Planning Board Meeting Minutes
October 1, 2024
8:00 p.m.

PRESENT: Rob Luntz **(Absent**)
John Ghegan (Absent)
Geoffrey Haynes
Steve Krisky
Eva Thaddeus

ALSO PRESENT: Daniel O'Connor, P.E., Village Engineer
Len Simon, Village Board Trustee & Planning Board Liaison

ABSENT: Ian Murtaugh, Village Board Trustee & Planning Board Liaison

1. **CALL TO ORDER:**

Acting Chairman Steve Krisky called the Planning Board meeting of September 17th, 2024 to order at 8:00 p.m.

2. **PUBLIC HEARING**
   a) *Fields, Maria, Sprocket Power – 1 Municipal Place (78.12-3-2) Amended Site Plan – Croton Auto Park for Battery Energy Storage System*

Geoff Haynes made a motion to open public hearing, seconded by Eva Thaddeus, and carried, 3-0, with Rob Luntz and John Ghegan being absent.

Maria Fields, CEO Sprocket Power and Peter Fazio, Project Manager, Sprocket Power were present in support of the application. The applicants reported that, in response to feedback from an earlier Planning Board meeting, they submitted an amended site plan which moves the battery energy storage system and equipment to a location near the proposed solar canopy car port and EV charging station. The equipment will be surrounded by a fence. There will be a Con Edison utility pole placed on the north side of the driveway, so the existing flag pole will need to be moved. Dan O'Connor said that he will send the plans to the Croton-on-Hudson Fire Chief to review. The applicant stated that this battery is in a container and has a fire suppression system, and, this is a lithium iron phosphate battery, not lithium ion, so is less flammable.

Geoff Haynes stated that at the last Planning Board meeting, the Planning Board and Village Board of Trustees were pleased with the relocation of the equipment and noted that the concerns raised by the Westchester County Planning Board were also addressed by the relocation of the equipment.

Acting Chairperson Steve Krisky invited comments from the audience, and John & Christine Dichiara of 60 Beekman Avenue spoke and had concerns with the revised plans and the proposed placement of the equipment as their home is the closest private residence to Croton Auto Park. Mr. and Mrs. Dichiara noted that there are still many unknowns with this application and had questions regarding potential hazards that this project may bring, including, "Will there be noise from the transformer"? ""Will there be radiation emitted from the equipment"?" "Is this a fire hazard and in the event of a fire, what about the pollution that comes from attempts to contain chemical fires?" "Will there be additional lighting"? "What about the underground wires?" Mr. and Mrs. Dichiara also asked about the canopies and Dan O'Connor reported that the proposed canopies will be in an area approximately 20 ft x 20 ft and 11-feet tall at the highest point, similar to the size of a two-car garage. The canopy will have solar panels.

The applicants addressed some of the neighbor's concerns. The applicants said that the transformer will make noise, a low hum. The applicants could not say that there was no radiation, but noted that transformers were ubiquitous. The applicants noted that the solar panels have low reflectivity and are

sloped west, toward the river. When asked exactly what chemicals would be released into the air in the event of a fire, the applicant did not know, but said that there are best practices around this.

Steve Krisky expressed surprise that they were not building a larger canopy area, and the applicant said that was the original concept, but in part, one of the reasons was that to downsize that battery and solar together can control the cost.

Steve Krisky said Croton's Conservation Advisory Council is working with the village to establish Dark Skies protocols within Croton's village code. (There already is a national movement & Cortlandt has recently passed a brand-new set of Dark Skies code, and hoped that someone would speak the owner of the Auto Park about the current lighting so that it could maybe be retrofitted to lessen the "spill light" or "bleed light" to provide some benefit for the neighbors. Dan O'Connor said that he would speak with the owner of Croton Auto Park.

The applicants said that there is no landscape plan as all the equipment will be on the pavement, but offered that the canopy itself will block the view of some of the equipment. Goeff Haynes noted the line of existing trees near where the equipment will be placed and wondered if that could be extended. The applicant did say that the fence around the equipment will be green and Eva Thaddeus remarked that if there was concern about a fire, surrounding the area with trees would not be a good idea. Dan O'Connor reiterated that he will speak with the Croton Fire Department, advise them of the plans, and invite them out to the site.

The neighbors spoke again and asked why the plans were changed and they were told that both the Planning Board and Westchester County Planning Board thought it would be obtrusive to the entire community at the original location. In the revised plan, the equipment will be surrounded by the dealership. It was noted that the battery and transformer are approximately seven-feet high and the surrounding fence will be approximately seven or eight-feet high.

