

TOWN OF HAMPDEN
MASSACHUSETTS

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Joseph Dolben
Cornelius Flynn
John Matthews
Judge Robert Howarth
James Quackenbush

**HAMPDEN PLANNING BOARD
PUBLIC HEARING MINUTES/BETHLEHEM BAPTIST CHURCH
Wednesday, December 12, 2012
Town House**

Approved 1/23/13

Mr. Flynn opened the Public Hearing at 7:07 PM.

The Hearing was scheduled on the application of Senior Pastor, Brian K. MacLeod, for Bethlehem Baptist Church for a Special Permit under Section 6.11, Water Supply Protection Overlay District, of the Hampden Zoning By-laws. The applicant is requesting a Special Permit to construct an approximately 35,000 square foot church and its necessary site improvements.

Members Present: Cornelius Flynn, Chairman; John Matthews, Joseph Dolben, Judge Robert Howarth, and James Quackenbush.

Introduction of Board Members: Mr. Flynn introduced the Planning Board members.

Statement of Authority: Mr. Flynn read the Statement of Authority.

Legal Notice: The Legal Notice was ready by Mr. Flynn.

Reports from Other Agencies: The Tax Collector reported that the account is current. The Building Inspector has reviewed the map for the property located at 119 Allen Street and has no objection to the Planning Board granting a Special Permit for this property.

Applicant's Presentation/Board Questions: Mr. Gary Weiner, Site Design Engineer with Ecotec Environmental Associates, Inc. presented the plans on behalf of Bethlehem Baptist Church and Pastor Brian MacLeod. Mr. Weiner indicated they are proposing to construct an approximately 35,000 square foot church and necessary site improvements at 119 Allen Street which was the location of the old Simpkins Farm. The property is 31 ½ acres, wooded, except for the front portion which has a pumpkin farm. Mr. Weiner indicated that Conservation has approved the wetlands. Mr. Weiner indicated presented to the audience the following:

- 7 foot water table to manage storm water
- A well will be installed which will be a public water supply
- (2) driveways - enter/exit both
- 375 parking spaces,(200 required according to the zoning by-laws) including 11 handicap parking spaces

- Small Garage will be located in the back for maintenance (lawnmowers, etc)
- 3 foot berm along the front
- There will be a water management system to capture water from the parking lot and from the roof. It will be treated (infiltration) to a detention basin. When detention basin fills, it flows out and is discharged to brook; therefore, drainage remains on-site.
- There will be a 12,000 gallon water suppression tank
- Lighting will be provided for the parking lot. There will be 16 ft light poles and also security lighting installed.
- Septic System to be installed (pressure distribution system). This has not been submitted to the Board of Health.
- The perks were witnessed by the Board of Health representative.
- They will pursue installing a fence around the retention basin.
- A report from J.S. Pechulis/Land Development services, Inc. dated October 10, 2011 was provided which indicates potential traffic impacts for the proposed church. The report indicates that Sunday peak hour traffic is approximately 100 vehicles per hour traveling along Allen Street. The average speed during peak hours on Allen Street is 43 mph.
- Endangered species on the rear of the parcel – no impact to habitat.
- There will be an anti-tracking apron will be installed.

A handout was provided to the Board reflecting the number of people in the building on specific days, meetings, and special services. Also, this handout reflected a comparison of the proposed building height versus the existing building height.

Mr. Quackenbush asked Mr. Weiner to explain the retention pond design. Mr. Weiner explained that there will be grass on the sides of the retention pond, and the bottom will be 1 ½ to 3" of stone on top of fabric to capture sediment and the clean water passes through. He indicated that the Church will have to maintain the system by cleaning the catch basins.

Mr. Weiner indicated that they need to file a Notice of Intent with the EPA for any ground disturbance of less than ½ an acre to control the construction of the site.

Bonnie MacKay, of 107 Allen Street, referenced the memo she e-mailed to the board concerning the spotted salamander and their natural habitat. Mr. Weiner indicated that this was not an issue with the Conservation Commission, and that this area is not in a priority habitat. She also raised questions pertaining to the septic system being 100 feet from the corner of her property, and how they will the dust be controlled. Mr. Weiner indicated that they will water to keep the dust down. A silt fence will be installed. Ms. MacKay asked if visibility will be obstructed with a berm, and how will they handle snow removal. Mr. Weiner indicated visibility will not be obstructed by the berm, and that the snow will be plowed to the back of the property. They will not stock pile the snow to her property. Ms. MacKay asked if this will affect property values. The Board referred her to the Assessor's Office.

