



ZONING BOARD OF APPEALS
TOWN HALL WELLESLEY, MA 02181

JOHN A. DONOVAN, JR., Chairman
ROBERT R. CUNNINGHAM
KENDALL P. BATES

ELLEN D. GORDON
Executive Secretary
Telephone
431-1019 X208

WILLIAM E. POLLETTA
FRANKLIN P. PARKER
SUMNER H. BABCOCK

ZBA 95-12
Petition of Babson College
Nichols Parking Lot/Babson Campus

Pursuant to due notice, the Special Permit Granting Authority held a Public Hearing on Thursday, February 16, 1995 at 8 p.m. in the Selectmen's Meeting Room (Conference Room B) at the Town Hall, 525 Washington Street, Wellesley, on the petition of BABSON COLLEGE requesting Site Plan Approval for a Major Construction Project pursuant to the provisions of Section XVIA and Section XXV of the Zoning Bylaw to construct a 47 car parking lot to cover 15,784 square feet, including a paved access path. The proposed parking lot would be parallel to the existing NICHOLS PARKING LOT adjacent to the Main Gate on the BABSON COLLEGE CAMPUS in a Business A District and a Water Supply Protection District. Associated landscaping will be provided.

A Special Permit pursuant to the provisions of Section XIVE and Section XXV of the Zoning Bylaw is also requested to construct a parking lot and to render more than 10,000 square feet impervious in a Water Supply Protection District.

On January 20, 1995, the petitioner filed a request for a hearing before this Authority, and thereafter due notice of the hearing was given by mailing and publication.

Presenting the case at the hearing was David Carson, Director of Planning for Babson College. Mr. Carson was accompanied by Ann James, landscape architect, and Robert Crowell, project engineer.

Mr. Carson said that Babson was requesting permission to build a parking lot close to the Main Gate at the intersection of Wellesley Avenue and Forest Street, which would be used to augment the existing Nichols lot which is overcrowded due to an excess of Administrative parking. The lot is not located in a student area, and there are no neighbors in the vicinity.

Mr. Carson said that Babson's strategy has been to site the lots as close to the Main Gate as possible. This lot will serve the Administrative Building, Alumni Hall and a third small building which was expanded a year ago.

The Board expressed concern with the overall planning prospects on the campus, as it appeared that parking was going to be a continuing challenge. The Board questioned whether the proposed expansion is a make-shift solution, or whether Babson has a long range parking plan.

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431-1019 X208

ZBA 95-12
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Mr. Carson responded that, as discussed at the hearing on the Graduate Center, the only other future construction would be a Campus Center, which would be located close to the largest student lot where there is an excess of parking spaces. In his opinion, once the Nichols and Athletic 2 lots are expanded, Babson will not require additional parking for years to come as Babson has determined that the undergraduate population will not be increased.

The Board noted that Dr. Katz, Director of the Board of Health, had expressed concern that the readings for the groundwater elevations had been taken in July when levels were below normal, and had suggested that the testing be redone at this time.

Mr. Crowell said that he had noted the high groundwater as determined by rust marks, and that the Town Engineer was satisfied with the data. The Board stated that it is sensitive to the requests of other reviewing Boards, and would condition that new testing be done.

Ann Zembrowski, Wellesley Avenue, expressed concern with the piecemeal review of Babson projects which diminished the total traffic and environmental impacts of combined projects. The impact of the parking lots on Wellesley Avenue is more highly peaked because they tend to empty at one time. She suggested that Babson prepare a Traffic and Safety Plan which would analyze traffic on site, and traffic exiting the site.

The Board explained that it does not have the authority to require Babson to do such a study, and it can only review the projects as they come before the Board for approval.

No other person present had any comment on the petition.

Statement of Facts

The subject property is located parallel to the existing Nichols Lot and adjacent to the Main Gate on the Babson College Campus in a Business A District and a Water Supply Protection District. The existing Nichols lot contains 124 spaces and is used for Administrative parking.

The petitioner is requesting Site Plan Approval to construct a new 47 space parking lot with associated landscaping which will cover 15,784 square feet including a paved walkway to connect the new lot with the existing one. Three additional cut-off lighting fixtures attached to 20 foot poles will be located on the perimeter, and a landscaped island will be provided on the interior of the lot.

ZBA 95-12
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Nichols Parking Lot/Babson Campus

The petitioner is also requesting a Special Permit to construct a parking lot and render more than 10,000 square feet impervious in a Water Supply Protection District.

The on-site recharge will be accomplished by the installation of two catchbasins on the eastern edge of the proposed lot, through which stormwater will be directed to two detention ponds connected by a 12" culvert. The southern pond is connected to a drainage ditch which transports stormwater to a manmade detention pond on the southeast side of the campus. The northern detention pond is slightly deeper and is designed to retain, for recharge on site, the runoff from a two year storm of 1390 cubic feet of water.

In regard to grade reduction, Section XIVE of the Zoning Bylaw states that "the soil overburden shall not be lowered to finished exterior grades less than 5 feet above the maximum groundwater unless technical evidence can be provided showing that the groundwater quantity and quality will not be detrimentally affected."

The high groundwater below the finished detention ponds will be approximately 2 to 2 1/2 feet below grade. However, technical evidence has shown that the soil has a very low permeability rate. Due to the protective layer of low permeable soil, the groundwater quality will not be detrimentally affected by the installation of the detention ponds.

Grade reduction is not an issue for the parking lot which will be approximately 5 feet above the high groundwater level and will be slightly filled rather than lowered.

