

Site Walk
Crom, LLC
125 and 119 Windham Road, PID 01023-001, 01023-003
Greg Leduc
117 Windham Road, PID 01023-004

On Saturday, September 13, 2014, the Derry Planning Board conducted a site walk to view the properties owned by Crom, LLC and Greg Leduc that are under consideration for the expansion of an existing self-storage facility. The site walk began at 8:32 a.m., at the property located at 125 Windham Road.

Present: Dave Granese, John O'Connor, Frank Bartkiewicz, Jan Choiniere, Lori Davison, Ann Alongi, Jim MacEachern, George Sioras, Elizabeth Robidoux. Also present were Eric Mitchell of Eric C. Mitchell & Associates, Inc., Edward Smith, Crom, LLC; Barbara, Facilities Manager at Granite Clover, John Shea, Brandon, Granite Clover; Tom Hutchinson, MI-Box, Dale Smith, Leighton A White, and abutters, Ernie Brown, Maureen Rose, Lee Bernard, and Doug Delara.

Weather conditions were clear, cool, with light clouds. The site walk began at the office building. Dave Granese asked that any questions posed at the site walk also be brought up at the public hearing so that they are on the record.

Eric Mitchell provided the following background, also providing a packet to the Board members; one was provided for the record. The self-storage facility was purchased by Crom, LLC this spring. The facility has been in existence since 1984 or 1985, with one renovation in the mid 1990s. Since Crom, LLC has purchased the property, many of the storage units have been rehabilitated and the pavement has been reclaimed and repaved. New drainage on the existing site has been constructed, a new sign installed and the septic system has been replaced. There was a slight expansion of pavement, and footings have been installed as they were repaving the area. No further work will occur in the area of the footings until the plan has been approved. On the existing site the intention is to add the 4500 sf addition, a 30,000 gallon cistern and the small addition of pavement. The main portion of the site plan involves the proposed 44,000 sf climate controlled building. The only waiver being requested at this time is for the parking calculation. They did ask for a variance to allow the house at 117 Windham Road to stay on the merged lots. The existing site (125 Windham Road) has an apartment over the office building. When the three lots are merged, it would result in two residences being located on one lot. The Zoning Board denied the request by a vote of 3-2 against, and they will appeal that decision.

Ed Smith said this facility is a sister facility to the Amherst site which has been in operation since 1999. If four to six customers come to the site during one day, that would be a heavy volume day. People pull up to their unit to load/unload items. The new building will be climate controlled and is one large building with a hallway. Access

to the individual units would be from inside the building. That building will be locked. It is a walk through, not drive through building. The hours of operation for that building would be Monday through Friday, 9:00 a.m. to 6:00 p.m.; 9:00 a.m. to 3:00 p.m. on Saturday and Sunday. The existing units are available 24 hours a day, 7 days a week with a pass key. The climate controlled building will have limited hours. The driveway will go around that building; limited access to that driveway is not in the plan at this time.

Maureen Rose asked if the snow plows will drive all around the climate controlled building. Ed said they will; they need to make sure the access is clear for emergency vehicles.

Dave reminded those present the purpose of the site walk is for the Board to gather information. Any questions about snow plowing and things of that nature should be brought up at the public hearing. Maureen questioned the notice for the site walk and advised she was under the impression it was to begin further up the street and not at this location. Dave advised the notice stated the site walk was for 125 Windham Road.

Barbara explained she works six days a week; she lives above the office. This is her twelfth year at the site. The busiest time of the month is around the first week of the month where she might see 15-20 customers in the office during the day time, averaging around 3-4 customers per day. She has not had any issues with people loitering at the site. The first of the month is when the rents are due and people who do not utilize the auto pay option come in to pay their rent. Ed complimented Barbara, noting she is a most diligent manager. Barbara commented she likes the site quiet because this is also her home. Currently there are 297 units on site; the intent is to increase that number to 600 units.

George Sioras asked with regard to snow storage. Ed stated they shut the facility down in order to clear the snow. They send an email out to their customers advising in advance (when they have advance warning of storms); close the gates, clear the snow; the site is reviewed by the manager to ensure it is clear and safe; and then they reopen the gates to the customers.

The site walk proceeded up Windham Road, pausing at the fire pond. Eric noted there is one detention area ahead on the site and one to the right. There will be a retaining wall 10' above the edge of the pond. Dave asked about wetland on the property. Eric said there is a small wetland that outlets near the entrance to the site and a small area to the rear near the rail trail. They do not intend to cut the trees along the roadway. Jim MacEachern confirmed the wetland setback is 30 feet as the wetland is less than 1 acre and is not a prime wetland. The old fire pond has been there for a long time; the neighbors skate on it in the winter. It will not be used as a fire resource.

