

**AMHERST PLANNING BOARD
RECORD OF DECISION
SITE PLAN REVIEW
SPR 2006-00002, 175 University Drive, CRES Development Company, Inc.**

Request

On November 1, 2005, CRES Development Company, Inc. filed an application for Site Plan Review approval for the expansion of the Amherst Shopping Center by adding 2,200 square feet of free-standing commercial space and 2,080 square feet of commercial space to the north end of the main building, and the addition of drive-up facilities at each location (Section 3.350.0 and 3.350.2).

Previous Action

On August 16, 1996, Amherst Shopping Center Associates filed a request for Site Plan Review approval (SPR 97-00002) to allow for the demolition, renovation, reconstruction and new construction of the shopping center at 175 University Drive, site of the Big Y grocery store. A new "pad" building would be constructed to house the CVS drugstore, the north end of the existing building would be demolished and a new larger building constructed. Big Y would locate to this new section and the old Big Y would be renovated for new tenants.

After continuing the initial public hearing to resolve issues concerning traffic at the entrance from University Drive, at its meeting on November 6, 1996 the Board voted to approve SPR 97-00002. The Board voted to waive the Traffic Impact Statement subject to the installation of a left turn lane on University Drive, completing the connection to the service drive, and widening the exit width to allow for turning lanes in both directions. The Town worked with the applicant to pay for some of the costs of the work on University Drive.

After approval was granted, the Big Y decided not to operate in the old store while building the new one and demolished the whole building. Therefore, they did not renovate the old store (site of the proposed 13,500 sq.ft. expansion) for new tenants and left that part of the site undeveloped. The new CVS building was built, ATM Kiosk constructed, the connection to the service road made, and the left turn lane on University Drive installed.

On July 1, 2004, the applicant filed SPR 2005-00001 for the expansion of the Amherst Shopping Center by adding 13,500 sq. ft. of commercial space to the south end of the existing Big Y building and another 2,080 sq. ft. to the north end of the building. In this application, the big concern was the traffic conflicts created by the completion of the service drive along University Drive at the entrance to the shopping center. The applicant worked closely with the Town to develop an alternative entrance design to eliminate these conflicts. The final design has been agreed upon, but re-construction of the entrance has not occurred pending a traffic study that the Town is currently undertaking. On August 18, 2004, the Planning Board approved SPR 2005-00001 with a waiver of the Traffic Impact Statement and conditions.

Site Visit

The Board did not hold a site visit for this request.

Public Hearing

The public hearing notice was published in the Daily Hampshire Gazette on November 22 & 30, 2005, and was sent to abutters on November 21, 2005. The hearing began on Wednesday, December 7, 2005 in the Town Room, Town Hall.

Mr. Bobrowski noted that the hearing was continued from December 7, 2005.

Attending on behalf of Amherst Shopping Center were Mr. David Stone, CRES Development Company and Mr. Bill Garrity, landscape architect with Garrity & Tripp.

Mr. Garrity presented revised plans to the Board. He said that parking on the east side of the building, which will be a Dunkin Donuts, had been eliminated and replaced with a concrete paved plaza with landscape beds, providing separation from the service drive. Sliding the building 9 feet to the east improved the design considerably, Mr. Garrity commented.

Given that CRES Development has been cooperative with the Town, Mr. la Cour said that the Town Engineer believes that \$10,000 would be a sufficient amount for the applicant to place in escrow for pending improvements to the entrance of the shopping center. Mr. Stone has indicated that he is ready to go forward once the Town decides on a plan. He asked how the escrow payment usually works. Mr. la Cour said that the funds would be held in an interest-bearing account and then released once the work is completed.

Mr. Bobrowski noted that a bike rack should be shown on the plans.

Mr. Garrity said there were two sewer lines on the site and they had gotten mixed signals from DPW as to which sewer line they should hook into. He said they would have a further conversation with the Town Engineer to address his concerns and clear up any misunderstandings.

Ms. Krzanowski told the Board that Mr. Walter Wolnik had called the office regarding his request for a path between the two shopping centers which he had raised at the last meeting. While Mr. Stone said that he would be willing to allow such a path, there would be issues. It was noted that the area is located in Hadley, not Amherst. The Board generally agreed that it would be better served by bringing the issue to the Public Transportation Committee.

There was no public comment.

Mr Francis MOVED: to close the public hearing. Mr. Hayden seconded, and the Motion passed 8-0.

Decision

Following discussion the Board voted 8-0 to approve this Site Plan Review application for expansion of the Amherst Shopping Center, 175 University Drive, by adding 2,200 square feet of free-standing commercial space and 2,080 square feet of commercial space to the north end of the main building, and the addition of drive-up facilities at each location.

Waiver

Traffic Impact Statement

Conditions

- 1) The final plans shall be approved by the Town Engineer.
- 2) A bike rack shall be installed on the northeast side adjacent to the patio area.
- 3) Lighting provided on the building shall meet Town lighting standards.
- 4) Prior to the issuance of a Certificate of Occupancy for the free-standing commercial space, the applicant shall provide \$10,000 to be placed in an escrow account to ensure completion of the entrance/intersection reconstruction.
- 5) All landscaping shall be installed and continuously maintained.
- 6) Four (4) copies of the final plans shall be submitted to the Planning Department.
- 7) This permit will expire in two (2) years if substantial construction has not begun.

**PLANNING BOARD
Amherst, Massachusetts
RECORD OF DECISION**

SPR 2006-00002, 175 University Drive, CRES Development Company, Inc.

The Amherst Planning board hereby grants this Site Plan Review approval for expansion of the Amherst Shopping Center, 175 University Drive, by adding 2,200 square feet of free-standing commercial space and 2,080 square feet of commercial space to the north end of the main building, and the addition of drive-up facilities at each location (Section 3.350.0 and 3.350.2). This approval is based on the information provided at, and plans submitted for, the public hearing held December 7, 2005, and continued to January 18, 2006. It is subject to the following waiver and conditions:

Waiver

Traffic Impact Statement

Conditions

- 1) The final plans shall be approved by the Town Engineer.
- 2) A bike rack shall be installed on the northeast side adjacent to the patio area.
- 3) Lighting provided on the building shall meet Town lighting standards.
- 4) Prior to the issuance of a Certificate of Occupancy for the free-standing commercial space, the applicant shall provide \$10,000 to be placed in an escrow account to ensure completion of the entrance/intersection reconstruction.
- 5) All landscaping shall be installed and continuously maintained.
- 6) Four (4) copies of the final plans shall be submitted to the Planning Department.
- 7) This permit will expire in two (2) years if substantial construction has not begun.

AMHERST PLANNING BOARD

Paul Bobrowski

Chris Boyd

Aaron Hayden

Carl Mailler

Mary Scipioni

Adrian Fabos

Leandro Rivera

Roderick Francis

Filed this date _____ in the office of the Town Clerk.

Anna Maciaszek, Town Clerk