

**Palmer Planning Board  
Planning Board Meeting Minutes  
Monday, April 24th, 2023**

**I. Call to Order**

Chairman Mike Marciniac called the meeting to order at 7:05 PM on Monday, April 24th, 2023, in the Town Hall Meeting Room. Vice Chairman Norman Czech, Clerk Kathy Burns, Members Timothy Cienciwa and Michael Dee were present. Also present were Town Planner Linda Leduc and Administrative Assistant Rebekah Wright recording minutes.

**Public Hearings:**

**7:00 pm- ADMess 4, LLC (Green Gold Group)- SP/SPA: Continued from 12/5/22, 1/23/23, 2/27/23 and 3/20/23:** The applicant, ADMess 4, LLC is seeking a Special Permit and Site Plan Approval as required by sections 171-28, 171-29, 171-124, to redevelop the existing building to conduct marijuana retail sales on the property located at 1140 Thorndike St, Palmer, MA. This parcel is known as Assessor's Map 65, Lot 8.

**7:15 pm: Kali Cannabis- Finding/ Site Plan Revisions-** The applicant, Kali Cannabis, is seeking a Finding under section 171.83Q for reconstruction after destruction of a pre-existing, non-conforming structure on the property located at 405-407 Shearer St, Palmer, MA. The applicant is proposing to construct a +/- 2,800 sqft retail cannabis dispensary. This parcel is also known as Assessor's Map 19 Lots 38 & 39, and Map 65 Lot 20.

***New Business:***

- PVPC: Draft Update to Housing Production Plan
- Meeting Minutes: 4/3/2023
- Abutting Town Notices
- Interest Allocation Report

**Old Business:**

**Board Member Comments:**

**Masterplan Implementation Committee Update**

***Town Planner Update:***

- Norma Street

**Next Meeting Date: 5/8/23**

**7:00pm:** Baptist Hill Solar- Continuation

**7:15pm:** AdMass (Green Gold Group)- Continuation

**II. Public Hearing:**

**7:00 pm-ADMess 4, LLC (Green Gold Group)- SP/SPA: Continued from 12/5/22, 1/23/23, 2/27/23 and 3/20/23:**

Chairman M. Marciniac opened the hearing at 7:05pm. Present was Attorney James McMahon of McMahon Strategic on behalf of the applicant. Also present were Jeffrey Dirk, PE and Peter Engle of McClure Engineering.

J. McMahon started by going over site plan updates. He stated that small plantings were proposed such as hydrangeas, hastas etc to delineate the property line between the residential and commercial uses. He then stated that further research was done regarding the stormwater system and that it is in fact appropriate for size. He then stated that an additional traffic study was completed by Vanasse and Associates.

Since traffic was a concern, he stated that the applicant proposed to host discounts to medical customers who arrive to the store via non-motorized methods. He stated that legally since they cannot give discounts for recreation/adult use customers they will offer "swag bags" to recreational customers who arrive via non-motorized methods.

He then stated that although large crows are not anticipated, if need be they will hire police detail to monitor the premise and help with traffic. He then stated that if all else fails and traffic is a severe issue, they will become an appointment-based business.

Jeffery Dirk of Vanasse and Associates then began his overview of the additional traffic study that was completed.

He stated that the traffic that would be generated from this proposed use does not create extra delays. He said there are a few options to help mitigate the traffic/queue on Lawrence St.

The first being the addition of "DO NOT BLOCK" painting on the road in front of the exit/entrance to the property.

The second was widening the road (by encroaching on the existing parking lot) and adding a turning lane and moving the driveway entrance to the furthest point of the property (still on Lawrence St).

There was then discussion that if the road was widened and a turning lane was added, it would leave the intersection in a better spot than it is now. It would go from an F grade intersection to a C grade.

John Furman of VHB reminded the Board of the waivers being requested. He stated that they are:

1. Exterior elevations
2. Formal Landscape Plan
3. 145-6.1.k Estimation of Seasonal high ground water.
4. 145-8.4.a.vi 3-foot separation from seasonal groundwater elevation to bottom of structure.
5. Stormwater finding of inapplicability.

P. Engle then stated that waivers 3 and 4 are no longer needed with the updated stormwater system. Patrick Dunford, Transportation Engineer, VHB, then went over the traffic review dated 4/24/23.

He then reiterated the potential changes that could occur to help mitigate traffic on Lawrence St. He then stated the trip generation assessment submitted by McClure Engineering.

He stated that dispensaries are usually considered "destination" locations rather than convenience locations. Meaning, people will plan ahead to go rather than randomly stopping. This usually results in a smaller traffic amount.

There was then discussion regarding the right of way being large enough to accept the extra 8 feet with the addition of a turning lane/widening of the road.

