



Town of Reading
16 Lowell Street
Reading, MA 01867

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January 9, 2022

Minor Site Plan Review

DECISION

Project/Site: 0 Birch Meadow Drive – Birch Meadow Park

To the Town Clerk:

*This is to certify that, at a meeting of the Community Planning and Development Commission, opened on December 12, 2022, continued to and closed on **January 9, 2023**, by a motion duly made and seconded, it was voted:*

“We, the Reading Community Planning and Development Commission, upon request from Activitas, Inc., on behalf of the Town of Reading, for Minor Site Plan Review for the property located at 0 Birch Meadow Drive (Assessors Map 33, Lots 52, 56, 57, and 91) for an increase of over 500 square feet of Gross Floor Area in new floor area, an increase in impervious area and associated parking improvements, as presented in the application materials enumerated below, do hereby vote XXX, to [REDACTED] the project under Minor Site Plan Review in accordance with Section 4.6.3 of the Reading Zoning Bylaw, subject to the Findings and Conditions below.”

Materials Submitted:

The following materials were submitted into the public record:

1. Certified Abutters List, dated 11/23/22;
2. Minor Site Plan Review Courtesy Notice of Public Meeting to Abutters;
3. Minor Site Plan Review Application, received 11/30/22;
4. Project Narrative, prepared by Activitas Inc., dated 11/30/22;
5. Civil Plan Set Birch Meadow Park Phase I, prepared by Activitas Inc., prepared for the Town of Reading, and including:
 - a. Cover Sheet and Locus Map, dated November 30, 2022
 - b. Sheet One: Topographic Survey, prepared by Reed Land Surveying, Inc., dated 7/28/22;
 - c. Sheet Two: Topographic Survey, prepared by Reed Land Surveying, Inc., dated 7/28/22;
 - d. Sheet L0.1: Key Plan Sheet, dated November 2022;
 - e. Sheet SP1.1: Site Preparation Sheet One, dated November 30 2022, and most recently revised 12/21/22;
 - f. Sheet SP1.2: Site Preparation Sheet Two, dated November 2022;
 - g. Sheet SP1.3: Site Preparation Detail Sheet, dated November 2022;
 - h. Sheet L1.1: dated November 30 2022, and most recently revised 12/21/22;

- i. Sheet L1.2: Layout and Materials Plan Sheet Two, dated November 2022;
 - j. Sheet L2.1: Grading and Utility Plan Sheet One, dated November 30 2022, and most recently revised 12/21/22;
 - k. Sheet L2.2: Grading and Utility Plan Sheet Two, dated November 2022;
 - l. Sheet L2.3: Grading and Utility Detail Sheet, dated November 2022;
 - m. Sheet L3.1: Planting Plan Sheet One, dated November 2022;
 - n. Sheet L3.2: Planting Plan Sheet Two, dated November 30 2022, and most recently revised 12/21/22;
 - o. Sheet L3.3: Planting Details and Schedule, dated November 30 2022, and most recently revised 12/21/22;
 - p. Sheet L4.1: Enlargement Sheet, dated November 2022;
 - q. Sheet L5.1: Detail Sheet One, dated November 2022;
 - r. Sheet L5.2: Detail Sheet Two, dated November 2022;
 - s. Sheet L5.3: Detail Sheet Three, dated November 30 2022, and most recently revised 12/21/22;
 - t. Sheet A1.1: Fire Floor Plan, dated November 2022;
 - u. Sheet A1.2: Elevations, dated November 2022;
 - v. Sheet A1.3L Renderings, dated November 2022;
6. Colorized Site Renderings, prepared by Actvitas Inc., received 11/30/22;
 7. Draft Decision, dated 12/12/22;

Findings:

- 1) Applicability: The proposed work requires Minor Site Plan Review approval under Zoning Bylaw Section 4.6.2.3(a), “***An increase in gross floor area of 500 square feet or more either by the creation of new floor area or by the expansion of an existing use into adjacent space within an existing structure***” and Section 4.6.2.3(b), “***...an increase in pavement of more than 300 square feet...***”
- 2) Zoning/Site: The site is located in the S-15 Residential Zoning District. The abutting/local area also includes the Coolidge Middle School, Reading Memorial High School and the Burbank YMCA.
- 3) Existing Conditions: The site maintains a public educational use with associated parking and open space/recreational amenities. The Birch Meadow School is primarily accessed off of Arthur B Lord Drive; though the park amenities and additional parking is accessed through the ‘Imagination Station’ parking lot to the south and off of Birch Meadow Drive. The existing parking lot is currently gravel based and maintains unformalized parking spaces; it also includes a graveled pathway to the fields and parks.
- 4) Overview: The proposal is considered as Phase I of improvements to the Birch Meadow Park complex. Phase I includes the improvement and paving of the existing Imagination Station gravel parking lot; a new walkway/path system that will connect the parking lot to the High School; site lighting, landscape and drainage improvements; as well as the construction of a new restroom/storage facility building and a new lacrosse wall. The proposed improvements result in an approximate increase of 14,573 square feet of impervious area.
 - a. Parking Lot Improvements: The parking lot will be paved over and formalized into a total of fifty-five (55) striped spaces. Included in the fifty-five spaces is fifty (50) standard 9’x18’ spaces, two (2) ADA accessible parking spaces, one (1) ADA van accessible space, and two (2) Electric Vehicle (EV) charging stalls.

The parking lot will allow two-way vehicle traffic flow by maintaining 24’ wide drive aisles. The existing curb cut along Birch Meadow Drive shall be maintained but

improved with accessible ramps and crosswalks. A second curb cut will be added to the east; those exiting from such curb cut will be limited to ‘Right Turn Only’. Additionally, ‘No Parking’ striping and regulation is proposed between this curb cut and the existing crosswalk directly to the east on Birch Meadow Drive. Both curb cuts measure 24’ wide and both will allow entry and exit.

- b. Walkway/Path System Improvements: The existing gravel path will be expanded, paved and curbed to allow for improved accessibility and drainage. It will be constructed of bituminous concrete. Along the path will be benches, lighting, retaining walls, signage and site amenities to serve as a gateway into the park complex. Paths will range from 4’ to 10’ wide but all will be accessible with flush connections to adjacent areas.
- c. Lighting/Amenity, Landscape and Drainage Improvements: A series of light fixtures will be provided in the parking lot, along the path system and on/within the new facilities. Site amenities, such as benches and seating, will be strategically located around the site. A series of shrubs, trees, upland and wetland plantings will be conducted, with input from the Conservation Commission. All new impervious area will be graded and directed to stormwater collection systems designed with BMP and LID features such as raingardens and bioretention areas. Stormwater will be directed through catch basins to the LID features for pre-treatment before discharge.
- d. New Structures: A new facility building will be constructed, along with a lacrosse wall/practice area, between Turf II and Morton Field.

The facility building will be separated into two restroom facilities and storage for the Town and Recreation needs. The building’s roof will expand to cover a series of picnic tables for gathering. A water fountain will also be provided. The building will measure 47’x16’ and will be constructed of CMU Block walls. The metal roof will be pitched to collect stormwater in a gutter system.

The lacrosse facility will measure 43’x41’ and be constructed of synthetic turf. The precast concrete wall will measure 12’ high and 26’ long for practice use.

- 5) Trash: A series of trash and recycle receptacles will be provided within the parking area, facility building and along the walkway/path system.
- 6) Snow Storage: A snow management and storage plan is to be developed with the Reading Department of Public Works. Snow storage shall be prohibited within the wetland buffers and in all raingarden/bioretention areas.
- 7) Conservation: The proposed improvements will require a Notice of Intent application with the local Conservation Commission. Educational signage, constructed of natural materials, will be strategically located along wetland buffer areas and stormwater features.

Conditions:

General:

- 1. **Limitations / Future Uses**: The Decision herein does not include approval for any future uses or site renovations that may – on their own merits and design – trigger the requirements of future site plan review, and/or require a special permit.
- 2. **Public Health, Safety and Welfare**: If, at any time, the site becomes a nuisance to public health, safety or welfare (i.e., traffic spillover, excessive noise, unreasonable site illumination beyond the hours of operation, etc.) – as shall be evidenced by substantiated complaints to the

Police Department or Public Services Office – the Applicant/Owner shall agree to work with staff to rectify the problem. Should the situation warrant it, an additional Site Plan Review by the CPDC may be required.

