for pedestrians. Ideally, any changes would be subject to a design review process that encouraged improved and creative design, landscaping, layouts, façade treatments, and signage that promotes walking and create common green space. Any new development, whether mixed-use or a single-use large retailer, should be done with these principles in mind.

- To further the “pedestrian friendly” development of the South Hadley Square Shopping Center, businesses that rely heavily on “quick in and out” vehicular traffic in a manner which impairs the pedestrian flows should be discouraged.
- Efforts should be made to connect the South Hadley Square Shopping Center with the Shadowbrook Estates development and Buttery Brook Park. The entire area should be safe, walkable and connected.
- Properties on Route 33 that are subject to the professional business permit process should follow the same practice as described above. Over time, these properties should be beautified, restored, landscaped and made more walkable with attractive signage and more discreet parking. A design review process should be employed.
- Encourage adaptive reuse of the existing structures when converting residential properties to a professional business or other nonresidential use.
- As part of the mixed-use component, denser affordable/multi-family housing could be developed via the flexible development method (or a similar strategy) in and near this complex.
- The site of the state highway maintenance facility located near the Big Y shopping complex is considered a key site in the community’s economic development strategy. As discussed in Chapter 2, Economic Development, the state highway maintenance facility should be moved and the site redeveloped, in conjunction with the further development of the Big Y Shopping Center and the adjoining undeveloped commercial properties.
- Planning for the development/redevelopment of this commercial focus area should be undertaken as part of the strategic planning process proposed for the community’s five commercial focus areas.
- The entryway from Chicopee should be visually improved with new signage, landscaping, lighting, and streetscape treatments to make it more welcoming.

Business C District Development Methods: Zoning Bylaw Section 255-37 [Town of South Hadley, MA Supplemental District Regulations \(ecode360.com\)](#)

In addition to the Special Permit standards and Site Plan Review criteria, Business C District development methods apply. Section 255-37 (A) (1) states one objective is “high-traffic generators such as drive-through restaurants, drive-up ATM machines, gas stations, etc. shall not be permitted in this district.” I have discussed this provision with Building Commissioner Dave Gardner and we agree that this project is more appropriately described as a walk-up ATM. Additionally, the Use Table allows drive-in banks by Special Permit.

Signs Standards: Zoning Bylaw Section 255-85

The applicant is proposing to add a name plate for Bank of America onto the existing freestanding sign located along Willimansett Street.

Departmental Comments

Jeff Cyr, Fire District #1 Water Department, 8/13/21 - I have no comments relative to the project.

Chief Gundersen, Police Department, 8/13/21 - No comments or concerns from the PD

Sharon Hart, Director of Public Health, 8/16/21 - I have reviewed the submission and have no comments/concerns.

Missy Couture, Assessor, 8/24/21 - No comments here.

Chris Bouchard, DPW 9/7/21 - No comments.

Anne Capra, Planning and Conservation Department – The project is outside of Conservation Commission jurisdiction. There are no wetland permitting needs.

The application was received and stamped by the Town Clerk on 8/17/21. The Public Hearing was properly advertised in the 8/27/21 and 9/3/21 Town Reminder. A certified list of abutters was received from the Assessor's office, and notice of the public hearing was mailed to persons in interest on 8/19/21. Application fees have been paid in full.

Requests to speak: None received to date.

Google Form Responses and Emails – Comments: None received to date

Action Needed: Hold the Public Hearing. If the Board closes the Public Hearing, a Decision must be made within 90 days and filed with the Town Clerk.

AGENDA ITEM #4 Special Permit Public Hearing – 193 Woodbridge Street, 8' fence, Susan and Linda Sachs

Application and project plans are online here:

<https://www.southhadley.org/1119/Woodbridge-Street-193---Fence-2021>

The applicants are proposing to install an 8' tall by 24' long privacy fence to block view of the neighbor from their deck at the rear of their house. Please refer to the photographs of the site in their application. The fence will be installed within their forested backyard. The color of the fence will be "Arbor Blend" which is a muted evergreen designed specifically to blend into vegetated areas. Per Section 255-32, fences taller than 6' require a special permit from the Planning Board. (<https://ecode360.com/30053187>) The fence will be installed no closer than 3' from the property line which is required by zoning.

