

MEMORANDUM

Subject: Response to 12/04 Staff Comments

Project: **The Cotting School
Gymnasium Expansion**

Project No. 18005.00

Date: 13 December 2019

To: Town of Lexington
Planning Board

By: Megan Buczynski
Principal Civil Engineer

Delivery: via email (*mbelanger@lexingtonma.gov*)

Dear Lexington Planning Board Members,

The following are our responses to the “Limited Site Plan Review Staff Comments” dated December 4, 2019. The comments are provided for reference in *italics* and our responses are in **bold**.

1. *Because of the Cotting property is registered land the process of cleaning up the interior lot lines would be lengthy and expensive; staff is ok with not doing this and leaving the parcel as is.*

No response required.

2. *Please provide the date of the parking count. Was this representative of a normal day? The Parking Analysis was done by observations at a point in time. It would be helpful if the Applicant provide a parking analysis according to staffing and operational demands to better evaluate the range of the parking demand. Several parking spaces by the Mary Perry Building, while in existence are not considered viable spaces because of the lack of maneuvering and should not be included in the parking count. It is unclear which parking spaces were included in the 152 space total.*

The parking counts took place on November 12, 2019 and November 14, 2019. The counts were done on typical days without major meetings or events taking place. Seven spaces at Mary Perry were included in the count. However, to allow for appropriate maneuvering, we have removed 2 spaces from the Mary Perry lot to allow it to function better.

3. *Please provide information about deliveries.*

The only major delivery is for cafeteria food and that is delivered to the east parking lot. US Food delivers food monthly. Milk, yogurt and produce are delivered weekly by a small truck from a local business. Mail deliveries (USPS, FedEx, etc.) are delivered to the front door daily. WB Mason delivers to the front door approximately twice a month on an as needed basis. Medical supplies are also delivered to the front door approximately once every 1-2 months on an as needed basis.

All delivery services understand the morning and afternoon drop-off times and do not come at those times of day.

4. *The parking space in front of the path should be eliminated and an unobstructed 4-foot wide path and crosswalk should be provided for pedestrians coming from the new parking lot.*

Done. Please refer to updated Parking Plan.

5. *Staff agrees with the Vanasse Report recommendation that the tree at the 489/497 Concord Avenue driveway be removed to provide adequate sight lines. It is likely the removal of this tree will need a public shade tree hearing via the Tree Committee. According to Chapter 120 of the Lexington Code a Public Shade Tree is: Any tree within the public right-of-way except for state highways that, as determined by the Tree Warden, has any portion of the stem between six inches and 4 ½ feet about grade actively growing into the public right-of-way.*

Cotting will contact the Tree Warden to begin the appropriate process per the Town's Bylaw's for removal of the tree per the Vanasse recommendation. If needed, Cotting will stake out the corners of the property at that location for the Tree Warden's review. Cotting will abide by the decision of the Tree Warden, Planning Board, and Selectmen with regard to the removal or retention of the tree.

6. *Original request remains the same: For proper public safety the driveway to the auxiliary parking lot needs to be 20-22 feet wide the entire length from Concord Avenue into the parking lot. Due to time constraints, public safety officials have not determined the minimum width. This is very important particularly as this parking lot will be regularly used during construction and likely beyond at the Cotting School uses the two houses on property.*

Based on a meeting with Lexington Staff Members on December 9, 2019, Fire noted that 20 feet wide is acceptable, but that they want it paved and don't feel that any gravel can withstand a fire truck. While we believe that gravel can be a suitable bearing surface and maintained by Cotting School in such a manner to allow it to be considered an all-weather surface, the plans have been updated to reflect asphalt at the fire access routes accordingly. It is also worth noting that the existing gravel driveway is a current condition serving the abutting lots and no new building construction on the parking lot or subdivision of any of the other portions of the abutting lots is being proposed. Please note that requiring pavement at all access drives is a very strong precedent to be set within the Town on all future projects and development moving forward. If the Town would like to continue the discussion of the final fire access surface, Cotting is willing to do so as a condition to the Planning Board's decision.

As such porous asphalt pavement (permeable drivable surfaces may be acceptable: see CMR 527, Ch. 18.2.3.4.2.1) is being proposed at the back fire access behind the gymnasium and at the 497 drive to the parking area and allowing a turnaround into the 489 drive. It is set so that the fire truck can pull into the drive on pavement have its 200' reach to the parking lot and the 489 house, and then turn around out onto the 497 drive. We feel this is an appropriate way to allow access that meets the Department's requirement, but not go overboard and pave the entire parking lot and drive which seems extreme. Please refer to updated sheets L1.1, L5.1., and L5.2.

7. *Screening must be provided along the improved driveway to the auxiliary parking lot.*

Please refer to updated Plan L5.2 for the proposed screening.

8. *Staff generally agrees that the proposed circulation pattern of creating a one-way flow on the eastern side of campus will relieve some burden of vans queuing on Concord Avenue. However, the final width of the entrance drive needs to be reviewed and approved by the Fire Department. In addition, queuing shall only be allowed in one lane; the other lane needs to remain passable at all times.*

At the December 9, 2019 meeting, the drive was discussed with the Fire Department and they found 20' to be adequate. Please refer to revised Plan PP1.1.