3. **Permitting:** The approval herein is for Minor Site Plan Review only. The Applicant shall seek building, electrical, plumbing, and gas permits as required for the work.
4. **Lighting:** Light fixtures shall be installed/adjusted to minimize impacts on traffic.
5. **Conservation:** At all times throughout construction of the project and occupancy of the site, the Applicant and/or future owners shall comply with all provisions of the Order of Conditions issued for the project by the Reading Conservation Commission.

During Construction:

6. **Construction Hours:** Construction shall be limited to the hours specified in General Bylaw Section 8.9.8.
7. **Construction Activities:** Construction activities shall be conducted in a workmanlike manner at all times. Blowing dust or debris shall be controlled by the Applicant through stabilization, wetting down, and proper storage and disposal methods, subject to the approval of the Health Agent or designee. The Applicant shall ensure that the abutting local streets are kept clear of dirt and debris, which may accumulate as a result of construction activities for the Project. Documentation shall be provided as needed demonstrating ongoing pest management control, subject to the approval of and administration by the Health Agent.
8. **Site Inspections:** Town staff or their designee shall have reasonable access to inspect the site to determine compliance with this Decision.

Prior to the Issuance of Occupancy:

9. **Architecture:** The building façade on each elevation (north, south, east, and west) shall be substantially as indicated on the approved plans and elevations.
10. **Management Plans:** Copies of the approved snow management plan shall be provided to the DPW Director, Community Development Director and Conservation Administrator for review and approval.
11. **Right of Way/Traffic Improvements:** The Applicant shall continue to work with the Town's Parking Traffic and Transportation Task Force (PTTTF) for review and implementation of additional right-of-way improvements and/or traffic regulations (i.e. turning movement restrictions, etc.).

Conditions for Ongoing Maintenance After Occupancy:

12. **Landscaping:** Landscaping on-site shall be maintained in a healthy condition in perpetuity. In the event that landscaping is damaged during snow removal operations, the property owner shall replace such landscaping during the next growing season.

Modifications/Revisions - Plan Changes after Approval by the Approving Authority:

Contemplated future changes to the plan approved herein shall be presented to the Community Development Director and the Zoning Enforcement Officer/Building Inspector, or other relevant Town staff, for review prior to implementation of proposed changes.

1. Minor Modification: Changes that do not substantially alter the concept of the approved Plan in terms of the specific location, the proposed land use, the design of building form and approved building details and materials, site grading or egress points. These include but are not limited to small changes in site layout, topography, architectural plans, landscaping plan, traffic circulation, parking, lighting, signage, open space or other criteria set forth in Section 4.6.9.1. Requests for approval under a minor modification for future renovations/alterations to the approved site plan or for future tenant changes shall be reviewed by the Community Development Director to determine if the proposed work qualifies for review through the Minor Site Plan Review process of Section 4.6.3 of the Reading Zoning Bylaw. If the work is eligible for review under Minor Site Plan review, the Community Development Director may review and grant approval of the proposed work by administrative approval of the Minor Modification. At the determination of the Community Development Director, the Applicant may be required to present the proposed project at a public meeting of the CPDC.

2. Major Modification: Substantial additions, deletions or deviations from the approved plan, including but not limited to changes in site layout, topography, architectural plan, landscaping plans, traffic circulation, parking, lighting plan, signage, open space or other criteria set forth in Section 4.6.9.1 of the Reading Zoning Bylaw. (Note: Approval of the major modification shall be grounds for reconsideration of the Site Plan application. Denial of proposed major modifications shall not invalidate the Site Plan in conformance with the previously approved Plan).

Signed as to the accuracy of the vote as reflected in the minutes:

Andrew MacNichol, Community Development Director

Date

Cc: Applicant, Town Clerk, CPDC, Development Review Team, Building Inspector, planning file