

**MINUTES OF PUBLIC HEARING
HELD BY THE PLANNING AND ZONING COMMISSION
OCTOBER 17, 2022**

ROLL CALL:

MEMBERS PRESENT:

In Person: Eric Prause, Chairman
Patrick Kennedy, Vice Chairman
Michael Stebe, Secretary
Nicole Clemons
Teresa Ike

ALTERNATES PRESENT:

In Person: Bonnie Potocki
Carlos Jusem
Yamuna Menon

ALSO PRESENT:

In Person: Megan Pilla, Principal Development Planner

Electronically: Gary Anderson, Director of Planning & Economic Development
David Laiuppa, Environmental Planner/Wetlands Agent
Katie Williford, Administrative Secretary

The Chairman opened the Public Hearing at 7:05 p.m. The Secretary read the legal notice for the application when the call was made.

TOWN OF MANCHESTER – Request a special exception modification under Art. II, Sec. 2.02.02 for a proposed school addition and southern storm water drainage system at 179 Keeney Street, Rural Residence and Residence AA zones. – Special Exception Modification (PSE-0035-2022)

Julia McFadden from TSKP Studio presented an overview of the application.

Ms. McFadden stated that the school is currently an upside-down U shape. It was originally built in 1955, with additions in 1964 and 1971. She displayed the proposed floor plan. The proposal includes shifting the main entry towards the east and moving the cafeteria and kitchen to that end. The service and dumpster location are also proposed to be moved to the east side, more out of sight. A proposed addition at the south end connects across the open end of the courtyard, creating a full loop and enclosing the courtyard. Another small addition is proposed to the library media center that bumps out into that courtyard.

Ms. McFadden presented illustrations showing the existing and proposed massing of the school. A canopy along the front of the building will provide some shelter and will have solar panels. Some green space would be filled in to provide more parking. A 3-ft.-tall bump out running atop the corridors would contain the new mechanicals due to the low ceilings.

Ms. McFadden displayed an aerial perspective. She noted that the front entry, where the cafeteria and kitchen used to be, would now be an art room and a STEM classroom, and the canopy would run along the front to the new entry.

Regarding topography, Ms. McFadden stated that the ballfield is at a low area and the site slopes up toward the building, bus loop, and parking, then continues to slope up beyond the school towards the residential areas to the east. There is a steep hill off the south end of the site down to Folly Brook, which runs along the south edge of the property.

Ms. McFadden presented before and after site plans. On the before plan, the parent drop-off loop came around on the west side and buses circulated through the main parking lot. There were three play structures on the south and another to the east of the parking lot, with another swing set up the hill. The proposed plan will separate the bus and parent drop-off, so the west bus loop is only school bus drop-off. The parking lot will be expanded, and parents will circulate through the parking lot for drop-off and pickup. The main entry will be moved to the east and the playgrounds will be consolidated on the east side of the building.

Mr. Darin Overton from SLR Consulting introduced himself, as well as Megan Raymond from SLR, who mapped the wetlands associated with Folly Brook.

Mr. Overton described the existing conditions of the property. He stated that the Upland Review Area extends within the existing building, so there will be some impacts. The property is 27 acres and the project only disturbs about 8 acres, Mr. Overton said. The site has a high point in the northeast corner and the school sits on one of the higher parts of site, but it does rise to the east. All of the site drains to the south and west and into the Folly Brook watershed, which is part of the Hockanum River watershed.

Mr. Overton described the existing drainage for the parking lots and drop-off loop. Everything drains down a collection system consisting of an existing pipe and catch basin system that connects with the drainage on Keeney Street, eventually discharging into Folly Brook, which then flows west. There are two existing discharges from the two wings on the site. He described the drainage from the roof leaders.

Mr. Overton displayed a proposed rendering of the site. He stated that they checked FEMA mapping for the site and, although Folly Brook runs along the southern quarter, there is no FEMA flood plain associated with that. There is one small extension of the 100-year FEMA flood plain that comes across the east side of Keeney Street and onto the property, but none of the proposed improvements affect the flood plain.

