



***Town of Lexington***  
**PLANNING BOARD**

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**LIMITED SITE PLAN REVIEW DRAFT DECISION**

**THE COTTING SCHOOL – ATHLETIC ADDITION**

**453 CONCORD AVENUE**

Date of Application: August 21, 2019  
Date of Hearing: September 25, 2019

**Application & Development Parcel Information**

Applicant & Owner: The Cotting School  
453 Concord Avenue  
Lexington, MA 02420

Lead Designer: Activitas, Inc.  
70 Milton Street  
Dedham, MA 02026

Parcel Location & Street Address: Town Assessors' Map 10, Parcels 40, 41A, 42, 43, 46, 47  
and Map 11, Parcels 26B, 31, 33  
453 Concord Avenue

Parcel Area: 776,675 sf

Zoning District: RO – One Family Dwelling

**PROJECT SUMMARY**

This Application for Limited Site Plan Review in regards to the School's proposal to install a gymnasium addition on the existing school building and related site improvements. Per the Zoning Bylaw Chapter 135 Sections 9.5.2.1 and 9.5.6 and Chapter 176 Section 9.4.1, the project is subject to Major Site Plan Review as the proposed expansion of the structure exceeds 5,000 sf. Per Zoning Bylaw Chapter 135 Section 9.5.6, the project is subject to the limited review

requirements as it is an educational use. The Cotting School has served the Boston area since its founding in 1893 with the goal “to enable students with special needs to achieve their highest learning potential and level of independence”. Cotting’s current campus has served this mission for over three decades but has not seen significant improvement since its construction in 1988. The new addition (approximately 25,355 sf) will include a regulation size high school basketball court, candlepin bowling lanes, a fitness center, a climbing wall, and new classroom space serving the visual and performing arts. The addition will be connected on two levels to the existing facility with accessible entrances at the upper and lower levels. Exterior improvements around and adjacent to the building include new ramps and walkways, paving of an existing gravel parking lot, installation of new subsurface stormwater detention/infiltration systems and associated infrastructure, and miscellaneous landscape improvements.

This addition is to augment the current curriculum. They are not intending to expand enrollment which typically ranges from 110-125 students.

Construction is planned for next spring. Blasting will likely be needed and is planned to begin during April vacation and will take approximately one year to complete. The project is currently being reviewed by the Conservation Commission. The applicant will be presenting to the Planning Board for Limited site Plan Review at a public meeting on September 25, 2019.

#### **STAFF COMMENTS**

- The Cotting School Property comprises several lots. The applicant should clean up the interior lot lines through the ANR process.
- The initial project summary from the applicants state that their parking requirement is 191 spaces and they are proposing 143 spaces. At a recent meeting with members of the Cotting School team, staff did not agree with their analysis and determined a more robust analysis is needed.
- The parking and loading analysis needs to account the entire site including the new parking lot recently built but not yet completed. It is the applicant’s burden to show how they can meet the parking requirements or show their actual parking demand is less than required and that they can meet the parking demand.
- The parking analysis should include a count of actual spaces used on several typical days. The site plan or a parking plan should clearly show the existing number of space by count; proposed spaces, and show marked or protected pedestrian circulation. For example, an unobstructed 4-foot wide path and crosswalk should be provided for pedestrians coming from the new parking lot.

A parking and loading analysis should include:

- Traffic counts at each entry and exits;
- Number of Motor Vehicle Trips by type (bus trips and car trips);
- Number of Employees (categorized by type of staff and number of hours/times worked)
- Number of Students (categorized by type of transportation provided)
- Visitor parking
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The By-law requires parking spaces to be 9’ x 18’. The bylaw requires 19’, however

if there is room for a bumper overhang, a shorter depth is allowed and should be noted on the site plan or parking plan that there is no obstruction for bumper overhang. Otherwise, any new spaces must comply with the parking space depths and widths as set forth in Section 135-5.1.13.

Because the School will be relying on the new parking lot to meet the parking need, the issues involved in the ZBA decision dated July 25, 2019 should be resolved before the site plan approval process is complete. While the recent ZBA decision works to resolve the parking lot screening and landscape issues, the Planning Board should consider the safety of the driveway. It is expected that the parking and loading analysis will show the new parking lot will be needed on a regular basis. The Driveway at 497 Concord Avenue should be widened to accommodate emergency vehicles and the line of sight at Concord Avenue be improved by removing the large oak tree and either moving the utility pole or moving the utility box. The Applicant should consult the Fire Department and provide a firetruck turn diagram. A traffic analysis should consider whether a right turn only is appropriate.

