



City of New Bedford Department of City Planning

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PLANNING BOARD

STAFF REPORT

REPORT DATE
February 9, 2022

MEETING DATE
February 9, 2022

Case #22-06 & #22-07: Site Plan Review & Special Permit

198 Herman Melville Boulevard

Map: 66 Lot: 153

Owner: City of New Bedford – Harbor Development Commission

123 McArthur Drive
New Bedford, MA 02740

Applicant: Bristol Community College Foundation, Inc.
777 Elsbree Street
Fall River, MA 02720

Zoning District: Waterfront Industrial (WI) within the Working Waterfront Overlay District

Site Area: 1.7± acres

Overview: Site improvements for a new offshore wind training facility.



Former Packaging Products Corporation warehouse
Looking southeast from Herman Melville Boulevard

Existing Conditions

The project site was formerly the site of Packaging Products Corporation. There is one large, metal building on site with seven (7) loading docks on the front. There is a garage door on the front of the building south of the loading docks. A paved parking area is set between the building and Herman Melville Boulevard. Parking spots exist at the perimeter of the site to the west and north and in front of the building north of the entrance walkway.

Most of the site is paved. A grass area exists at the southwest of the property. A black chain link fence surrounds the property. Property gates are located on Herman Melville Boulevard and on Hervey Tichon Avenue.

The building is oriented to the west and the site has 250± feet of frontage on Herman Melville Boulevard. The site has 300± feet of frontage on Hervey Tichon Avenue.

A fenced industrial building and parking lot abuts to the north across Hervey Tichon Avenue. A fenced industrial yard abuts to the south. An industrial building with a loading dock on Hervey Tichon Avenue abuts east, with the waterfront and docks for commercial vessels further east. All surrounding properties are gated and primarily used for waterfront industrial purposes. The future site of the South Coast Rail station and layover facility, and the Whale’s Tooth Parking Lot abut west across Herman Melville Boulevard.

The surrounding neighborhood is industrial, comprised of businesses supporting the working waterfront.

Related Permitting

A Chapter 91 Waterways Licensure Application has been submitted to the Massachusetts Department of Environmental Protection.

Decision Criteria

The applicant is requesting a Site Plan Review. The ordinance provides the Board the following criteria for reaching a decision.

Site Plan Review Criteria
<p>In considering Site Plan Approval for the proposed project, the Board must find that the plan meets the objectives identified in Section 5470 of the City’s Zoning Ordinance (c.9) including:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Adequate access to each structure for fire and service equipment• Adequate provision for utilities and stormwater drainage• Site alteration shall be designed after considering the qualities of the specific location, proposed land use, the design of building form, grading, egress points and other aspects of the development so as to:<ul style="list-style-type: none">○ Minimize cut/fill volumes, removal of 6” caliper trees and larger, removal of stone walls, displacement of wetland vegetation, extent of stormwater flow increase from the site, soil erosion and the threat of air/water pollution;○ Maximize pedestrian/vehicular safety to/from the site○ Minimize the obstruction of scenic views from publicly accessible locations○ Minimize visual intrusion by controlling layout/visibility of parking, storage and outdoor service areas viewed from public ways and residential areas○ Minimize glare from vehicle headlights and lighting fixtures○ Minimize unreasonable departure from the character, materials and scale of buildings in the vicinity○ Minimize contamination of groundwater from on-site wastewater disposal systems or operations on the premises involving the use, storage, handling or containment of solid/liquid wastes and hazardous substances○ Ensure compliance with the Zoning Ordinance○ Minimize damage to existing adjacent public ways○ Promote orderly and reasonable internal circulation within the site so as to protect public safety

Special Permit Criteria for Parking Reduction

When deciding on the Special Permit for a parking reduction, the Board must consider the requirements outlined in Section 3120 of the City's Zoning Ordinance (c.9):

- Any parking or loading requirement set forth herein may be reduced upon the issuance of a special permit by the Planning Board if the Board finds that the reduction is not inconsistent with public health and safety, or that the reduction promotes a public benefit. Such cases might include:
 - Use of a common parking lot for separate uses having peak demands occurring at different times
 - Age or other characteristics of occupants of the facility requiring parking which reduces auto usage
 - Peculiarities of the use which make usual measures of demand invalid
 - Availability of on-street parking or parking at nearby municipally owned facilities.
 - Where a special permit is granted, a reserve area, to be maintained indefinitely as landscaped open space, may be required sufficient to accommodate the difference between the spaces otherwise required and the spaces reduced by special permit. The parking/site plan shall show (in dotted outline) how the reserve area would be laid out in to provide the otherwise required number of spaces