The proposal includes an expanded parking area which becomes the drop-off loop for parents, and the bus loop is on the west side of the property, Mr. Overton said. Minimal improvements to paving and sidewalk connections are proposed, and the prior connection into the parking area will be disconnected so the bus loop is entirely independent. A new paved emergency access drive is proposed along the southern part of the property.

The playground on the south side of the school is proposed to be removed in lieu of creating an improved playground area on the east side, with a basketball court and two other playground areas to the north and south of that basketball court, Mr. Overton said.

Mr. Overton discussed the utilities and stormwater management. With the addition on the south

side and the parking expansion, they had to address the increase in impervious area. They analyzed the hydrology of the site and provided an underground detention area under a portion of the parking lot to offset the peak increases, he said. Improvements to the roof leaders on the south side are also proposed. The underground detention under the parking lot will mitigate the increases in runoff from the increase in impervious, he said. On the south side, the two roof leaders will be discharged to similar locations, but a level spreader will be provided. Another, which has created an eroded channel in the current location, will be relocated in an attempt to minimize impact to the mature wooded area.

Mr. Overton described minor proposed utility improvements, including replacement of the sanitary sewer that currently serves the building going back to the manhole near Primer Road; installation of a new grease trap on the east side; a complete electrical upgrade coming from an existing pole; new electrical service coming in the west side to a transformer in the southwest corner of the school; new water main service coming off the water main along the existing driveway near Primer Road; and telecommunications off an existing pole coming underground into the north side of the building.

Mr. Overton described proposed landscaping improvements, including trees, shrubs, groundcover, and seeding all disturbed areas back to grass where there will be maintained lawn area.

A detailed erosion and sedimentation control plan was submitted, Mr. Overton stated.

Mr. Overton explained that some changes were made to the plans in order to stay on budget. The paver type of emergency access will now be a paved extension of the bus loop to provide improved emergency access on the south side. The colorized stamped concrete proposed for the courtyard area is now changed to a standard concrete walk. Excess soil being excavated is now planned to be put on the south side where the playground is being removed, bringing the grade up in that area.

Mr. Overton said that they received comments from Town staff, and they believe there is nothing that cannot be incorporated.

Ms. Megan Raymond, Professional Wetland Scientist, Registered Soil Scientist, and Certified Flood Plain Manager with SLR, introduced herself. She stated that Folly Brook riparian corridor exists along the southern portion of the site and occupies about 5.8 acres of the property. It's a high functioning wetland corridor with native plants adjacent to the watercourse edge. She described the wetland in detail. The project will have no direct wetland impacts but does provide an opportunity to improve stormwater drainage. The site is sitting at the upper end of the Folly Brook watershed, Ms. Raymond said, noting that the stream is mapped as intermittent, but there is evidence of some high flows that can come through. She added that the project is well away from that.

Ms. McFadden stated that there is fill on the southeast corner of the site. Some of that fill will come out when excavating for the addition that connects the two wings. They do not anticipate intruding more into that area.

Mr. Stebe asked about how they will deal with the gas line service deletion, the geothermal fields, and how the project will hit the Net Zero goal in the process.

Ms. McFadden indicated where the well field will be located to the east of the relocated playground, and the line connecting it to the new mechanical room. She added that there will be photovoltaic panels on the roof and front canopy.

Mr. Overton said they are eliminating the gas connections to the building; they will be abandoned in place, or the gas lines will be removed.

Ms. McFadden stated that the hazmat environmental team has done their review and there is an underground storage tank that is serviced with diesel oil that is piped to the existing boiler room, then out the south side, into the courtyard where the existing generator is located. The generator is nearing the end of its useful life and will be removed, as will the underground storage tank, the diesel, and the old boilers.

