

CITY OF WOBURN
WOBURN CITY COUNCIL
SPECIAL PERMITS COMMITTEE
WOBURN CITY HALL
COMMITTEE ROOM
MONDAY, JANUARY 13, 2025 – 6:51 p.m.

Voting members present: Chair Darlene Mercer-Bruen, Councilor Lou DiMambro, Councilor Charles Viola, and Councilor Joseph Demers. Absent: Councilor Joanne Campbell

Non-voting members present: Councilor Robert Toro, Councilor William Pappalardo, and Councilor Robert Ferullo. Absent: President Jeffrey Dillon

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Reading and approval of meeting minutes of October 21, 2024: Motion made by Councilor Demers and seconded by Councilor DiMambro to waive the reading of and approve the minutes of the previous meeting; in favor, 4-0-1.

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Woburn (Edens) LLC request for minor plan change under Section 30.13.1 of the WZO Smart Growth Overlay District for site improvements to foster pedestrian connectivity and improve patron guidance to available surplus parking, at 300 Mishawum Road:

Representing the applicant were Attorney Mark Vaughan, Riemer & Braunstein LLP, 700 District Avenue, 11th Floor, Burlington, MA; Ryan Leeming, Vice President, Development & Construction, Edens, 21 Custom House Street, Suite 450, Boston, MA; and Emily Anderson, Bohler, 45 Franklin St., 5th Floor, Boston, MA. Chair Mercer-Bruen said approximately a year and a half ago the City Council and Edens talked about parking. She said she has been contacted by several people who have concerns about the parking configuration at Woburn Village. She said she requested input from former City Engineer John Corey and Building Commissioner Thomas C. Quinn Jr. Motion made by Councilor Demers and Councilor Viola to accept and make part of the permanent record the following documents from Mr. Corey: A memorandum dated January 13, 2025; and entitled “Woburn Village – Special Permit Review of parking and Internal Traffic;” maps from MDM Transportation Consultants Inc., labeled “Figure 6 – Peak Parking Demand Weekday Peak (7:00 PM) Parking by Zone, and “Figure 9 – Peak Parking Demand Saturday Peak (3:00 PM) Parking by Zone;” approved, 4-0-1. Motion made by Councilor Demers and seconded by Councilor Viola to accept and make part of the permanent record an email from Commissioner Quinn to the Clerk of Committees dated January 13, 2025; with the subject line “RE: Edens;” approved; 4-0-1. Chair Mercer-Bruen read the memo from Mr. Corey as follows: “The Engineering Department has reviewed an Interim Parking Monitoring Study dated July 2024, prepared for the Edens project. The study indicates that there is sufficient parking within the complex, however it is not always convenient to the location that

a customer is looking for. The two graphics appended herein show the percentage of occupied parking during the peak weekday 7 p.m. period and the peak Saturday afternoon 3 p.m. peak period. The peak evening hour is compelling in that the areas adjoining the restaurants are near or at capacity, while the Avalon facility has more than sufficient capacity. Similarly, the Saturday peak afternoon period is near capacity for the retail areas, while the Avalon facility is less than half full. The study makes a series of recommendations to improve traffic circulation and parking conditions, all of which are deemed to be improvements over the existing situation. I trust the foregoing information is sufficient for your needs. Should you have any questions or comments, please do not hesitate to contact this office.” Attorney Vaughan introduced Mr. Leeming from Edens and Ms. Anderson from Bohler. He said there are challenges with the site in regard to parking. He said there is a greater demand for parking near the restaurants in proximity to the Mishawum Road entrance. He said there is ample parking in the area near the corner of Mishawum Road and Commerce Way. He said the report indicates there are between 160-180 available spaces predominantly in that corner. He said he thinks everyone wants to get as close as they can to their destination. He said this parking mentality is not uncommon and also occurs at similar properties like Market Street in Lynnfield. He said his client is hoping to provide the elements of a plan that would increase awareness of the available parking areas. He said the effort would also include the addition of about 280 feet of sidewalk area with images on the sidewalk that directs people to other parking areas. He said his client would make these images fun and decorative. He said this is what his client is seeking in terms of approval. He said he thinks it would make for a significant improvement for the site. He said an additional 50 spaces will be available on nights and weekends when the day care center next door is in operation. He said he thinks this will also certainly be a significant enhancement for the site. Chair Mercer-Bruen said if there are too many signs at some point people stop paying attention to them. She said the sidewalk markings could be a fun for families. She said the goal is to not have people circling the parking lot until they find a suitable parking spot. Councilor Viola said people want to get those spots up front. He said he will keep an open mind about what Edens is proposing. He said he thinks the sidewalk graphics is an interesting concept. Councilor Pappalardo asked if there are any sidewalk markings there now. Attorney Vaughan said there are no sidewalk markings now. Councilor Pappalardo asked where the space for the sidewalks is going to come from. Attorney Vaughan said no parking will be lost. He said landscaping will be re-planted. Councilor Pappalardo asked if the street will become narrower. Attorney Vaughan said the street will be the same width. Councilor Demers said he feels validated. He said people really don’t want to park far away and walk to where they are going. He said when he goes to Woburn Village he will park by Chase Bank and walk to Tavern in the Square. He said there has been a societal change. He said when he was younger his mother always parked away from the first three rows in case someone who needed to be closer to store could park closer. He said he does have concerns about traffic. He said there is an intersection where there is an issue with stop signs. He said people assume there is a 4-way stop there but it’s not. He said if people are going to start parking at the Mishawum Road/Commerce Way corner; there is going to be less queuing. Motion made by Councilor Demers and seconded by Councilor Viola to suspend the City Council’s rules to allow any member of the City Council not on the committee to address the petition; approved, 4-0-1. Councilor Ferullo asked if the tenants are playing ball in regard to the parking. Attorney Vaughan said there is a parking area for employees behind the row of stores. He said there are about 30 parking spaces that have been designated for employees. Councilor DiMambro said there is a 4-way intersection off Mishawum Road about which he has heard