Proposed Conditions

The applicant proposes interior and exterior site improvements. The interior of the metal building will be renovated to house a wind turbine training facility. The applicant indicates the facility will accommodate up to 54 people at a time. The rejection packet cites 242 spaces are required for places of assembly. The applicant proposes 56 parking spaces and is seeking relief of 186 parking spaces. Updated utilities and stormwater drainage in the parking lot area will improve water quality and groundwater recharge at the project site. Plans indicate the existing loading dock is to be filled and landscaped. The southernmost loading bay with an existing storm drain is to remain. The applicant proposes paving the grassy area at the southwest of the project site with concrete to accommodate an outdoor training area. Parking lot renovations include the construction of parking islands to improve circulation at the site., new lampposts, and a realignment of parking spaces. Additional wall-mounted lighting on each side of the building is proposed. The existing trees along the perimeter are to remain. The applicant proposes resurfacing the existing ground sign. The existing electric-powered gates are to be salvaged as well.

Staff Review

The table below outlines the proposed site changes and highlights items for discussion and the Board's consideration.

Parking	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The application indicates fifty-six (56) parking spaces are proposed and the rejection packet indicates two hundred forty-two (242) are required, so the applicant is requesting a reduction of one hundred eighty-six (186) spaces for relief. Three (3) handicap parking spaces with offloading are proposed in front of the building, next to the vestibule. • Three parking islands are proposed. • Proposed drive aisles are a minimum of 22 feet wide. Parking space dimensions are a minimum of 9 feet x 20 feet. • Bicycle parking for seven bikes is proposed near the main entrance.
Landscaping & Site Features	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • There are 3 trees along the westerly edge of the project site. Two evergreen shrubs border the ground sign at the northwest corner of the site. Existing trees on site will be protected during construction. • Two small parking islands will be sited at the east and west of the parking spaces in the north of the lot. A larger parking island will be sited in the south area of the parking lot. Plans indicate parking islands will be grass landscaped. The Board may wish to discuss additional landscaping options for these area with the applicant.

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The applicant proposes relacing the loading dock with a grass landscaped area in front of the 6 bays to be removed. The Board may wish to discuss additional landscaping options for this area with the applicant. • A grass infiltration basin with stone spillways is proposed for the southwest corner of the site. The Board may wish to discuss additional landscaping options for this area with the applicant. • Electric-operated gates at both entrances are to be salvaged. • A paved, concrete training area in the open space south of the parking lot is proposed.
Signage	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The ground sign at the northwest corner of the site is to be resurfaced per plans submitted. The Board may wish to inquire about illuminated signage.
Circulation	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Plans indicate improved circulation via three east-west aisles created by the parking islands. • Vehicles and pedestrians will access the site through existing gates on Herman Melville Boulevard and Hervey Tichon Avenue. • Plans indicate trucks will access the site from Hervey Tichon Avenue and back into the loading bay at the southeast corner of the parking lot. • Public sidewalks have been incorporated into the project.
Traffic/Transit	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The applicant indicates the facility will have a maximum number of 54 people including instructors on site at any given time. • The SRTA Terminal on Elm Street is one mile from the proposed site. The closest bus stop is at Hillman Street and Purchase Street near Melville Towers. There are no bus routes along Herman Melville Boulevard.
Operations	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Hours of operation will be 8:00 AM – 5:00 PM, Monday through Friday. • The proposal indicates a total of 48 students and 6 instructors will be on site daily. • Weekly deliveries will occur during normal business hours.
Stormwater	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The project site is located within Zone X based on FEMA Flood Insurance Rate Map. • No alterations are proposed to the existing drainage pattern on site. Additional stormwater components to improve water quality and recharge will be added and result in an overall decrease in the amount of impervious area within the property according to the stormwater management report provided by the applicant. • Stormwater from the site will drain into the existing storm manholes at Hervey Tichon Avenue to the north and at Herman Melville Boulevard to the west. • The removal of the trench drain in front of the existing loading bays is proposed. • The proposed stormwater system is comprised of two deep sump catch basins, a pretreatment stone filter strip, four sediment forebays, and an infiltration basin. • The stormwater report submitted by the applicant indicates the roof and a portion of the parking that drains to the trench drain at the loading docks is conveyed through an underground stormwater system and connected to a manhole in Hervey Tichon Avenue. The applicant proposes that stormwater runoff from the building's roof be routed to the same discharge point as existing conditions. • Planning staff defers to the Department of Public Infrastructure regarding compliance with the City's Stormwater Rules and Regulations.