Mr. Matthews questioned why they are doubling their parking spaces, and Pastor MacLeod indicated that they are planning on growth and hope to go to only one service on Sundays. Mr. Matthews also questioned why the traffic study was done on a week day versus a weekend. Per Mr. Weiner, they use a factor and extrapolate. It costs more to do the study on four different Sundays.

Mr. Quackenbush asked if the applicant would be willing to plant trees on the islands in the parking area. Pastor MacLeod indicated he will bring this to this issue to the development team for discussion.

Mr. Matthews asked if there are plans for a school. Per the Pastor, there will only be Christian Education --no school.

Mr. Weiner indicated that a site trailer will be located at the back right side of the property, or they will build a garage.

The fire suppression tank will supply the sprinkler system.

Mike Conrad, of 132 Allen Street, questioned if it is calculate one car per family or many cars per family. Per Mr. Flynn, three people to a car is the formula. However, the Pastor indicated that in reality, there are many cars per family.

Ann Marie Noel, of 155 Allen Street, raised concern over the visibility of the parking lot and that it doesn't look right for Hampden. She indicated that the three foot berm and such a massive building is not attractive for Hampden. Pastor MacLeod indicated that he really can't argue with this. Mr. Flynn indicated that the aesthetics of the parking lot could be enhanced by adding trees as a compromise. She also questioned the placement of signs, the flow of water and the well. Per Mr. Flynn, signs are regulated in the by-laws. Mr. Weiner addressed the water flow by indicating it will go back into the land. Ms. Noel asked what the plans are for the remaining land. Per Pastor MacLeod, it will be for only church related use. She indicated that she is upset with the number of cars and traffic on a Sunday morning.

Mr. Quackenbush asked if a landscape plan was done. Mr. Weiner indicated that it could be done.

Dawn Premo, of 132 Allen Street, asked how the digging will affect her artisan well, and Mr. Weiner indicated it would be insignificant. She also indicated that she is upset with the number of cars on a Sunday morning. Mr. Matthews indicated that he understands the concern the residents have that live around the proposed church, and that the visual impact will be hard to get used to; however, "change is hard to get used to." Mr. Flynn asked that the Church and the residents work together.

Questions were raised about the special permit process. Mr. Flynn indicated that activities can be undertaken subject to a special permit and that the landowner has the right subject to the controls governed by the Planning Board Zoning By-laws. He also indicated that the Planning Board is responsible for the protection of the aquifer. The Plans and the conditions are governed by Massachusetts laws and a decision will be prepared. There are two items outstanding:

- 1) What will be done about installing a fence around the retention basin?
- 2) What will be done about planting trees on the islands in the parking lot to improve the aesthetics?

Bethlehem Baptist Church will get back to the Planning Board concerning these two issues.

Chairman Flynn called for a motion to approve the Special Permit. Judge Howarth motioned to approve the Special Permit to construct an approximately 35,000 sq. ft. church and its necessary site improvements within Section 6.11 Water Supply Protection Overlay District. Mr. Quackenbush indicated that he would like to amend the Special Permit by adding a contingency that the applicant does the work in good faith to mitigate the aesthetics of the parking and asphalt. The Pastor indicated that they will work with the town. Mr. Flynn indicated that we cannot hold Bethlehem Baptist Church accountable to do this but that they try to work with the town. Therefore, Mr. Flynn called for a motion to vote on the amendment to the Special Permit. Judge Howarth made a motion to amend the Special Permit. Voting not to approve the amendment to the Special Permit was Cornelius Flynn, John Matthews, Charlie Dolben and Judge Robert Howarth. Voting to amend the Special Permit was James Quackenbush.

There being no further motions, Chairman Flynn called for a motion to approve the Special Permit to construct an approximately 35,000 sq. ft. church and its necessary site improvements within Section 6.11 Water Supply Protection Overlay District. Judge Howarth made a motion to approve the Special Permit. Voting to approve the motion was Cornelius Flynn, John Matthews, Charlie Dolben and Judge Robert Howarth. Voting not to approve the motion was James Quackenbush. Approval was granted (4-1).

Judge Howarth made a motion to adjourn at 8:53 PM. Mr. Dolben seconded the motion. All in favor so adjourned.

Submitted by: Joanne Fiore, Clerk