

**CITY OF WOBURN
WOBURN CITY COUNCIL
SPECIAL PERMITS COMMITTEE
WOBURN CITY HALL
COMMITTEE ROOM
TUESDAY, NOVEMBER 28, 2023 – 6:09 P.M.**

Voting members present: Chairman pro tem Darlene Mercer-Bruen, Councilor Lou DiMambro, Councilor Charles Viola, and Councilor Joanne Campbell. Absent: Chairman Richard Gately

Non-voting members present: President Michael Concannon, Councilor Jeffrey Dillon, Councilor Robert Ferullo, and Councilor Joseph Demers

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Reading and approval of meeting minutes of November 13, 2023: Motion made by Councilor Viola and seconded by Councilor DiMambro to approve the minutes of the previous meeting; in favor, 4-0

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Sun Tree Estates LLC for a special permit under Sections 5.1(12) and 8.3.1 of the WZO to allow for a child care center and shared parking with adjacent premise, at 205 and 213 Cambridge Road: Representing the petitioner were Attorney Mark Bobrowski, Blatman, Bobrowski, Haverty & Silverstein LLC, 9 Damonmill Square, Suite 4A4, Concord, MA (via Microsoft Teams); Robert Michaud, Managing Principal, MDM Transportation Consultants, Inc., 28 Lord Road, Suite 280, Marlboro, MA; and Bert Corey, P.E. of DGT Associates, 803 Summer St., First Floor, Boston, MA. Attorney Bobrowski said Mr. Michaud will be making a presentation about traffic in response to the peer review submitted by Vanasse Hangen Brustlin. Mr. Michaud said the peer review was relatively clean. He said there were four points that VHB said need to be addressed. He said VHB pointed out Day Circle is access-restricted from Cambridge Road between 4-6 p.m. He said VHB wants to make sure that is abundantly clear. Councilor Ferullo arrived. Mr. Michaud said the peer review also indicates there would be a plan for signage and striping. He said that will be presented tonight. He said the peer review also indicates there should be a pedestrian connection plan. He said VHB also indicated snow storage areas should be described. He said VHB also referenced ADA compliance and that bicycle storage should be designated. Councilor Campbell said she also asked for information about bus routes. Mr. Michaud said the site is served by public transportation but there is not expected to be any meaningful use of it. He said due to the nature of the operation public transportation does not really provide a practical way of getting to and from the site. He said there are no plans to integrate a bus stop. Councilor Campbell said she thought the applicant was looking at how the child care center would affect the traffic for buses along that route. Mr. Michaud said that was not the applicant's understanding of VHB's analysis. He said the most significant change at the driveway involved ADA ramps and signage, and a stop bar at Cambridge Road. He said the applicant will install a sidewalk system that connects to Cambridge Road. He said there will be an 8-foot-wide sidewalk in the site that will connect to the sidewalk on Cambridge Road. He said