Snow Storage	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The applicant proposes snow storage at the northwest corner of the site near the sign (see Snow Storage Map Fig. 3, page 197).
Waste Receptacles	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The proposal indicates the 10 cubic yard dumpster is to be sited in front of the building west of the garage door. Proposed bollards are to be sited behind the dumpster to the south. PVC fencing is proposed for the dumpster enclosure.
Utilities and Mechanical Systems	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The water main connection and service box is located at the northeast corner of the site on Hervey Tichon Avenue. A sewer cleanout and doghouse sewer manhole are proposed a few feet west of the water main. Plans indicate connecting the proposed transformer to the underground electric on Herman Melville Boulevard at the southwest corner of the site. The Board may wish to condition that the applicant coordinate with Eversource on all utility work. The applicant proposes the transformer to be located west of the screened dumpster and the generator to the south of the screened dumpster, sited on concrete utility pads. The Board may wish to discuss screening for the generator and transformer with the applicant and appropriately condition that revised plans be submitted that detail screening. Condensing units at the back of the building and the north side along Hervey Tichon Avenue will be sited on concrete utility pads. The Board may wish to discuss screening for these units with the applicant and appropriately condition that revised plans be submitted that detail screening.
Lighting	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> 18-foot lampposts are proposed at the south, west, and north sides of the parking lot and on the east side of the island in the middle of the parking lot. Photometric plans indicate the parking lot will have a maximum footcandle rating of 3.7, with an average of 1.4. Wall-mounted lighting on the front of the building, facing west, includes eleven existing to remain and 3 new lights. Two new sets of security cameras are also proposed on the northwest corner and to the south of the garage door (see A2.1, A2.2). The photometric plan indicates three new wall-mounted lights along the walkway area will have a maximum footcandle rating of 5.6 with a minimum of 1.0. New wall-mount lights are proposed on each side of the building per architectural plans (see A2.1, A2.2). These lights are not included in the photometric plan. The Board may wish to discuss the details of these wall-mounted lights with the applicant. Photometric analysis indicates little to no light in the public way beyond the sidewalks. Footcandle ratings beyond the project site are < 1.0. The Board may wish to condition that the site be illuminated no earlier than one hour prior to opening and no later than one hour after closing.
Demolition and Erosion Control	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Plans indicate removal of most of the hardscaped surface at the front of the building and around the perimeter of the parking lot, including wheel stops. Six loading bays will also be removed. Plans indicate measures will be taken to protect existing trees during construction.

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Fence sections to be removed during construction on Hervey Tichon Avenue and Herman Melville Boulevard will be salvaged. • The construction entrance is to be on Hervey Tichon Avenue, after removal of pavement. The gate is to be salvaged. • A compost filter sock is proposed around the entirety of the project site, excluding the construction entrance on Hervey Tichon Avenue. Plans indicate erosion control waddles/filter tubes around the project site staked at 10-foot intervals. Conservation Agent memo requires all erosion waddles/filter tubes is to be sandbagged or staked at 6-foot intervals. The Board may wish to condition that the applicant adhere to the erosion controls suggested by the Conservation Agent. • Inlet protection is proposed at the catch basin at the northeast corner of the project site on Hervey Tichon Avenue. • Plans indicate removal of water service and capping the main at the northeast corner of the project site on Hervey Tichon Avenue. • Plans indicate removal of condensing unit, concrete pads, and refrigerant piping along Hervey Tichon Avenue. • Plans indicate removal of pavement on Hervey Tichon Avenue for construction of new connections to water service and manhole drain. • The gate on Herman Melville Boulevard is to be disconnected by the electrical contractor and salvaged. • The proposed project area includes the drainage manhole and underground electrical connection southwest of the project site on Herman Melville Boulevard. • The existing wall adjacent to the loading dock and the building's main entrance is to be removed. • Existing bollards and fencing at the dumpster are to be removed. • Material laydown area and soil stockpile are to be located in the grass area south of the parking lot.
Architectural	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Six loading bays in front of the building will be discontinued to provide additional parking space in front. The loading bay furthest south is to remain. • Architectural plans indicate windows will be added to the front of the building where the loading dock bays are to be removed. • Additional external wall-mounted lighting is proposed for each side of the building. The Board may wish to discuss dark-sky-friendly lighting. • New security cameras mounted on the building are proposed.
Master Plan	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The proposal is consistent with the Master Plan's goal of providing workforce development and training that aligns with emerging growth sectors.

Interdepartmental Review Comments

As required under city ordinance, the case submittal documents were distributed to City Clerk, City Solicitor, Health Department, Inspectional Services, Engineering, Public Infrastructure, Conservation Commission, Fire Department and School Department.

At the time of writing this report, the following departmental memos have been received:

Conservation Agent memo, 1/24/22

Department of Public Infrastructure memo, 2/8/22

Site Photos



Gated entrance with trees to remain
Looking east from Herman Melville Boulevard



Front of building and loading dock to be filled.
Looking southeast from gate on Hervey Tichon Avenue.