Arthur Aguilar, homeowner from 62 Beekman Avenue spoke and said that it sounds like it's a done deal. Mr. Aguilar wondered why the current location was chosen for the equipment and thought that the auto park had more than enough space for the equipment to go elsewhere. Dan O'Connor reported that the current location meets the zoning requirements.

Noting that there were no additional comments from the audience, Geoff Haynes made a motion to close the public hearing, seconded by Eva Thaddeus, and carried, 3-0, with Rob Luntz and John Ghegan being absent. Dan O'Connor committed to sharing the plans with the fire department and schedule a site visit.

Acting Chairperson Steve Krisky said that voting on this application will be tabled until the next meeting so that there will be time to hear back from the Croton-on-Hudson Fire Department regarding the neighbor's concerns. Steve Krisky would also like to hear something back about the light issues.

3. **NEW BUSINESS**

a) Holcomb, Helen, 62 Young Avenue (79.13-1-41) Application for Approval of an Accessory Cottage

Architect Julie Evans is present in support of the application. The project is a garage conversion to an accessory cottage with a little expansion of the footprint. The goal of the project is for the owner to age in place while her daughter and son in law move back to the home to assist with her care. The new part of the building falls within the setback requirements. There will be a new, small porch, new pathway to driveway, a new, small cultec system. The new section of the project will conform to the NY Stretch Code. There is room for two cars in the existing driveway.

The loft space will not be habitable space. The loft space will be storage, accessed by a rolling ladder, and it may be used for mechanicals. The accessory cottage will be all electric, with a heat pump and on demand hot water. They will need to run a new sewer line that will connect to the main house.

Erica Lauden of 68 Young Avenue and 124 Penfield Avenue spoke in favor of this application. Erica Lauden believes that it is not too big and fits in with the character.

Geoff Haynes asked about the timing of the project and when it would get underway. The applicant said that the intention is to begin the project shortly. Geoff Haynes asked the applicant to make sure that a second car fits in the driveway, without blocking the sidewalk. The applicant said that they will measure it out and take down the gate if they needed to.

Eva Thaddeus made a motion to approve the resolution, as written, for an accessory cottage at 62 Young Avenue for Helen Holcomb, seconded by Geoff Haynes, and carried 3 – 0 with Rob Luntz and John Ghegan being absent.

4. **OLD BUSINESS**

a) *MAF Realty (Mark Franzoso) 74 Grand Street (78.8-6-59) – Extension of Minor Site Plan Approval*

b) *MAF Realty (Mark Franzoso) 78 Grand Street (78.8-6-56) – Extension of Minor Site Plan Approval*

Steve Krisky asked if there were any code changes since the original minor site plans were approved and Dan O'Connor said that there were, but the applicant would be required to comply with the building code that is in effect when the building permit is issued. Dan O'Connor said that these sites were part of the Croton Meadows subdivision, where some land was given to the Village, so there would be no recreation fee involved.

Eva Thaddeus made a motion to pass the resolution to extend the minor site plan application for 74 Grand Street for two years, with the condition that a landscape plan be provided as part of the building permit application or as part of the next extension application, seconded by Geoff Haynes, and carried, 3 – 0, with Rob Luntz and John Ghegan being absent.

Eva Thaddeus made a motion to pass the resolution to extend the minor site plan application for 78 Grand Street for two years, with the condition that a landscape plan be provided as part of the building permit application or as part of the next extension application, seconded by Geoff Haynes, and carried, 3 – 0, with Rob Luntz and John Ghegan being absent.

5. APPROVAL OF MINUTES – Draft Minutes September 17th, 2024

Geoff Haynes made a motion to approve the Planning Board minutes of September 17th, 2024, as amended, seconded by Eva Thaddeus, and the motion carried, 3 – 0, with Rob Luntz and John Ghegan being absent.

6. ADJOURNMENT

Eva Thaddeus made a motion to adjourn, seconded by Geoff Haynes, and the Planning Board meeting adjourned, at 10:00 p.m. with a vote of 3 – 0, with Rob Luntz and John Ghegan being absent.

Respectfully submitted,
Karen Stapleton
Secretary to the Planning Board

*****Minutes approved, as amended, with a motion by Eva Thaddeus, seconded by John Ghegan, and carried 3-0, with Rob Luntz and Steve Krisky being absent on 10/15/24*****