Ms. Potocki asked about the anticipated start and finish dates. Ms. McFadden stated that they are trying to get the construction documents out to bid by the end of the year. Some site preparation for the addition might begin before the end of the school year, she said, and once school is out, they will begin work in earnest, doing hazardous material removal and renovation work. The school is expected to open in fall 2024.

Ms. Potocki asked how rain will be directed off the canopy in front. Ms. McFadden said that it slopes, and she believed there would be gutters, but she was unsure.

Regarding the additional parking in front, Ms. Potocki asked whether permeable pavement or low impact development was considered, and, if so, why that was not selected. Ms. McFadden stated that they are trying to bring parity to all of the schools, and bituminous is the typical material that has been used for the parking lots. They did investigate two places where they could have rain garden detention with native plantings. Generally, those options are not investigated because of cost.

Ms. Potocki commented about the emergency access being paved and fill material being brought in to create it. She asked how sheet flow will be handled now that the emergency access drive is proposed to be paved.

Ms. McFadden clarified that they will not be bringing fill in, but rather reusing excavated soil because it is expensive to move soils off site.

Mr. Overton stated that they talked to the Fire Department about access, and the Fire Department wanted to add the extension around the south side of building. There is a 30-ft. area that is relatively flat before the slope down to the playground area, so they propose putting some fill there to push the slope outward. The plan is to place excess fill in the playground area to bring it more in line with the grade of the emergency access drive. The pavement there will be a small, linear area of impervious, so once the grass is established, water can sheet flow off into the grass without any potential for erosion. Ms. McFadden added that it is replacing bituminous that runs around the back of the building already.

In response to a question from Ms. Potocki, Mr. Overton described the proposed change in grade in the area and the locations of the existing and proposed bituminous areas. There will not be much of a change in impervious there, he said; they are just replacing an expanse of pavement that was not very useful and utilizing it for emergency access and the walkway to the doors.

Ms. Potocki asked how snow removal will be handled. Mr. Overton said that, for the bus loop, he expected that they will plow snow to the side so it can sheet flow to the grass areas and down the slope to the west. For the parking lot, snow will be pushed to the end, and some snow storage can take place on the islands. They believe there is enough snow storage around the perimeter of the parking area, and snow could be moved to broader areas on the site in more extreme winters, he said.

Mr. Prause stated that his son attends Keeney School, but he will be in the swing space next year. Mr. Prause does not stand to benefit from the improvements, but expressed his appreciation.

Mr. Prause commented that the existing walkway around the school is proposed to be removed. Ms. McFadden confirmed that there is not a connecting sidewalk across the very south edge, but there is nothing impeding someone walking across there.

Mr. Prause asked if the number of basketball hoops is being reduced from four to one. Ms. McFadden responded that she thought there were two half basketball courts rather than the one that was shown.

Mr. Prause asked about the locations marked on the plan as “engineered wood fiber mulch.” Ms. McFadden responded that they are two playscapes for different age ranges, both of which are fenced and easily accessed from the building.

In response to a question from Mr. Prause about the middle courtyard, Ms. McFadden explained that it would be an outdoor learning space that could be flexibly used. There would be concrete seat walls, a paved area that could be used as an informal teaching area, and a garden planting bed on the south edge that could be a student gardening area.

Mr. Prause commented that the hill on the west side of the building is used for sledding and asked to see the proposed grading, which Ms. McFadden displayed. She stated that they tried not to impact the slope down to the ball field. The ball field gets wet at times, and Public Works asked if that could be addressed. Mr. Overton said that an accessible route will be added to the ball field, and underdrains are proposed to connect into the existing storm drainage that runs down along Keeney Street. Ms. McFadden added that the slope will stay so children can continue sledding.

Mr. Prause noted that there is a natural gas termination as part of this project, and asked what would happen if the geothermal pump stops working. He asked whether some type of redundancy is being removed and the school will now be relying on geothermal to be working 100% of the time in order for the school to be open. Ms. McFadden responded that she did not believe there was a redundancy, but she could follow up on that question.