The site walk proceeded to 117 Windham Road. Eric noted the lot line between the properties Crom owns and the Leduc property is in the middle of the proposed driveway. The proposed building has been staked out in red. The orange stakes indicate the edge of proposed pavement; blue stakes are the lot lines. A fence is

proposed near the edge of pavement between the proposed building and the existing single family home. Jim confirmed the existing driveway will stay and will curve to the left around the proposed building. Eric pointed out the ladder they set up in the existing vegetation which will allow Board members to see the natural vegetation they would like to use for the rear buffer area. The peak of the proposed building will be less than the top of the rod that has been placed with the ladder. John O'Connor confirmed the height of the proposed building is 14 feet. Eric advised they removed the proposed peak from the building to keep the height down. If the variance is granted, the house will stay and they will rent it. If the variance is denied there are several options. They can take away one dwelling unit or have this be an ancillary accessory building to the storage use and use it for storage or as office space.

Dave asked if access will be through this driveway. Eric explained the public access is near the office. This will be an emergency only access for police and fire. It will be gated off with a knox box. The public can only access the site from the entrance near the office. One of the previous renditions of the plan had access on three sides of the building. The Fire Department asked for access on all four sides.

Dave asked Eric to point out the fence location in relation to where the Board was standing. Eric said the fence will be near the orange stake to the left. The new fence will be black chain link. Ed said it will be the same as the new fence that has been installed to the rear of the existing site. The Board will see that when they get to that area. It is black nylon coated chain link. Dave asked if the existing shed will be removed. Eric said they will move the shed. It was noted there will be a fence along the rear of the property; the location of the rail trail was pointed out to the Board members. There was a short discussion relative to security cameras on site.

George asked if someone could explain the proposed lighting. Ed advised they will use LED down lit lighting which will illuminate a small area. Dave asked to be shown the 50 foot buffer area. Jim noted they need to be cautious about taking away from existing vegetation. The Planning Board learned a lesson years ago when American Excavating was creating their site on Madden Road; the existing vegetation was removed and plantings put in to meet the letter of the regulations; it would have been better to leave the existing vegetation as it was a better buffer.

Eric advised the outside edge of pavement is to the rear of the shed. The edge of pavement is 60 feet off the lot line so that it does not cut into the buffer. They feel the existing vegetation provides an adequate buffer to the rear of the site behind the shed. Jim paused near the door to the shed and it was noted that he was standing at the approximate line for the edge of the 50 foot buffer. Maureen advised most of the existing vegetation to the rear is deciduous and would lose its foliage for the winter months.

Dave climbed the ladder and stated that at 11 feet up, what he could see was better than three rows of trees. The Board discussed the vegetation. Eric said many of the trees and bushes will lose their leaves in the winter and the vegetation won't be as thick

as it is currently. Jim suggested putting up a 6 foot stockade fence; Eric said the fence won't be seen by anyone other than the people driving behind the building. If they relocate the septic pipe, it will be placed near the edge of pavement. John confirmed the red flag the Board could see was marking one of the building corners. The edge of pavement will go to the left of the building.

The Board walked to the property line between 117 Windham Road and 115 Windham Road, Maureen Rose's property. Maureen noted the existing home at 117 Windham Road is 24.9 feet from her property line. The people renting that home will be in her buffer playing in the back yard. Jim noted the area to the rear is fairly full of vegetation; what is proposed for the area that has lawn? Eric said they had proposed a 10 foot stockade white vinyl fence. Since then, they met with Maureen Rose, her consultant, and town staff. Maureen and her consultant felt that ten feet would be too tall and asked for a different fence with landscaping off the house that would fill in the front yard. They did not agree to that proposal but know that they need to work on a plan to develop the buffer area. They have floated several suggestions such as an 8 foot tall fence (colored vinyl), placed about 6 feet off the property line with plantings on the house side and maybe an arbor vitae or two to plug in the hole in the existing line of trees. The fence would go up to the stone wall in the front. They have also offered to fill in the holes on Ms. Rose's side of the property line. Jim said plantings on the house side of the buffer do Maureen no good; he felt the fence should be placed 12 feet off the property line and plantings placed on both sides of the fence.

Eric said the intent is to create a buffer; not the 50 foot width. The question should be what is the best way to do it? They are open to plantings as recommended by the Board. Jim said the industrial use abuts the residential use and he would want to err on the side of the residential use. People in the rental property will know what they are renting when they sign the lease; he would want to see more green and a natural buffer in between the property lines. The proposed rental may not be a rental depending on the ZBA decision.