complaints. He said that is something he would like to see addressed. He asked how many parking spaces will be available on weekends at the day care facility. Chair Mercer-Bruen said there will be 52 parking spaces available after 5 p.m. on weekdays and all day Saturday and Sunday. Councilor DiMambro said he has no issue with parking near the Chase Bank and walking to where he needs to go. He said it's amazing people will use a treadmill for 90 minutes after they park their car a few steps the building where their gym is. He asked if the applicant can look at that 4-way intersection. Attorney Vaughan said he does not think this request for a minor modification is the end of looking at improvements. Councilor DiMambro said it might be worth the developer's while to add a few more parking spaces for the employees than the 30 that are out back. He said anything the developer can do to free up spots out front will help. Chair Mercer-Bruen said she also has a previous email from Commissioner Quinn dated December 9 which she said makes has several suggestions, including the submission of a specific site plan with locations that do not interfere with ADA ramps/requirements, a maintenance plan, illumination of markings and the use of slip resistant materials for the sidewalk. Ms. Anderson said there is going to lighting to enhance the walkways. She said there will also be decorative uplighting. Chair Mercer-Bruen said she would speak to Commissioner Quinn. She asked the applicant to do anything it can do to enhance the parking situation. Councilor Viola asked if there would be crosswalks connecting to the new sidewalk areas. Mr. Leeming said they can certainly look into that. Councilor Viola thanked the applicant's representatives for their time. Motion made by Councilor Demers and seconded by Councilor DiMambro that the minor modification "ought to pass;" approved, 4-0-1.

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Shree Ganraj LLC for a special permit under WZO Section 5.1(29) to allow for a fast food restaurant, at 100 Sylvan Road a/k/a 300 Trade Center, Suite 1410: Representing the applicant were Dev Rana and Veedhi Rana, both of 100 Sylvan Road, Woburn, MA; and Tony Spencer, Operations Manager, Cummings Properties, 200 West Cummings Park, Woburn, MA. Councilor DiMambro said he has spoken to Michael Aveni, the Principal Architect at Cummings Properties, and Building Commissioner Thomas C. Quinn Jr. He said he wants the applicants to tell the committee about how the restaurant is going to work. He said he knows there previously was a Dunkin' Donuts but since then the space has been vacant. He said he took a look at the space and he is fairly sure he knows how the restaurant is going to work but he would like to hear from the applicant. Mr. Rana said he and his sister are looking to start a fast food operation. He said they will be serving Indian food, mostly things like sandwiches. He said there is a large Indian population in Woburn and the surrounding communities. He said he hopes to provide a lot of delicious food. Councilor DiMambro said there is a distinction between a sit-down restaurant and a fast food operation. He said the site was permitted for fast food in 2008. He said that was pretty much an innocuous facility. He said there is no hardware, no oven, no grill. He asked what will be offered for sale. Mr. Rana said they will be offering sandwiches, like paninis. He said they will be cooking and warming. Councilor DiMambro asked about hours of operation. Mr. Rana said he is thinking about 9 a.m. to 5 p.m. but as this is their foray into the food service industry they do not have a sense of what hours they will require. He said they do not want to remain open until 9 p.m. or 10 p.m. He said they are hoping for hours from 7 a.m. to 7 p.m. Councilor DiMambro asked if they want to be open seven days. Mr. Rana said they would like to

be off for one day, perhaps Monday or Tuesday. Councilor DiMambro said even though it is a big office building there is really not a lot of traffic on weekends. He said he wants the business to succeed. Councilor Demers said when he looked at the floor plan he wondered where the stove would be but now after listening to the applicant he thinks this operation will be something like a sandwich express. He said he thinks it's a great idea. He said he will defer to Councilor DiMambro in regard to hours of operation but he thinks 7 a.m. – 7 p.m. would work, with a review after six months. Councilor DiMambro said that would be something to consider. Councilor DiMambro asked if they will be selling coffee and pastry. Mr. Rana said they will be selling coffee. Councilor DiMambro said if the business moves, the special permit ends. He said there will be no daisy chain to another entity. Motion made by Councilor DiMambro and seconded by Councilor Demers that the special permit "ought to pass" with the following conditions: 1.) Hours of operation shall be from 7 a.m. – 7 p.m., seven days; and 2.) The Special Permits Committee shall review the special permit after six months; approved, 4-0-1.

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Motion made by Councilor Viola and seconded by Councilor DiMambro to adjourn; in favor, 4-0-1. Chair Mercer-Bruen adjourned the meeting at 7:24 p.m.

A TRUE RECORD ATTEST

Gordon Vincent

Clerk of Committees