there is an excellent means of access and egress to the public sidewalk. He said the intent is to have a 1-way counterclockwise flow of vehicles into the site. He said the plan is intended to reduce vehicular conflict at the driveway. Councilor Campbell asked if Mr. Michaud can show the committee a diagram. Mr. Michaud presented a diagram and explained how the traffic is designed to go one way. Councilor Campbell asked where the children will be dropped off. Mr. Michaud said there is no drop-off area. He said the plan is for the parents to park and walk their children to the school. He said there is more than sufficient parking for parents to pick up and drop off. He said the applicant has had success with this plan in Lexington. He said there will be no live parking in the aisles. Mr. Corey snow storage will be located in an area on the south side of the parking field. He said there is a good-sized lawn area there. He said there is also an area along Cambridge Road where snow could be stored. He said there is quite a bit of area for snow storage. Councilor Viola asked if piles from a huge snowstorm could obstruct the view of drivers. Mr. Michaud said the primary snow storage is in the side yard and it should not create visual impairments for drivers. Councilor Viola asked if runoff will go onto adjacent properties. Mr. Corey said runoff will go toward the Reeves School. He said if there is a significant snowstorm, snow will be removed from the site and disposed of properly. Mr. Michaud said there will be no reliance on parking spaces for snow storage. Councilor DiMambro asked if the single-family house will be rented. Mr. Michaud said the petitioner intends to put the house on the rental market. Councilor DiMambro asked if melting or thawing snow will end up in the basement of the single-family house. Mr. Corey said runoff will go toward the Reeves School. Councilor DiMambro asked if the applicant has spoken with the DPW about runoff. Mr. Corey said the applicant met with DPW and there are no issues with runoff. Mr. Corey said the applicant has added a concrete slab with eight parking spaces for bicycles to the plan. Councilor Viola asked if there will be a telephone pole in the middle of the driveway to the rental home. Mr. Corey said there is a concrete marker there and the pole is 15 feet away from the driveway. He said the marker is for the right of way. Councilor Viola asked how far the marker is from the right of way. Mr. Corey said the marker is 6.41 feet from the right of way. Motion made by Councilor Viola and seconded by Councilor DiMambro to suspend the council's rules to allow any member of the council not on the committee to address the petition; approved, 4-0. Councilor Demers asked if there is any thought to relocating the exit of the parking lot. Mr. Michaud said MassDOT has jurisdiction and the applicant will need an access permit. He said MassDOT's preference is to have access and egress consolidated and the proposed design will meet that criterion. He said the access/egress is also at Day Circle and MassDOT typically prefers a common location. He said there is no reason to separate the access and egress drives. He said it might be less beneficial to have a second driveway. Councilor DiMambro asked if the fire department has been consulted about the 8-foot-wide sidewalk on the premises. Mr. Corey said the applicant has proposed a plan for maneuvering a fire truck and the location of a fire hydrant with Woburn Fire Dept. Insp. Larry Parece and Lt. Mark Smith and all their comments have been addressed. He said the fire department needs to be able to stack its vehicles in proximity to the buildings. Chair pro tem Mercer-Bruen asked the applicant to make sure the City Council is in copied on any email communication with the Woburn Fire Dept., Woburn Police Dept., DPW and other relevant municipal departments. Mr. Corey said the applicant has drafted a response letter. Councilor Campbell said it seems to her putting the exit and entrance to the child care center roughly across the street from Day Circle will result in a situation where there is too much going on. Mr. Michaud said an offset driveway would introduce a weird conflict zone. Mr. Corey said the site driveway is somewhat offset from Day Circle. Mr.

Michaud said they are within 75 feet of each other. Councilor Demers asked if splitting the egress and the access drives would create more or less conflict than having them together. Mr. Michaud said the conflict zone would be greater. Councilor Demers asked what the frontage is. Mr. Corey said the frontage is 123 feet. Councilor Viola asked if there was any thought to restricting left turns out of the parking lot. Mr. Michaud said in his experience turn restrictions create unintended consequences. He said people will either ignore the restriction and turn left anyway or traffic will go to side streets to turn around. He said implementing turn restrictions is not good design practice. Councilor Viola said he lives on one of the side streets off Cambridge Road and people do not let you turn left. He said Cambridge Road is constantly busy with traffic. He said he envisions traffic backing up onto the applicant's property. Mr. Michaud said the property can accommodate backups. He said the design is similar to the one used at the Primrose School on Lexington Street. Councilor Viola asked if speeding is an issue. Mr. Michaud said the speed limit on Cambridge Road is 35 mph, and a speed study indicates the average speed is 32-33 mph. He said the speeds are not out of line with the posted limit. Councilor DiMambro said he is still stuck on drainage. He asked if the applicant is going to add drainage boxes. Mr. Corey said the applicant is proposing a large infiltration box in the center of the parking field. Councilor DiMambro asked if any detention or retention measures are being proposed for the snow containment area. Mr. Corey said there are no such plans for the snow storage area. Chair pro tem Mercer-Bruen suggested reaching out to DPW Supt. Duran about the drainage plans. Councilor Dillon asked what effect the elimination of the rental house would have on the access/egress driveway. He asked if it would be safer. Mr. Michaud said the amount of traffic this site will generate is benign. He said eliminating the rental house would not necessarily make the driveway safer. Councilor Dillon said there is a lot going on at that driveway. Mr. Michaud said splitting an entrance and an exit creates more problems. He said the preference is for a minimum separation of driveways of at least 150 feet. He said MassDOT's goal is consolidated access. Chair pro tem Mercer-Bruen suggested sending a communication to the firm that performed the peer review to ask what splitting the access and egress would accomplish from a safety perspective. Motion made by Councilor Viola and seconded by Councilor Campbell to send a communication VHB asking what impact on safety would occur if the access and egress drives were split, and to look into the possibility of enhanced safety if the house on the locus is removed; approved, 4-0. Councilor DiMambro showed the applicant's representatives what kind of route the committee is referencing on the diagram. He said the committee would like to know if a looped route would be more effective, and if sight lines would be improved upon removal of the house. Mr. Michaud said he can't speak to the feasibility of taking down the house, but added the applicant is certainly amenable to determining what VHB has to say about splitting the access and egress routes. Councilor DiMambro said there are a lot of pros to that approach. Councilor Campbell said she has other concerns. Mr. Corey said he would cover the engineering aspect of the councilor's concerns. He said he met with DPW Supt. John Duran and Water Treatment Plant Supervisor Tony Blazejowski about items in the water/sewer realm. He said the applicant's project will be tying into the existing manhole. He said any overflow will be accommodated by a leeching catch basin. He said the applicant reacted to the hydrologic analysis for 25-year and 100-year storms and that has been added to the response letter. He said the applicant is fortunate because there is really good soil at this site. He said they will have a response letter for the DPW and the City Engineer's concerns. Councilor Campbell said her concern is the applicant is trying to put too much onto the site. She said there is a lot being crammed into one area. She said by eliminating the house, the applicant can access a really large