Maureen said that at the Zoning Board hearing, she had proposed if they leave the house, that an 8 foot gray fence be set at the 50 foot buffer line. She had suggested it go from the stone wall, be brought out around the house, and then go all the way to the back to the rail road bed. The people on the rail trail can access the property from the trail. She wants the fence because people will be able to see her yard and she wants a buffer near her house. She felt the owners wanted to leave all of the lawn for the renters. Her proposed plan is on file with the Zoning Board and should be forwarded to the Planning Board members. The proposed septic line should also be outside of the 50 foot buffer and the fence should have a gate in it so that they can access the septic system without having to cut all the brush down to get to it. It does not need to be a stockade fence; 8 feet tall is fine. Maureen said she wants to keep noise, kids, dogs and renters away from her house. Dave noted the rental use is pre-existing. Ernie Brown currently rents the house and he said his plan was to say and he would like to see it aesthetically right. Dave noted the issues that are being brought up have to do with encroachment and the Board is being asked to fix a pre-existing issue. Maureen

said the trees near the house will go and the trees that are in the middle of the lot now are where the building will go; they will go away and those trees are currently providing a buffer.

There was a short discussion regarding prior burglaries in the area and suppositions about who perpetrated the crimes.

Maureen felt her house could be seen behind the chain link fence. John stated he walked the rail trail yesterday and he could see the pile of rocks, but only some of the tops of the storage units. The houses can't be seen from the rail trail. Dale Smith said the pile of rocks will go. Dave said the Board needs to look at the regulations in regard to the proposed fence. Ed said they will work with the town and the abutter to come up with a plan for vegetation in front and back of the house. Eric said he would expect to put the existing treed area in an easement so that it remains. The sumac would need to be removed and they might install a split rail fence to square off the area to the side and landscape to encapsulate the house. The purpose of a buffer is to diminish sound and views, not to close in an area's use. If the variance is granted, the residence becomes taxable and useable.

John asked if the Board could proceed to the proposed MI-Box storage area. Maureen asked if a ¼ acre house lot was being created in a two acre zone. Eric explained the house would be on 7 acres; the Industrial zone is a zone that requires one acre lots.

The Board walked to the front of the residence at 117 Windham Road. Ed stated the fence between the areas is not an issue so long as the fence is placed in a straight line. The proposal from the abutter is to have the fence cross the front yard at an angle. He would suggest installing a fence from the stone wall with plantings on either side. Ann said she would not want to see the stone wall disturbed. Lori agreed.

Eric said with regard to the buffer, the Board decides on the buffer at each individual site. The buffer is intended to diminish the effect of the industrial use from the neighborhood. All of the trees will stay to the rear. The house will block the proposed building and Ms. Rose would not be able to see the building because of the trees. Maureen said she would be able to see the building in the winter because most of the trees are deciduous. People driving along the back of the building will go past her window. Ann said the street noises from Windham Road would be louder than what could be heard from the storage site.

Dave asked if there was an example of the 8 foot tall chain link fence the applicant would like to install. Ed said he will show the Board the new section of fencing they put up so the Board can see what it would look like. Dave commented sometimes people put slats on the chain link fence to block sound. John thought that was normally on a dumpster surround.

Eric said with regard to the buffer, the regulations allow three rows of trees, but that won't help in an application with a building and an intense use. This is a not an

industrial manufacturing site; this is a quiet use. They need to come up with a buffer that works well for the site and the neighborhood that diminished the effect they will have, which is minimal.

Dave asked about the proposed 10 foot tall fence. Maureen said if they put the fence at the 10 foot offset they will play with 40 feet of the required buffer.

Ernie said that whatever goes in should be attractive and make good sense for the lot and house so that they can get renters that want to live there. If something is put in that is not attractive, they may not attract a quality renter. If this lot is an eyesore, he will not want to continue to rent here. The residence as a buffer is a plus to Maureen because it insulates her from the industrial use. Otherwise the house may be repurposed for storage. Dave thought arbor vitae would be good for a buffer and might be better than a ten foot tall fence. John suggested a fence 10 feet off the house and then a wall of arbor vitae. He would not want to see jogs in the fence; it would be irresponsible of the Board to cut $\frac{3}{4}$ of the house off. He suggested staggered rows of arbor vitae where the Board was standing; the fence is more for security. Dave was not in favor of fencing off the whole yard. Jim thought the fence should go to the rail trail. Liz noted that if the fence did go all the way back to the rail trail, some of the existing trees in the thick vegetation would have to be removed. Jim suggested a fence to the thick buffer and then maybe change to a smaller fence for the remaining distance to the rail trail.

