

City of Auburn, Maine

"Maine's City of Opportunity"

Office of Planning & Permitting

Planning Board Report

To: Auburn Planning Board

From: Eric Cousens, City Planner

Re: Site plan and special exception request of Albert E. Hodson, agent for Becket Family Services seeking approval to establish a 40 student school and a greenhouse at 31 Holbrook Road (PID# 387-028), pursuant to Chapter 60, Section 60-229(b)(13) of the City of Auburn Ordinances.

Date: August 13, 2013

I. PROPOSAL

Albert E. Hodson, agent for Becket Family Services seeking approval to establish a 40 student school and a greenhouse at 31 Holbrook Road (PID# 387-028), pursuant to Chapter 60, Section 60-299(b)(13) of the City of Auburn Ordinances.

The chapter and verse of the Ordinance refer to the following:

1. Section 60-229(b)(13) refers to: Low Density Rural Residence District (RR), b – Special Exception Uses, 13 –Schools.

The existing parcel has approximately 600' of frontage on Holbrook Road, 230' of frontage on North Auburn Road and is 2.28 acres in area. The existing structure totals 6,420 square feet in area and was formerly used as a school for approximately 100 students. The proposed use of the building as a school could have continued without Planning Board Review, however, the building has been vacant for a number of years and the approvals have expired. The proposed school would serve up to 40 students.

The proposed site plan provides for continued use of the two existing access points on Holbrook Road, a one-way entrance and a full two-way access point to the north. Traffic will be substantially reduced from the former use as a public school and there are no concerns with safety.

A new greenhouse structure is proposed to the north of the improved parking lot. Both the improved parking area and the greenhouse will add impervious area to the site that will generate additional stormwater runoff and potential for phosphorus export. The applicant is proposing an onsite filter pond to mitigate any increases and to meet

the Lake Auburn Watershed Standards. The application supplement dated August 6, 2013 from A.E. Hodson Consulting Engineers addresses the concerns and meets the requirements of the City Ordinances.

The existing subsurface wastewater system will be upgraded/repared as indicated in the application. The system was designed for 100 students and has capacity for the proposed 40 student school. Because the system has been substantially inactive for a number of years, staff recommends that any approval be conditioned on the system being inspected prior to occupancy by a site evaluator or engineer and that they certify that it is installed as designed and functioning properly. If it is not functioning properly then any malfunctions shall be corrected.

The erosion control plan indicates the use of 10-20-20 fertilizer to help stabilize and establish vegetation. Because the property is in the Lake Auburn Watershed and in close proximity to the lake, staff recommends that the property owner refrain from using fertilizer unless soil samples indicate specific nutrient deficiencies that make it necessary for maintaining vegetation.

Staff is supportive of the proposed development as it is consistent with the comprehensive plan, existing zoning and surrounding uses.

II. DEPARTMENT REVIEW

Police Department:

No Concerns.

Fire Department:

No concerns. Building plans will be reviewed prior to occupancy.

Water and Sewer District:

See attached letter from John Storer.

Engineering Department:

The Department Concerns are being addressed with the updated plans and stormwater information.

Planning Department:

- A. Any refuse and recycling containers shall be located within refuse enclosures at all times. Said enclosure/s shall be reviewed with Staff prior to their construction and building permits must be issued.
- B. Any new site lighting shall be full cut off style fixtures and not have bulbs that protrude below the fixture mount.

III. FINDINGS FOR SPECIAL EXCEPTION REVIEW:

- A. The Zoning Ordinance contains no specific requirements for the school use similar to that being proposed.
- B. The Special Exception sought will not create or aggravate a traffic hazard, a fire hazard or any other safety hazard.
- C. The proposed Special Exception sought will not block or hamper the Comprehensive Plan pattern of highway circulation or of planned major public or semi-public land acquisition.
- D. The subject property is situated in a RR district and the proposed use is consistent with this zoning classification. The exception sought to reuse the existing school structure will not alter the essential characteristics of the neighborhood and will not tend to depreciate the value of the property adjoining and neighboring the property under application.
- E. The proposed use is on existing lots of record.
- F. The standards imposed are, in all cases, at least as stringent as those elsewhere imposed by the Auburn Building Code and by the provisions of Chapter 60.
- G. All essential city services, which will be required for the project, are presently available or can be made available without disrupting the City's Comprehensive Plan.
- H. It has been determined that the proposed project satisfies the objectives of Special Exception review and will constitute a suitable development and will not result in a detriment to the neighborhood or the environment. It will result in improved economic opportunity and community recreation for the area. This determination is based upon the above noted findings.

IV. RECOMMENDATION:

Based upon the findings noted above, Staff recommends that the Planning Board approve the proposed Special Exception & Site Plan request of Albert E. Hodson, agent for Becket Family Services to establish a 40 student school and a greenhouse at 31 Holbrook Road (PID# 387-028), pursuant to Chapter 60, Section 60-229(b)(13) of the City of Auburn Ordinances, with the following conditions:

- A. The building shall meet or exceed the National Fire Protection Association and the American Insurance Association Fire Prevention Codes and any state/local rules, regulations and/or ordinances.
- B. All refuse and recycling containers shall be located within the refuse enclosures at all times. There shall not be any outside storage of materials (parts, pallets, dumpsters, containers, etc.) unless stored within a screened (solid) enclosure. Said enclosure/s shall be reviewed with Staff prior to their construction and building permits must be issued.
- C. All site lighting shall be full cut off style fixtures and not have bulbs that protrude below the fixture mount.
- D. Plan approval is also conditioned upon compliance by the applicant with the plans and specifications which have been received by the Planning Board in connection with the development proposal.

Eric Cousens
Director of Planning and Permitting