Landscaping at front of building, next to the entrance.
Looking southeast from Hervey Tichon Avenue.



South bay, garage door with bollards, dumpster enclosure.
Looking south from north of the loading dock.



Entryway and vestibule at front of building.
Looking northeast from parking lot near loading dock.



Existing conditions at back of building, at site's east extent.
Looking south from Hervey Tichon Avenue.



Materials for Consideration

The engineered plan submission is shown as “Off-Shore Wind Training Facility – 198 Herman Melville Blvd” dated 1/12/22, and prepared by Fuss & O’Neil of Quincy, MA. The plans are stamped by Kevin McGarry, PE. The plan set consists of the following sheets:

- GI-001 Cover Sheet
- GI-002 General Notes
- GI-100 Context Map
- Sheet 1 of 1 Boundary & Topographic Survey
- Sheet 1 of 2 Boundary & Topographic Survey
- CP-101 Site Preparation & Erosion & Sediment Control Plan
- CS-101 Site Layout Plan
- CG-101 Grading, Drainage & Utility Plan
- CD-501-505 Construction Details

The architectural plan submission is shown as NOWI – Offshore Wind Training Facility” dated 1/3/22, and prepared by Civitects Architecture of Fall River, MA. The plan set consists of the following sheets:

- A1.1 Plan: First Floor
- A2.1 Exterior Elevation: West & East
- A2.2 Exterior Elevation: North & South

Recommended Conditions



Special Permit. Having reviewed the submitted materials, planning staff offers the following recommendations for conditions to the Planning Board should it act favorably on the requested Special Permit approval for the project:

That the following **specific conditions** be applied to this decision:

1. The number of required parking spaces shall be reduced from two hundred forty-two (242) to fifty-six (56) for a reduction of one hundred eighty-six (186) spaces.



Site Plan Approval. Having reviewed the submitted materials, planning staff offers the following recommendations for conditions to the Planning Board should it act favorably on the requested site plan approval for the project:

That the following **specific conditions** be applied to this decision:

1. Prior to the issuance of a building permit, the applicant shall submit revised plans to the Department of City Planning for review that show the following:
 - Additional landscaping on the area between the building and the parking area, the parking islands, and the infiltration basin.
 - Screening for the transformer, generator, and condensers.
2. The applicant shall submit evidence of an approved Chapter 91 Waterways Licensure issued by the Massachusetts Department of Environmental Protection prior to the issuance of a building permit.
3. Erosion control measures shall include straw waddles/filter tubes every six feet, as required by the Conservation Agent in his memo related to this case.
4. Site lighting shall be illuminated no earlier than one hour prior to opening and no later than one hour after closing.
5. The applicant shall coordinate with the Department of Public Infrastructure to resolve all comments in their forthcoming memorandum.
6. The applicant shall coordinate with Eversource prior to starting utility work.

That the following **general conditions** also be applied to the decisions:

7. The project shall be completed according to the plans, notes, reports, and specifications submitted for consideration and final approval by the Planning Board.
8. The project shall be undertaken in a manner consistent with any departmental memos received in relation to plan and placed on file for Planning Board consideration. The conditions of such memos shall be considered to be part of these conditions.
9. The applicant shall submit final plan revisions to the Department of City Planning in the following formats: one (1) -11" x 17" Plan Set and one (1) CD or USB with Plan Set in PDF format and shall ensure that these same plans are properly submitted to the Department of Inspectional Services.
10. The applicant shall ensure that a copy of the Notice of Decision, bearing the certification of the New Bedford City Clerk signifying no appeal has been made against the project's approval, be provided for the Department of City Planning case file folder.
11. That the applicant shall ensure a copy of the Notice of Decision bearing the certification of the city of New Bedford City Clerk, signifying no appeal has been made against the project's approval, be recorded at the Registry of Deeds.
12. The applicant shall ensure that a copy recorded decision be provided for the Department of City Planning case file folder.

13. The applicant shall present any proposed modification from the approved plans for consideration to the Director of City Planning for determination as to whether the modified plan must return before this Board for further review.
14. The rights authorized by the granted approval must be exercised by issuance of a Building Permit by the Department of Inspectional Services and acted upon within one year from the date the decision was granted, or they will lapse.
15. The developer and site contractor must schedule a pre-construction meeting with the Department of Public Infrastructure prior to the start of construction.

Materials Provided by the Applicant are available at: <https://www.newbedford-ma.gov/planning/planning-board-agenda-info-2022/>

Staff Report prepared by: Rachel Mulroy Staff Planner
Reviewed by: Jennifer Carloni, City Planner



198 Herman Melville Boulevard Map: 66 Lot: 153

NOTE: Property line is approximate; for discussion purposes, only. Aerial image is oriented north.