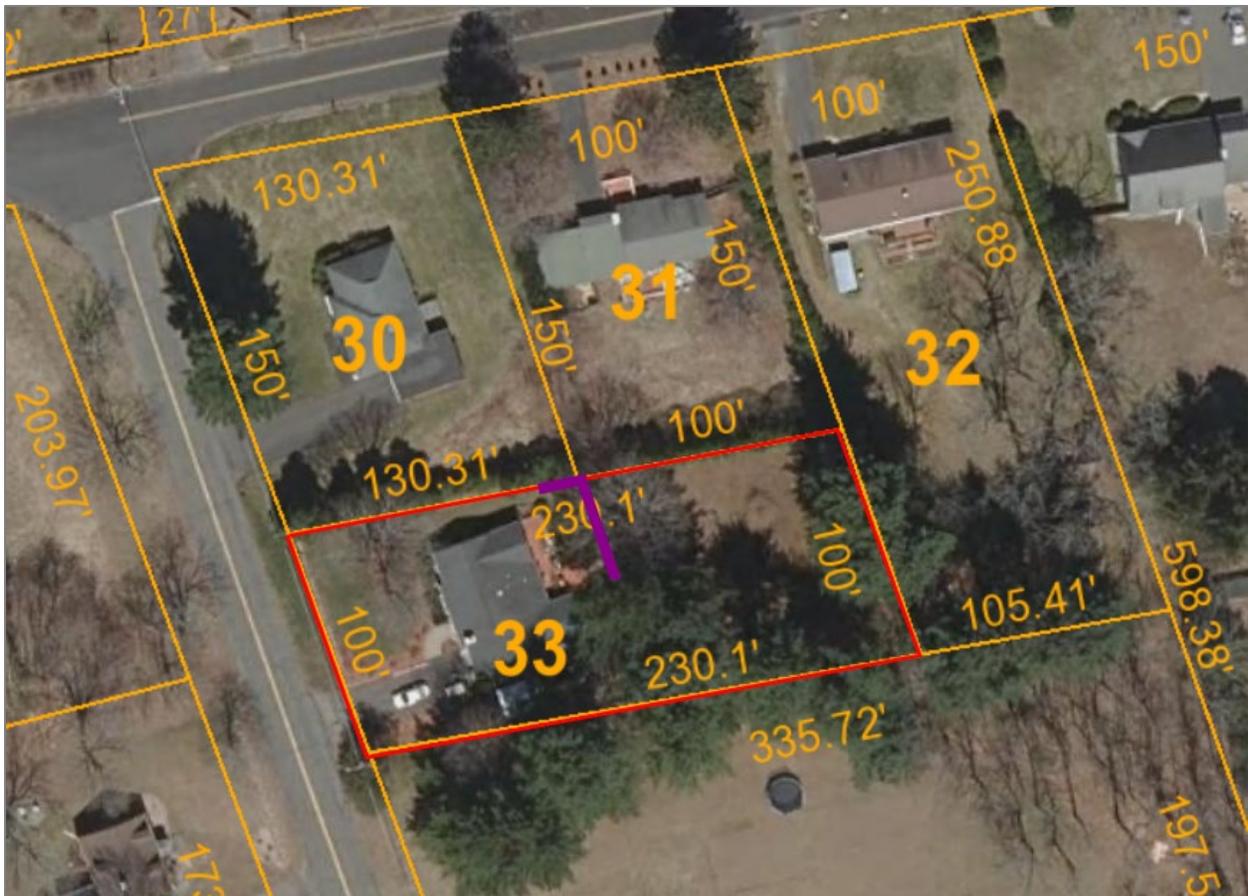
The property is within the Agricultural zoning district and the Water Supply Protection Overlay District. The property is within the Pearl Street land use area as described in the 2010 Master Plan Land Use Vision Statement:

The land and corridor along Pearl Street is similar to Alvord Street in that it has many dramatic vistas and a rural landscape, but differs in its development pattern.

