

Stockbridge Zoning Board of Appeals Meeting – October 10, 2018

Purpose of meeting: To hear application for variances relating to the Proctor Hall site

Applicants: Norman Rockwell Museum and First Congregational Church

Property of concern: 6 Main Street, Stockbridge, MA

Present for the ZBA: Jim Murray, Thomas Schuler (chair), John Hyson, Bob Jones, Buck Smith, Miles Moffatt, Eric Plaukin (alternate)

Attendees at the meeting who signed in: (see attached sign-in sheet)

Meeting activities:

1. Notice of this meeting was advertised in the Berkshire Eagle, and via certified mail to the abutters: Ryan, Golf Course, Church and Sanderson.
2. Vicky Donohue LLC spoke on behalf of the museum, other museum representatives and church representatives were also present
3. Donohue explained that the museum is proposing to purchase the parcel, and create a research and education center for the arts
4. Sale will require there be a division of the land, and need to address the variances on both lots
5. Properly line would be same as the line shown in 1902 lease
6. Tax map 105, parcel 2 (old town hall, or Proctor Hall), and parcel 3 (church)
7. Straddles two zone districts (RC and R2)
 - a. Variance for frontage
 - b. Variance for entry points was submitted in 2017 (two drives)
 - c. Footprint stays the same
8. Regarding parking – there will be an agreement between the three parties, church, museum and golf course. There hasn't been any objection raised by the parties
9. Findings:
 - a. Building is in existence already
 - b. Section 7.2.2 of the bylaws – it's clear as to the shape and structures, and their relationship with other properties, and literal hardship to comply with specific zoning requirements
10. Fundraising will have to be done, and could take over 1 year, so the museum may need to ask for an extension a year from now
11. Deborah McMenemy – 4 Glendale Middle Road – from church (moderator), supports the project since the landscape and building remain the same. Would work together with the museum.
 - a. Reuse committees organized by the Town have met in the past, and considered many different uses for Proctor Hall, including a function hall, catering facility, affordable housing and think tank offices. Obstacles for reusing for purposes as such usually came up and dampened the prospects for successful conversions. This museum opportunity is the best idea that has been proposed and is well liked by the church.
12. Laurie Norton Moffatt spoke on behalf of the museum, saying that this project would be a very beneficial for the Town, and the museum is dedicated to making this a successful partnership.

13. The ZBA chair asked for discussion amongst the ZBA members:
 - a. Jones: We're essentially deciding on a property line, and site conditions as they currently exist, and which have existed for a long time don't seem to be affected by the proposal.
 - b. Murray: The buildings have existed long before zoning was done, and no major changes to the properties are proposed under this proposal
 - c. Plaukin: The proposal appears to make good use of the property, and meets the terms of Section 7.2.2 of the Bylaw
 - d. Moffatt: The abutters seem satisfied with the proposal, and agreement as to space for parking among the church, museum and golf course seems to be considered in the proposal discussion
 - e. Schuler: Agrees with Plaukin, in that the application for variances can be considered under Section 7.2.2
14. Vote – the ZBA is in agreement with the requested variance as stated in the application, as memorialized in Exhibit F of the application
 - a. 5 to 0 vote to accept the application for variances.