Mr. Prause asked about the generator that will be removed and what would happen if the school lost power. Ms. McFadden responded that there is a portable generator that they can bring to a site that is experiencing a power outage. She said that there was discussion about relocating the existing generator, but that did not make sense, because it is near end of life.

Ms. Clemons noted that there are time capsules in the courtyard, and she wanted to make sure those can be saved. Ms. McFadden responded that the time capsule is flagged. They will dig it up and store or relocate it.

Ms. Pilla stated that most comments from Town staff were minor technical comments. There was staff feedback that was delayed while awaiting the results of camera inspections of the sewer and stormwater infrastructure. Engineering will accept those comments as modifications to the approval. In terms of the regrading to minimize material leaving the site, she stated that her memo to the applicant today explained that staff will want to review proposed regrading to make sure it does not result in drainage concerns.

Ms. Potocki said she hoped the fill will be tested for suitability, because it is unclear whether there may be contamination.

Mr. Stebe asked who will maintain the six electric vehicle charging stations. Ms. Pilla said she would double check, but it would be the Town in some capacity, either Public Works or Manchester Public Schools.

Chairman Prause asked that any member of the public who wished to speak either in favor of or in opposition to this application come forward at this time.

Mr. Dennis Dessureault, 172 Keeney Street, introduced himself as the neighbor whose property will catch all the sediment, water, and garbage from the project. He asked what the southeast discharge height to the brook is, and how much water volume will come off that roof and come out of that discharge. He commented that, when you come to the parking lot and the water retention to keep the water out, the manhole cover usually blows off once a year. He said that field floods, that whole baseball area floods, the 12x30 drain under Keeney Street will get flooded, it will no longer pass enough water, and it floods out the whole end of the field. As far as the State saying that the brook dries up, Mr. Dessureault said it has never dried up in the 44 years he's lived there. He expressed his concern that his house could get flooded, because the project would add quite a bit of water. He did not know how many gallons the retention chamber would hold, but he was sure it wouldn't be more than two to three thousand, which would mean it could fill up in minutes. His concern about the discharge to the brook height is that it just means it will wash out a different location.

Mr. Overton responded that they analyzed whether there might be an increase in runoff. They also looked at existing soils and at opportunities for stormwater infiltration, low impact development, or other ways to mitigate surface runoff. In this situation, they didn't have soils that were highly permeable or receptive to infiltration. Because of the limited area of where water would drain to, they didn't propose rain gardens. They went with underground storage because there is a split through the building. The roof area drains to the south and the courtyard drained to the south previously. They seek to balance the micro watersheds onsite as well as the overall watershed, which drains to Folly Brook. They looked at the watershed to the south where the roof leaders discharge. They're continuing to discharge the roof leaders and the courtyard to the south. Their analysis shows that, based on the changes proposed, they don't have an increase to the south. On the north side, they have an increase in pavement, which is the reason for the underground detention. The detention is open-bottomed, but there will not be a high level of infiltration into the ground, so it is stored and metered back through an outlet control structure, and then it ties into the existing system to drain in a similar manner as the existing parking lot on the north side of the building drains under existing conditions. They included a hydrodynamic separator to catch sediment or floatables, and scheduled maintenance is required as part of that. The underground storage has an isolator row, so the first row of chambers is designed to trap sediment and can be accessed for cleaning. Mr. Overton stated that they have provided for a higher level of water quality management and have analyzed to make sure there is not an

increase in peak rates of runoff. He acknowledged that there is a portion of a FEMA 100-year flood plain on the property.

Mr. Dessureault asked how much water will be discharged and how fast. He reiterated his comments about regular flooding of Keeney Street and his concern about whether his house will be flooded.