Pearl Street has maintained a residential development pattern that has not changed much since the houses were first constructed. It consists of swaths of farmland with single-family homes situated on larger plots of land. Like Alvord Street, given the diminishment the scenic and rural landscape (not only in town but in the Pioneer Valley overall), preservation of this area's rural visual and land use character should be a top priority. Again, however, preservation should not occur without support for residents – funding and incentives should be pursued on all fronts to ensure that this can occur for the benefit of the community.

Primary considerations for this land use area are the maintenance of agricultural land and scenic vistas. Given the density of the residential cluster abutting this property, and the forested condition of the lot and side yard boundaries, these characteristics seem not to apply to this property.

Waiver Requests: The applicants have requested a waiver from the Master Plan consistency statement and the Special permits consistency statement because the fence will be located in their backyard and will not be visible from the street.



Departmental Comments: None received to date.

The application was received and stamped by the Town Clerk on 8/23/21. The Public Hearing was advertised in the 9/3/21 Town Reminder. A certified list of abutters was received from the Assessor's office, and notice of the public hearing was mailed to persons in interest on 8/30/21. Application fees have been paid in full.

Requests to speak: None received to date.

Google Form Responses and Emails – Comments: None received to date

Action Needed: Hold the Public Hearing. If the Board closes the Public Hearing, a Decision must be made within 90 days and filed with the Town Clerk.

AGENDA ITEM #7 Route 202-Route 33 Corridor Study Community Forum

This project was undertaken in 2019 and 2020, with a final draft plan released in February 2021. At that time, due to COVID, in person public meetings were not (and still are not) being held, and the Board agreed to wait until an in person public meeting about the final draft plan could be held before finalizing the plan. I recently explored options for holding an outdoor public meeting for this project, however Town Administration has stated that is not permissible at this time due to the continued presence of COVID in South Hadley and the region. Thus, I would like the Board to consider whether or not hosting a virtual meeting to present the final draft plan is something you would like to schedule.

Because this plan has not been finalized, it has held up decision making regarding proposed zoning changes along the corridor. I'm also concerned that the longer the plan sits on the shelf, the less likely it will be to get finalized. The project consultant Emily Innes is no longer with Harriman Associates, the firm that was hired to develop the plan, but has agreed to deliver the final presentation and any outstanding edits. Funding for this work has been encumbered in the FY22 budget but will not be carried over to FY23. Therefore, we do need to hold the community meeting and allow time for Emily to incorporate comments, etc. into the final plan before June 30, 2022,

Draft Route 33 and 202 Corridor Plan here:

[Route-202Route-33-Corridor-Study---2021-02-16-Draft---pending-in-person-public-meeting \(southhadley.org\)](#)

Recommended Action: I recommend the Board take a vote as to whether or not to hold a virtual community meeting in the next month or two so that the plan can be finalized.

AGENDA ITEM #8 Planning and Conservation Department Report

27 Bardwell Street Multifamily Special Permit

The Board has received a letter from Raymond Hervieux, on behalf of Jesse Liu, for a request for a one year extension to the Special Permit. They cite a labor shortage and material delivery

delays as the reasons for the delay in construction. On October 19, 2020, the Board issued a one year extension based on a similar request related to conditions the COVID-19 state of emergency. The current permit is due to expire on September 20, 2021.

Action Needed: The Board should vote as to whether or not to grant a one year extension on the Special Permit.

Upcoming Meetings

October 18, 2021

October 25, 2021

November 8, 2021

November 22, 2021

December 6, 2021

December 13, 2021

January 3, 2022