

April 05 2021

Mr. Paul Foley
Director of Planning
and Economic Development
Town Hall
40 Center Street
Fairhaven Ma

RE: Permitting For Fairhaven HS Athletic Field Improvements

Dear Mr. Foley:

TRAVERSE LANDSCAPE ARCHITECTS, LLC (Traverse) would like to take the opportunity to provide some background of the process for planning and design for the Fairhaven HS Athletic Field improvements that has taken place to date. As you are aware, on Tuesday, October 20, 2020 the Fairhaven Town Meeting gave its approval for the construction of a new \$1.4 million multi-sport artificial turf field at the Fairhaven Alumni Stadium. In December 2020, the school district hired Traverse to begin the design and engineering process of the new synthetic turf multi-use field.

As part the early Due Diligence and Site Analysis portion of design, Traverse evaluated the site for code compliance, accessibility and major risks to the project's success. That process uncovered several code compliance questions.

- 1) The Press Box is not an accessible structure. Per 521 CMR 14.00
- 2) Minimum Facilities (restrooms) for Building Occupancy are not met with 300' path of travel from stadium seating per 248 CMR and Table 2902.1 of the International Building Code. Facilities located within the existing school building are not within 300' of bleacher seating and are also not located on an accessible route.

Upon learning of these code compliance questions Traverse immediately reached out to the towns building and plumbing inspector for interpretation and expectations related to improvements and occupancy. A meeting was held January 12th with the building inspector. With regards to the press box, the building inspector recognized the date of construction and the burden of a new elevator or press box. The original project had not intended to make improvements to this structure. The building inspector mentioned a willingness to grandfather in the current conditions of accessibility with restrictions of use to approved school personnel only. The press box was noted as meeting national access regulations 206.2.7 (*An accessible route is required to press boxes except where the aggregate area of all press boxes serving a playing field or assembly area is no more than 500 sq. ft.*)

With regards to minimum restroom facilities, the current stadium neither provided an adequate number of fixtures with in 300' or an accessible route to restrooms, it was the interpretation of the building inspector that an occupancy could not be given at the close of the project without some resolution to the code compliance. The building inspector recognized the burden of the code places on a small stadium of this type. It was meant for much larger places of assembly. The building inspector made the recommendation to provide (1) handicap water closet and (1) standard water closet for females and (1) handicap water closet and (1) urinal for males. The building inspector also recognized the timeline for the project and providing students with a safe playing environment by the fall of 2021 and noted that if a permanent solution was unattainable that portable facilities could be used on temporary basis.

With this information above, the Fairhaven Schools field committee began to evaluate all potential solutions. Potential solutions evaluated included:

- 1) Renovation of the current concession building to house restroom facilities. The current building had undersized utilities and lacked the adequate space to renovate and provide the necessary restroom facilities.
- 2) A new restroom and storage facility beyond the north endzone. The building was of similar size to that proposed in the permitting documents. The building would require elimination of at least one row of parking at the north end zone. Cons of this option included elimination of parking and very long utility runs. Current events at the stadium force

overflow parking on to nearby residential streets. Elimination of any parking as part of the project only increases the burden and is seen as a detriment to the project.

- 3) Temporary use of portable facilities on poured concrete slab south of the home bleachers (visible from Huttleson Ave) and a permanent solution to demolish and rebuild the existing concessions building with a new building housing concessions, restrooms and storage. This option is costly and a longer term project that is not attainable in the current schedule. Portable restrooms would be placed in this location preventing obstruction of any accessible walkways.
- 4) A new restroom and storage building of 1,100 square feet placed south of the home bleachers. The building is a block building of similar architecture to the existing support buildings of the Fairhaven Alumni Stadium. The building provides (1) handicap water closet and (2) standard water closets for Females, (1) handicap water closet and (2) urinals for males as well as a family restroom with diaper changing station. These counts exceeded the minimum recommend by the building inspector and were thought to be of added benefit to the community. The storage component is provided to house storage of athletic equipment's, goals etc. This was also seen as benefit to the community, the equipment would other wise be stored in the same location uncovered, unscreened and unprotected.

In evaluation of the project's budget and other necessary items, the field committee made the recommendation to move forward with option 4 as an alternate bid item to be accepted as the budget allows. This option was the most cost-effective permanent solution that kept the project on schedule and had the least amount of perceived negative impacts. If the projects construction bids come in high, the school would provide the necessary portable restrooms until a permanent solution can be put in place. Additionally, the project is making improvements along Huttleson Ave. removing the black vinyl chain-link fence behind the decorative brick wall and replacing it with a decorative metal fence up to the proposed athletic restroom support building. This was seen as an aesthetic improvement along the major roadway of Huttleson Ave. The proposed building is believed to meet all zoning regulations and is outside of the required minimum 25' building setback, Traverse did not find any additional special zoning or historical/architectural overlay districts with in the towns current zoning maps.

Traverse Landscape Architects and the Fairhaven Schools Field Committee are providing this memorandum with the belief that the design process has been transparent with the town and respectful of the towns Zoning regulations and the proposed restroom building is a reasonable solution for code compliant restroom facilities whose necessity was unknown at the time of the October 2020 town meeting.

Sincerely,
Justin Robertshaw PLA, ASLA, CPSI