piece of property and these issues could be fixed, and the playground would not be right on Cambridge Road. She said moving the playground farther away from the main road might give people more peace of mind. She said the traffic pattern at the Primrose School isn't working right now. She said traffic is backed up onto the breakdown lane of Lexington Street. She said there is no breakdown lane on Cambridge Road to accommodate that type of traffic. Chair pro tem Mercer-Bruen said there were experts who told the council there would not be overflow traffic from the Primrose School onto Lexington Street. Councilor Campbell agreed the traffic pattern at the Primrose School isn't working. She said the applicant is seeking a special permit from Section 5.1 of the Woburn Zoning Ordinance as well as a special permit from Section 8.3.1 for relief from the Dover Amendment. She said Section 8.3.1 refers to off-street parking in R-4, R-3, some business zoning districts and mixed use districts. She said she does not believe the Dover Amendment is applicable because the locus is in an R-1 district. She said she is concerned the petition is not properly before the council. Attorney Bobrowski said this is the best plan the applicant could come up with. He said the applicant is asking for relief via the Dover Amendment as an alternative to Section 5.1. He said the applicant submitted a petition for relief under the Dover Amendment to hedge its bet. Councilor Campbell said the applicant does not meet the 25-foot setback on the corner. She said the setback is only 16.6 feet. She said the open space calls for 50 percent and the applicant does not meet that threshold. She said if the house is removed, everything could move forward. She said the applicant could move the playground farther away from Cambridge Road. Attorney Bobrowski said he understands what the councilor is saying about the house. He said he would like to hear from VHB before the council leaps to the conclusion the house has to go. He said hopefully the committee will get a response quickly. He said he has not been able to speak to the City Solicitor but he agrees with her memo about the applicability of the Dover Amendment. Councilor Dillon asked if the applicant has had a construction specialist look at the house to determine if it is worth saving. Attorney Bobrowski said he assumes the owner of the property has had the house examined. He said he understands the committee's concerns. He said the applicant's plan is to thoroughly renovate the house and make sure it is up to code. He said the applicant is not just doing basic renovations. He said the applicant wants to do it thoroughly. Chair pro tem Mercer-Bruen said anyone who sees the house could say it rises to the level of a potential nuisance. She said the City Council would have an issue with the condition of the property whether the petition for the child care facility was submitted or not. Motion made by Councilor DiMambro and seconded by Councilor Campbell to accept the following documents and make them part of the permanent record: A memorandum from City Solicitor Ellen Callahan Doucette dated November 28, 2023, and entitled "Special Permit Petition – Child Care Facility – "Dover Amendment;" and a document from Vanasse Hangen Brustlin dated November 7, 2023, and entitled "Peer Review of the Traffic and Site Plans Proposed Daycare Redevelopment, 205 Cambridge Road, Woburn, MA;" approved, 4-0.

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Motion made by Councilor Viola and seconded by Councilor Campbell to adjourn; in favor, 4-0. Chair pro tem Mercer-Bruen adjourned the meeting at 7:06 p.m.

A TRUE RECORD ATTEST

Gordon Vincent

Clerk of Committees