- It is understood that the Applicant is working to provide temporary parking during construction. If the parking is across the street the applicant should provide a means of safe crossing and provide this information in the logistics plan.
- While the intention is to not increase enrollment, the proposed addition greatly increases the site capacity. Safe access to and from Concord Ave and pedestrian circulation is a concern. For these reasons, along with extreme concerns from abutting residents, the applicant should consider methods to lessen traffic and site circulation disruptions. Therefore, the applicant should submit a traffic study to discern what could be done now and in the future to alleviate traffic concerns on Concord Avenue.
- The project site is within the 100-foot wetland buffer and the proposed stormwater infiltration system discharges into the wetland. As such the Conservation Commission has jurisdiction in the project. In addition, the Cotting School is working to correct a violation within a conservation easement at the rear of the property. A building permit should not be issued until conservation easement violation is resolved to the Conservation Commission's satisfaction and the proper permits are obtained from the Conservation Commission.

#### **ADDITIONAL INFORMATION NEEDED**

The applicant shall provide the following materials:

- 1) Fire Truck turn diagram
- 2) Snow storage plan
- 3) Height detail of the parking canopy, drive aisle width. – This can be on the firetruck turn plan

- 4) Site Traffic and circulation should be shown or explained.
- 5) Traffic Mitigation Plan for both on-site and off-site along the School frontage.
- 6) Lighting Plan (make sure any new lighting for additional parking spaces and addition are shown on the plans) before final approval the emergency access drive surface needs Fire Department approval. Egress safety lighting should be shown on the photometric plans.
- 7) Revised Logistics Plan
- 8) Zoning Analysis to include Parking and Loading Analysis and Plan.

## **MATERIALS SUBMITTED**

1. Site Plan Review Application, filed with Town Clerk August 24, 2019
2. Project Memorandum dated August 21, 2019
3. Athletic Field Improvements Narrative dated February 14, 2019
4. Legal Ad Permission to Bill Form dated August 21, 2019
5. Property Deed
6. Construction Management Logistics Plan
7. Lighting Fixture Information
8. Minor Site Plan Filing Fee
9. Certified Abutters List
10. Stormwater Report dated August 12, 2019
11. Limited Minor Site Plan Review Plan Set, The Cotting School Athletic Addition, Lexington, MA, Prepared by Activitas, Inc. (27 Sheets) dated August 12, 2019 and revised to August 21, 2019
  - a) Sheet 1-5: Topographic Survey, last revised August 23, 2018
  - b) Sheet SB1.1: Setback Plan
  - c) Sheet C1.1: Site Preparation Plan
  - d) Sheet C1.2: Construction Access Plan
  - e) Sheet C1.3: Site Preparation Details
  - f) Sheet C2.1-C2.2: Utility Plan
  - g) Sheet C2.3- C2.4: Utility Detail
  - h) Sheet L1.1: Layout and Materials Plan
  - i) Sheet L1.2: Courtyard Layout and Materials Plan
  - j) Sheet L2.1: Grading Plan
  - k) Sheet L2.2: Courtyard Grading Plan
  - l) Sheet L3.1: Planting Plan
  - m) Sheet L3.2: Courtyard Planting Plan
  - n) Sheet L4.1-L4.2: Detail
  - o) Sheet P1.1: Photometric Plan
  - p) Sheet A1.1: First Floor Plan
  - q) Sheet A1.2: Second Floor Plan

- r) Sheet A1.3: Low Roof Plan
- s) Sheet A1.4: Overall Roof Plan
- t) Sheet A2.1: Exterior Elevations

## FINDINGS

- 1) Zoning: All 9 lots are located in the RO zone but because of the building's educational use, the Cotting School is granted certain rights under Chapter 40A. However the Town may still enforce zoning pertaining to building coverage requirements, parking, open space, setbacks, and yard size and lot area. The property abuts single-family residential lots and is located close to Route 2.
- 2) Interior Space: The proposed one-story structure will be comprised of approximately 25,355 gross square feet. The new addition will include a regulation size high school basketball court, candlepin bowling lanes, fitness center, concession stand, climbing wall, and new classroom space serving the visual and performing arts. The addition will be connected on two levels to the existing facility with accessible entrances at the upper and lower levels.
- 3) Functions/Events: Events will generally take place outside of normal school hours.
- 4) Noise: The project architect maintains that the rooftop HVAC units are partially surrounded by the new building. As a result the HVAC units are not anticipated to generate noise beyond the property lines.
- 5) Limitations: The Site Plan Decision herein does not include approval for any future uses or site renovations that may – on their own merits and design – trigger the requirements of site plan review and/or require a special permit.
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