J. McMahon then stated the average turnover time for customers is 5-7 minutes which means customers aren't dwelling on site. He then stated with the moving of the entrance, the previous curb cut will be closed and parking will be maintained.

There was then discussion of the need for a final updated site plan with all changes.

**A motion to approve the requested waivers (exterior elevations and formal landscape plan) was made by N. Czech, seconded by M. Dee. The motion passed 5-0.**

**A motion to issue a determination of inapplicability for the Stormwater Management Ordinance was made by N. Czech, seconded by M. Dee. The motion passed 5-0.**

A motion to continue the hearing to 5/8/2023 at 7:15pm was made by T. Cienciwa, seconded by N. Czech. The motion passed 5-0.

**7:50 pm: Kali Cannabis- Finding/ Site Plan Revisions-**

M. Marciniac opened the hearing. Administrative Assistant R. Wright read the public hearing notice. Present were applicants Suzanne Melanson and Evans Klimavich as well as Tony Capachietta, project Manager of Hayes Engineering.

T. Capachietta went over his slideshow and gave brief explanation to the Board. It was stated that when the applicants originally went in front of the Board for a Special Permit/Site Plan Approval it was not caught that the site was non-conforming.

He stated the existing structure was non-conforming in the rear setback.

It was stated the degree of nonconformance of the proposed new build is not more detrimental than previous.

It was then stated that the ZBA had granted a variance for a retaining wall, but it is no longer necessary with the new layout.

**A motion to grant the finding was made by N. Czech, seconded by T. Cienciwa. The motion passed 5-0.**

T. Capachietta then went over minor adjustments to the site plan. He stated they have moved the proposed building further back on the site.

He stated there is a 1:1 slope of rocking riprap on the slope, which will have filter fabric and crushed stone. He stated the max slope will be 5 feet.

He then stated the rear exit will have steps versus a ramp as a ramp is not needed per the ZEO, however they are not opposed to installing a ramp regardless. He then stated ADA signage is now on the plans. Accessible ramps have also been added to driveway entrance.

K. Burns then asked about if there is a heavy rain, will the water just rush down the side of the riprap.

It was stated no because a 6in perforated pipe (trench drain) will be installed at the top to mitigate overflow.

J. Furman then went over his review memo dated 4/21/23.

He went over the minor changes to the site plan.

He stated that the parking in the front is at a 45 degree angle rather than the previous 90 degree, which helps give space to the site.

He stated access ramps have been added. Landscaping has been added behind the building. He then explained how now a "double basin" is proposed to mitigate stormwater. He stated VHB is satisfied with everything submitted.

**A motion to approve the site plan amendments was made by N. Czech, seconded by M. Dee. The motion passed 5-0.**

**PVPC: Draft Update to Housing Production Plan (HPP)**

Present were John Latour of the Community Development office as well as Karen Martin, a Land Use Planner at PVPC.

She went over what a housing production plan is. She stated that it is essentially a community document that provides municipalities an opportunity to present a proposed approach to addressing it's need for affordable housing.

She then discussed Palmer's location of affordable housing.

She stated there are benefits to communities who submit an HPP. She stated that in Massachusetts, the goal is to have 10% of affordable housing, and in Palmer there is currently 4.8%. She then went over the timeline of the process and explained Palmer is in phase 1 of the process. She stated a public forum is needed next, for phase 2, and would love the Board's participation with that. She explained that the forum will give residents the ability to discuss their concerns or feedback.

There was then discussion on when/where this forum would take place. It was stated it should not fall on a Monday to mitigate the chance of overlapping with another Town meeting. Brief discussion ensued.

**Meeting Minutes: 4/3/23**

A motion to approve the minutes of 4/3/23 as written was made by N. Czech, seconded by K. Burns. The motion passed 5-0.

**Interest Allocation Report:**

None available for review.

**Abutting Town Notices:**

The abutting town notices were available in the Board's dropbox for review.

**Masterplan Implementation Committee Update:**

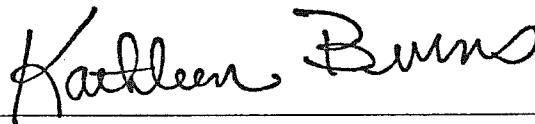
T. Cienciwa stated they met with Three Rivers Water District and had a great meeting, and gained valuable information.

**Town Planner Update**

L. Leduc explained that parcels on Norma St were purchased, and the owner is looking to build a single family home on one of the parcels. The question presented is if there is legal frontage since the road is not an accepted street. L. Leduc reached out to the Boards Attorney, and referred it back to Zoning.

**Adjournment**

A motion to adjourn the meeting at 9:08 pm was made by K. Burns, seconded by N. Czech. The motion passed 5-0.



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Kathleen Burns, Clerk