George advised the buffer can be a combination of new and existing vegetation. He suggested they come back to the Board at a later meeting with a plan that shows the selected trees to remain on the lot. Maureen felt the objective was to keep the noise on the industrial side of the property and a fence around the property would be beneficial. Something should be along the fence with trees. She is concerned about the area along the rail trail. She does not want to hear snow plows in the middle of the night. Right now she does not hear noise from the storage facility. The existing trees between the bare area and the existing units will go to make room for the new building. She does not want to see any lights and would like the trees to stay near the rail road bed. Ed said there will be a light above the fire safety pass door to the rear. There will also be one in each corner, so there will be a total of three LED lights along the back of the building. There is no reason for people to travel around the back of the building at night. The access is intended for the Fire Department. Doug Delara asked if the lights could be motion sensor. Ed said they could.

The Board progressed to one of the proposed edges of the building. Eric said the rest of the land has mature trees to the rear. They would cut 30 feet for the driveway, and likely will not need to add to the buffer. John asked about the location of the septic system. Eric said they might place a new pipe along the edge of the pavement and then into the trees. The septic is behind the stand of poplar trees. The Board noted the far corner of the building and the far corner of the edge of pavement. Where the large boulder is currently sitting is the approximate location of the MI-Box storage. Eric noted the existing vegetation is fairly thick along the rear of the property. Maureen

asked about drainage; this lot had been filled in. It was noted again the existing storage buildings are 14 feet tall.

The Board proceeded to the area set aside for MI-Box storage. There will be nine spaces available, with one MI-Box to a space. The exception would be if they had more than one 8 x 8 unit on hand; those could be placed two to a space. The units come in 8 x 8, 8 x 16 and 8 x 20. They will place what would fit in the space. Maureen expressed concern that insects such as bed bugs and cockroaches could travel back from a customer site to this site. Ed said the MI-Box are expensive rental units. Maureen also had a concern about the sprays that are used to clean the units. John Shea advised bed bugs do not leave their food source area.

The Board proceeded to the new fence at the rear corner of the existing site. Ed said the fence is rustproof and they will use this type of fence for the rest of the site. The existing lights on the units will be replaced and they are rehabbing the existing units. The unit doors will be painted green.

The Board walked back to the office area for a MI-Box demo. MI-Box was explained as follows. The intent is for portable storage. Out of the 100 units available, 70% would be at a customer site. The remaining 30% would be at one of the 5 facilities. This facility has space for 9 of the larger units. The units are aluminum and polycarbonate, so do not rust. (The competitor's pods are made of plastic.) These units are sealed and are weather tight. Ed noted that during Hurricane Sandy, the units did not leak and there was no water in any of the units. They do not double stack these units outside. The Nashua facility has space to stack them inside and they can triple stack them at that facility. Maureen asked if the truck would run the entire time the units were being loaded and off loaded. The truck will. The entire process takes about five minutes. Brandon noted no mold or mildew will grow inside the units. The truck that loads/off loads will not stay on this site. The company owns two MI-Box trucks and they depot out of the Nashua facility. Ed said they will not exceed what can be stored outside on site. It is possible they could have 18 of the smaller units stored on site in the 9 parking spaces. The units can carry 10,000 pounds. The truck operator placed the MI-Box unit onto the truck for transportation. An iced coffee placed inside the open unit did not tip/spill during the process.

When asked about the next meeting, George advised the zoning issue needs to be resolved before the applicant can come back to the Planning Board because the zoning issue will affect the final design. The Planning Board cannot act until that issue is resolved. Maureen felt if the plan was redesigned, the next version would have to go back to TRC and her house should be shown on the plan. George agreed the plan would likely go back to TRC.

Doug Delara asked what happens if they can't get a variance. Could the house be removed? Maureen said the town can still require her buffer and the trees as requested. George said it would be up to the Board as to what the final design of the buffer will be. He suggested they take a look at the American Excavating site; there is a

nice natural buffer on this site now and he would not want to see the same thing happen. Maureen said the Board should not be considering what is on her property.

Lee Bernard asked the Board to consider what the area will be like at the end of the day. The neighbors are here and these are the views they pay for and the Board needs to also protect the citizens. They live here and at the end of the day, they look at it. He has views of the site from his house because his property is across the street and his land is elevated above this site.

The site walk ended at 10:12 a.m.

Approved by: _____
Chairman/Vice Chairman

Secretary

Approval date: _____