

Hudson planning board to vote soon on Amazon facility

After 10 months of studies and presentations, one of the largest warehouse and distribution facilities in the state could soon be approved by the Hudson Planning Board.

Hillwood Investment Properties wants to build the Hudson Logistics Center on 400 acres occupied by the Green Meadow Golf Club. Amazon would be the main tenant.

Opponents argue Hillwood still has not met its legal requirements to mitigate significant environmental and traffic impacts in the town.

Town Planner Brian Groth said the public will have its last chance to comment on the project at a special meeting on March 24. Afterward, the board will deliberate and vote on the application.

Gary Frederick, a senior vice president at Hillwood, thanked town staff and elected officials for taking the time to review the voluminous studies and site plans presented over the past several months.

“Our project is complex and has required a number of meetings over nearly a year to review all the details,” Frederick wrote in an email. “We also thank the people of Hudson for all of their input, much of which has been incorporated into our project to make it even stronger.”

During the Wednesday meeting, Hillwood representatives proposed spending about \$9.7 million in total impact mitigation, which includes a \$2 million impact fee, a \$3 million STEM program for Hudson schools and a \$1.4 million platform tower truck, which the fire department would need to respond to any fire at the proposed facilities.

Hudson Police Chief William Avery, Fire Chief Robert Buxton and Public Works Director Jess Forrence each presented their own appraisals of the proposal. They concluded the project’s fiscal impacts on their departments would be minimal, except for the platform tower truck and a dedicated full-time building inspector.

Buxton said his department will need to work with developers to ensure they’re prepared to respond to any industrial accidents during construction.

“This is going to be potentially the largest construction site that the community has seen in the better part of a decade, probably ever,” Buxton said.

In an emailed statement, attorney Amy Manzelli of BCM Environmental and Land Law said the planning board has the grounds and authority to deny the proposed site plan.

“Although Hillwood has plied the record full of many pages, Hillwood still has not met the legal requirements. Property value, traffic, wetland and other water resources, and more — these are all issues that Hillwood’s proposal fails on,” Manzelli said.

“My clients, many of whom live next door, remain deeply concerned about the tremendous adverse impacts this project would have, both in Hudson and beyond. These are exactly the problems that Hudson laws are designed to prohibit.”

Manzelli was hired by a group of about 50 residents last year, most of whom live in a neighborhood abutting the golf course property.

“We believe we have provided compelling evidence, which has been reviewed by the Town’s independent peer reviewers, that demonstrates we meet or exceed the 22 separate criteria required (to) gain project approval,” Frederick said.

Plans call for Amazon to occupy two of the three buildings, which total a combined 2.6 million square feet. The Friel family, which owns the Green Meadow Golf Club property, will sell the land to Hillwood as part of the deal.

Developers are promising to improve traffic on a mile of Lowell Road, and say the property would add an estimated \$5.1 million in new property tax revenue annually.

https://www.unionleader.com/news/business/hudson-planning-board-to-vote-soon-on-amazon-facility/article_7069ab10-4880-58e1-967c-e13db5f548e2.html