



**Town of Reading**  
**16 Lowell Street**  
**Reading, MA 01867**

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**February 6, 2023**

## **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 January 9, 2023 and closed on XXX, 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 Renovations, prepared by Activitas Inc., prepared for the Town of Reading, and including:
  - a. Cover Sheet and Locus Map, dated 1/27/23;
  - 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 1/27/23;
  - e. Sheet SP1.1: Site Preparation Sheet One, dated 1/27/23;
  - f. Sheet SP1.2: Site Preparation Sheet Two, dated 1/27/23;
  - g. Sheet SP1.3: Site Preparation Detail Sheet, dated 1/27/23;
  - h. Sheet L1.1: Layout and Materials Plan Sheet One, dated 1/27/23;
  - i. Sheet L1.2: Layout and Materials Plan Sheet Two, dated 1/27/23;

- j. Sheet L2.1: Grading and Utility Plan Sheet One, dated 1/27/23;
  - k. Sheet L2.2: Grading and Utility Plan Sheet Two, dated 1/27/23;
  - l. Sheet L2.3: Grading and Utility Detail Sheet, dated November 2022;
  - m. Sheet L3.1: Planting Plan Sheet One, dated 1/27/23;
  - n. Sheet L3.2: Planting Plan Sheet Two, dated 1/27/23;
  - o. Sheet L3.3: Planting Details and Schedule, dated 1/27/23;
  - p. Sheet L4.1: Enlargement Sheet Plan One, dated 1/27/23;
  - q. Sheet L4.2: Enlargement Sheet Plan Two, dated 1/27/23;
  - r. Sheet L5.1: Detail Sheet One, dated 1/27/23;
  - s. Sheet L5.2: Detail Sheet Two, dated 1/27/23;
  - t. Sheet L5.3: Detail Sheet Three, dated 1/27/23;
  - u. Sheet E0.0: Electrical Legend and Schedule, dated 1/27/23;
  - v. Sheet E1.0: Electrical Site Plan Part A, dated 1/27/23;
  - w. Sheet E1.1: Electrical Site Plan Part B, dated 1/27/23;
  - x. Sheet E1.2: Electrical Site Plan Part C, dated 1/27/23;
  - y. Sheet E2.0: Electrical One-Line Diagram/Schedule/Details, dated 1/27/23;
  - z. Sheet E2.1: Electrical Details and Schedule, dated 1/27/23;
  - aa. Sheet E3.0: Electrical Details, dated 1/27/23;
  - bb. Sheet E3.1: Electrical Details and Schedule, dated 1/27/23;
  - cc. Sheet ED1.1: Electrical Site Plan Part B Demolition, dated 1/27/23;
  - dd. Sheet A1.1: First Floor Plan, dated November 2022;
  - ee. Sheet A1.2: Elevations, dated November 2022;
  - ff. Sheet A1.3L Renderings, dated November 2022;
6. Photometric Plan Set, Reading Birch Meadow Park, dated 11/11/22
  7. Colorized Site Renderings, prepared by Actvitas Inc., received 11/30/22;
  8. Birch Meadow Proposed Materials, received 11/30/22;
  9. Responses to Conservation, dated 1/4/23;
  10. Responses to RPD and CPDC, dated 1/4/23;
  11. Staff Reports:
    - a. Comments from Town Engineer, received 12/8/22;
    - b. Memo from RPD, dated 12/19/22;
    - c. Draft Decision, dated 2/6/23;

**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 Imagination Station 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, three (3) ADA accessible parking spaces (one of which is to be an ADA van accessible space), and two (2) Electric Vehicle (EV) charging stalls. It will also be improved with a combination of vertical granite curbing, transition granite curbing, bituminous concrete curbing and mountable granite curbing.

The parking lot will allow two-way vehicle traffic flow by maintaining 24' wide drive aisles. The existing 24' wide curb cut to the west of the lot, providing access to/from Birch Meadow Drive, will be maintained but improved with accessible ramps and crosswalk. This curb cut will allow entry and exit, as well as left- and right-hand turning movements out.

A second curb cut will be added to the east. This curb cut will measure 18' wide and be controlled through a vehicular gate. The gate will be opened during events (i.e. sporting/recreation events, public events, etc.) and when open, those exiting from such will be limited to 'Right Turn Only'. Additionally, 'No Parking' striping and regulation is proposed to the areas immediately adjacent to the curb cut and the existing crosswalk directly to the east on Birch Meadow Drive.

- b. Walkway/Path System Improvements: The existing gravel path will be expanded and paved to allow for improved accessibility. It will be constructed of bituminous concrete (asphalt). Along the path will be a series benches, retaining walls, signage and site amenities (i.e. trash/recycle bins) 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: A series of light fixtures will be provided in the parking lot, along the path system and on/within the new facilities. New transformer, electrical equipment enclosure, and utility infrastructure will be located on-site to house proposed improvements and future lighting/site improvements.

Parking lot lighting will be provided around the edges of the lot and will include bronze finished poles ranging 10- to 15-feet tall.

Pathway lighting includes a series of bronze finished fixtures measuring 12-feet tall.

Building/Structure lighting will include wall mounted, pole mounted and safety lighting.

- d. Landscape and Drainage Improvements: A series of shrubs, trees, upland and wetland plantings will be provided and strategically located. New parking lot 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.

- e. 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. The metal roof will be pitched to collect stormwater in a gutter system. The building will measure 47'x16' and will be constructed of CMU Block walls. A water fountain will also be provided in its vicinity.

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 requires a Notice of Intent application with the local Conservation Commission. The Applicant/future owner(s) shall comply with the Conservation Commission conditional approval.

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. **Right of Way/Traffic Improvements:** The Applicant shall continue to work with the Town’s Parking Traffic and Transportation Task Force (PTTTF) and school administration 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:**

11. **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:*

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Andrew MacNichol, Community Development Director

Date

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

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