Regarding capacity, Mr. Overton responded that he would need to look at the detailed engineering report that highlights the amount of storage. He described the collection system and the dimensions of the chambers. The storage capacity is basically a volume under the parking lot, he said. He described the outlet control structure. Mr. Overton stated that they have not analyzed Keeney Street or the larger watershed to Folly Brook at the cross culvert. It sounds like there may be existing drainage issues in larger storms and there may be backup in the cross culvert in Keeney Street, he said. Mr. Dessureault indicated the location of the manhole cover that blows off in large storms. Mr. Overton said they were not aware of that issue previously, but he could address that with the engineering and school staff. He stated that the project would not increase the flows into that pipe system.

Mr. Prause expressed concern about the baseball field. He asked whether the intent is to actively convey that into Folly Brook.

Mr. Overton explained that an underdrain is proposed for the baseball field to allow wetness to drain away. The plan also includes a surface yard drain and a pipe connection to a manhole in the drainage system that runs parallel to Keeney Street. There will be an underdrain and a small surface drain so surface water can drain through the pipe system, so it doesn't flow across the field. If the field is flooded, it would mean the drainage system is backed up. This is intended for small storms to collect runoff that comes down toward third base, and after the storm, the underdrain is for the saturated soil conditions to dry more quickly.

Ms. Potocki said she felt that more investigation is needed regarding the stormwater system. The flooding on this street creates an icing condition, she said. Her opinion was that the underdrain will not be sufficient and there is no emergency overflow. Ms. Potocki suggested that another detention area should be considered.

Ms. Pilla stated that one written comment was received, from Dean Ott, 157 Lyness Street, who asked if the time capsule buried around 1999 will be preserved.

Mr. Prause asked if the members wished to discuss keeping the hearing open. Mr. Kennedy responded that he did not see a reason to keep the hearing open.

MOTION: Mr. Kennedy moved to close the public hearing on application PSE-0035-2022. There was no second for the motion.

Mr. Prause noted the concerns about stormwater. He added that, if the hearing were held open, it would be useful to get information about the redundancy of the geothermal system.

Mr. Kennedy commented that that is not a zoning issue; it has to do with the functioning of the school building. The school wants to get this project out to bid, so extending the hearing for no real reason is not something the Commission should do, he said.

Mr. Stebe was in favor of holding the hearing open.

Mr. Prause asked if there would be enough time to figure out the stormwater issues by the next meeting date. Ms. Pilla responded that would be plenty of time for Town staff to look at it, but it depends whether the applicant needs time to gather some of that information.

Mr. Overton clarified that the field drainage is just an underdrain; it's a stone trench with a 6" perforated pipe in it. What he had thought was a yard drain actually has a solid cover. The drainage proposed for the field is really just an underdrain to collect groundwater and allow that to drain dry; it is not intended to convey surface water from the field.

Regarding the redundancy for the geothermal system, Mr. Overton said that the proposed system for heating the school needs electricity to run. Even though the existing system uses fossil fuel for heating, it does require electricity. Power is needed to heat the school either under existing conditions or with the proposed geothermal system. If a generator is provided, it can still operate, he said.

Mr. Overton said that the hydrology analysis is related to the site. Although they analyze to make sure a project will not make an existing condition worse, there is not much they can do at the main stem of Folly Brook at that cross culvert to improve the situation of the larger watershed. He stated that a full engineering analysis for the project was provided that shows that they are not making any existing drainage or flooding issues worse.

Mr. Anderson clarified that the information about the hydrology and stormwater was provided to Town staff, and staff have reviewed it. Planning staff can pass along the Commission's comments and questions and ask staff to take a closer look, and can also get clarification from the project manager from the school, he said.

MOTION: Mr. Stebe moved to continue the public hearing on application PSE-0035-2022 until November 7, 2022. Ms. Ike seconded the motion. Mr. Prause, Mr. Stebe, Ms. Clemons, and Ms. Ike voted in favor of the motion. Mr. Kennedy voted against the motion. The motion passed four to one.

The Chairman closed the Public Hearing portion of the meeting at 8:41 p.m.

NOTICE: A DIGITAL RECORDING OF THIS PUBLIC HEARING CAN BE HEARD IN THE PLANNING DEPARTMENT.