The following plans were submitted: Topographic Plan dated 6/20/94, drawn by John Gilbert Dick, Registered Land Surveyor; Site Preparation Plan (L-1), Parking Lot Expansion Plan (L-2), both dated 1/4/95, drawn by Carol R. Johnson, Registered Landscape Architect; and Context Plan dated 8/10 94, prepared by Carol R. Johnson Associates. Nichols Parking Lot Expansion Drainage Calculations, prepared by Crowell Engineering, and an Official Development Prospectus were also submitted.

All aforementioned plans and information were sent to the Design Review Board, Planning Board, Wetlands Protection Committee, Town Engineer, Board of Health and the Fire Chief in accordance with Section XVIA of the Zoning Bylaw. Written responses were received from each of the above and are on file in the office of the Board of Appeals.

On January 26, 1995, the Design Review Board reviewed the petition and voted to offer no comment on the project.

ZBA 95-12
Petition of Babson College
Nichols Parking Lot/Babson Campus

The Wetlands Protection Committee reviewed the proposed construction plans and were satisfied with both the on-site recharge system and the lowering of exterior grades to only 2 1/2 feet above the northern detention basin due to the impermeability of the soil. The Committee recommended that the catchbasins be cleaned annually and verification of the cleaning should be submitted to the Committee by July first of each year. The Committee also recommended that the base elevation of the detention ponds be checked every five years. If deposition is found to be 6 inches or more, the bottom of the ponds should be cleaned out to the original design grade.

The Board of Health suggested that as the original groundwater elevations were done in July, 1994, when levels were below normal for that period, that the elevations be re-evaluated in March or April to better assess existing conditions.

On February 7, 1995, the Planning Board reviewed the petition and voted to offer no objection to the granting of the requested Special Permits.

Decision

This Authority has made a careful study of the materials submitted and the information presented at the hearing. The proposed 15,784 square foot parking lot containing 47 spaces constitutes a Major Construction Project under Section XVIA because it involves grading or regrading of land over an area of 5,000 square feet, and because it is an activity regulated under Section XIVE, Water Supply Protection Districts.

It is the unanimous decision of this Authority that the proposed plans for the additional lot parallel to the existing Nichols Parking Lot adjacent to the Main Gate on the Babson College Campus comply with the Zoning Bylaw of the Town, protect the safety, convenience and welfare of the public, minimize additional congestion in public and private ways, and insure adequate protection for water, sewerage and drainage. Furthermore, compliance with Section XVI, Section XXI and Section XXII of the Zoning Bylaw has been insured.

A Special Permit is hereby granted and Site Plan Approval is given by this Authority pursuant to Section XVIA, Section XIVE and Section XXV of the Zoning Bylaw, subject to conditions attached hereto as Addendum A.

A Special Permit is also required pursuant to the provisions of Section XIVE of the Zoning Bylaw for construction of a parking lot and the rendering of more than 10,000 square feet impermeable in a Water Supply Protection District.

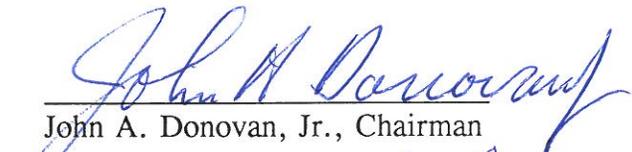
ZBA 95-12
Petition of Babson College
Nichols Parking Lot/Babson Campus

It is the unanimous decision of this Authority that the Design and Operation Standards contained in Section XIVE-F have been met in regard to on-site recharge and grade reduction.

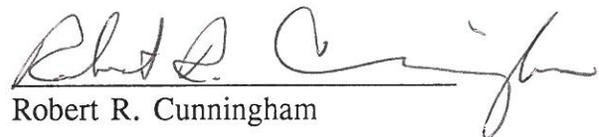
Therefore, a Special Permit for the construction of said parking lot in a Water Supply Protection District is hereby granted, subject to conditions contained in Addendum A.

APPEALS FROM THIS DECISION,
IF ANY, SHALL BE MADE PURSUANT
TO GENERAL LAWS, CHAPTER 40A
SECTION 17, AND SHALL BE FILED
WITHIN 20 DAYS AFTER THE DATE
OF FILING OF THIS DECISION IN
THE OFFICE OF THE TOWN CLERK.

cc: Planning Board
Wetlands Protection Committee
Board of Health
Inspector of Buildings


John A. Donovan, Jr., Chairman


Kendall P. Bates


Robert R. Cunningham

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Nichols Parking Lot/Babson Campus

ADDENDUM A

1. All work shall be performed in accordance with the plans submitted and on file with this Authority.
2. All design and construction must comply with all applicable State and local codes.
3. Groundwater elevations shall be redone and documentation of results of testing shall be submitted to the Board of Appeals prior to the issuance of any building permit.
4. All catchbasins shall be cleaned on an annual basis and documentation of the cleaning shall be submitted to the Wetlands Protection Committee prior to July 1 of every year. Documentation shall include a letter stating who performed the work, the date the work was done, the nature of the work, and a receipt for the work done.
5. The base level of both detention ponds shall be check every five years. Documentation of said level shall be submitted to the Wetlands Protection Committee with the documentation of the catchbasin cleaning for that year. If the deposition is found to be six inches or more, the bottom of pond shall be cleaned out to the original design grade and documentation of said cleaning shall be submitted to the Wetlands Protection Committee at the same time as the aforementioned documentation is required.
6. Upon completion of the project, a set of site utility and drainage plans shall be submitted to the Department of Public Works.

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