9. *Staff also agrees that widening the eastern entrance drive as well as slightly widening the western driveway exit/entrance will provide a safe flow of traffic. The Fire Department will need to approve the width. It is important to note that this driveway improvement will require approval by the Conservation Commission as it is in the 200-foot riverfront as Hardy's Pond Brook runs parallel to the property line.*

At the December 9, 2019 meeting, the drive was discussed with the Fire Department and they found 20' to be adequate. Please refer to revised Plan PP1.1. The eastern most drive will be in 200' previously disturbed riverfront area. The Project Team will discuss this work with the Conservation Director to determine the best method of submission to the Conservation Commission.

10. *The Fire Department requires that the fire access drive be asphalt. The proposed width of this access should be shown on the plans.*

Refer to response to Item #6. Refer to updated Plan L1.1 and L5.1 for the width of the drives.

11. *The locations of the fire hydrant on site need a comprehensive review. The Fire Department has not completed its review and has not approved the fire hydrant location. All fire hydrants and/or stands proposed and existing should be shown on the plans.*

Locations of the existing fire hydrants and relocated hydrant were discussed with the Fire Department at the December 9, 2019 meeting and all locations were agreed upon. Refer to updated Plan PP1.1 for the locations of the hydrants.

12. *The Transportation Safety Group will evaluate whether all the criteria are met for this portion of Concord Avenue to be designated a School Zone. According to the Manual of Uniform Traffic Control Devices (MUTCD) one of the criteria is that there needs to be a crosswalk present within the school zone. The Transportation Safety Group (TSG) supports the Applicant installing one at the Applicants expense at an agreeable location.*

A crosswalk will be provided near the eastern most entrance; refer to updated Plan PP1.1 for the approximate location. Cotting will continue to work with the MUTCD for the School Zone.

13. *Lighting – It appears that the proposed lighting meet our zoning by-laws. The Applicant will be required at the time of building permit to submit a lighting plan along with the spec sheets showing the shield and cutoff devises.*

No additional response needed.

14. *Because the School will be relying on the new parking lot to meet the parking demand during construction, it was initially recommended that the issues involved in the ZBA*

decision dated July 25, 2019 should be resolved before the site plan approval process is complete. The issues are not resolved. At the time of building permit, if this parking lot is not operational; the Applicant will need to submit a temporary parking plan before any permits are issued.

As discussed at the December 9, 2019 meeting, Cotting School has a contingency plan for temporary parking in the event that the new parking lot is not operational at the time of at the time of the building permit.

15. In addition, the Board should consider whether the Applicant will meet the new parking demand created by the addition space.

The understanding from Planning Board Meeting was that the Board was in agreement that there is no new demand created by the expansion project.

We believe the information contained within provide us with a permissible project with conditions as part of the final decision. As such we thought the Town would like to see how much this gymnasium project means to the Cotting Community, especially their students. Please find attached an article from Billy C., a student at Cotting School, to understand what this project means for him and his peers. We think it's important that the entire Lexington Community remembers what this project is truly about: To enable students with special needs to achieve their highest learning potential and level of independence.

If you have any questions or comments on the enclosed information, please do not hesitate to contact me directly at (781) 355-7040 or by email at meb@activitas.com.

Respectfully,

ACTIVITAS



Megan Buczynski, PE
Principal Civil Engineer
meb@activitas.com

Attachments:

Letter from Billy C.,

Revised Sheet PP1.1 – Parking Plan

Revised Sheet L1.1 – Layout and Materials

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Revised Sheet L4.1 – Detail Sheet I

Revised Sheet L5.1 – 489 Concord Ave Drive Site Plan Sheet I

Sheet L5.2 – 489 Concord Ave Drive Site Plan Sheet II

Billy C., Age 18, Capstone student at Cotting School

December 10, 2019

Written by Billy and his coach for the school paper and Cotting's annual report

"Cotting is just like a family, and Tessa was like a sister to me," says Billy C., an 18-year-old Capstone student at Cotting School. "We rode the bus together for four years, and we'd always talk sports. There was lots of kidding around about our favorite teams. We would talk about Disney and how Disney pursued new stories but kept the old favorites. Tessa would often wear a Mickey shirt to school, and that is how I still think of her."

A strong, passionate basketball player who cared a great deal about the game and her teammates, Tessa Geomelos died in April 2019 at age 20. The entire Cotting community mourned her unexpected passing. On December 6, 2019, the Cotting Falcons played their first basketball game since Tessa's passing--against the alumni.

Before the game, Billy was nervous and wondered how the team would do without Tessa shouting encouragement. He bought a new pair of sneakers that would not scuff up the gym floor and asked his father to decorate them to honor Tessa. It worked.

Billy recalled, "Sometimes when I play basketball now, I feel like a black cloud is raining on top of me. But when I put those shoes on Friday night, they drove away the black cloud over my head. It felt as if Tessa were inside the gym with us telling us how we could play better and how many baskets we could score. I knew that Tessa would not be happy if I messed up wearing her name on my shoes, and we came from behind and won the game."

It was Tessa's dream to build a bigger, new gym, with enough room for students to run hard and for spectators to sit comfortably to watch the games. Billy says, "I am excited that we are on the way to that dream."