



**SOUTH KINGSTOWN PLANNING DEPARTMENT  
PROJECT REVIEW MEMO**

**Union Fire – Matunuck (Station 7)**

**Advisory Development Plan Review, Advisory to Zoning**

September 28, 2021

Project Type:	<b>Development Plan Review</b>		
Review Stage:	<b>N/A</b>		
Address:	<b>49 Matunuck Schoolhouse Road</b>		
Plat:	<b>86-2</b>	Lot:	<b>32</b>
Parcel Size:	<b>0.73 acres</b>	Zoning District:	<b>GI</b>
Applicant:	Union Fire District of South Kingstown c/o John Blessing PO Box 327 Wakefield, RI 02880	Owner:	Same

**Property Characteristics**

Lot 32 contains a total area of 31,718.75 square feet (0.73 acres) and is developed with an existing fire station and associated parking lot. The remainder of the parcel is undeveloped and located in a 'GI' (Government Institutional) Zoning District. The subject parcel is bound by Matunuck School House Road to the south, AP 80-3, Lot 11 to the east (vacant farmland), Lot 29 to the north (multiple residential dwellings), and Lot 28 to the west (single-family dwelling).

**Project Description**

The proposed project includes the construction of a new 5,500± square foot fire station and an auxiliary 1,890± square foot ambulance building to replace the existing fire station with associated improvements to the property for parking, site drainage, and wastewater treatment. The fire station is proposed to include a 3,750 sq. ft. main floor, consisting of the fire truck bays, offices and sleeping quarters, and a 1,750 sq. ft. basement storage area.

***Parking***

Per the Town Zoning Ordinance, public service buildings require one parking spaces per 350 square feet of floor area. The proposed buildings consist of a total of 5,640 sq. ft. of floor area (excluding closet/storage and utility spaces). Accordingly, per Zoning, a total of 16 parking spaces are required to service the site. Based on the programmatic needs of Union Fire, the proposed rescue facility will house two (2) employees max.; the proposed fire station will house six (6) employees max.; with two (2) visitor spaces for a total programmatic need of ten (10) parking spaces. As currently designed, twelve (12) total parking spaces are proposed, exceeding the programmatic needs of UFD, but less than required per the Town's Zoning Ordinance. In addition, three (3) of the proposed twelve (12) parking spaces have been designed with less than the required dimensional requirements per parking space (350 sq. ft. required; 342 sq. ft. proposed). This application will therefore require relief from the Zoning Board of Review in the form of variances for parking space dimensions, as well as the minimum number of parking spaces provided.

Landscaping

The applicant proposed limited landscape improvements on the site, however the design does not meet the requirements of the South Kingstown Land Development Regulations and will require a waiver in that regard.

Utilities

*Water:* A new domestic water service and if necessary, fire protection service, will be provided to the new building from the existing main within Matunuck Schoolhouse Road.

*Sewer:* A new on-site wastewater treatment system will be designed to replace the existing cesspool servicing the existing fire station. Based on the soil evaluation test holes, the grading of the site, and the anticipated wastewater loads, a bottomless sand filter with Advantex pre-treatment pod(s) appears most suitable for this site.

*Electric/Communications:* Electric and telecommunications exist along Matunuck School House Road. Existing connections are proposed to be utilized to service the new buildings.

Drainage

Stormwater runoff from the new rooftops and pavement are proposed to be routed to one of two (2) underground infiltration systems that will ultimately discharge to an existing drainage system within Matunuck Schoolhouse Road or offsite to the north, mimicking existing conditions. A small above-ground basin is proposed at the rear to treat and infiltrate runoff from the northern-most parking/paved area. Soil erosion and sedimentation controls are proposed throughout the duration of construction to protect the adjacent roadway and properties.

**Waivers Required**

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As proposed this application requires waivers from Article IV – Special Requirements, Section G (Landscaping – General Standards and Specifications) of the *Subdivision and Land Development Regulations*. Specifically, these waivers pertain to the following requirements:

**G.2 – Street Landscaping.** Whenever a parking or loading area adjoins a public street right-of-way, or the right-of-way of a private street which is or may be customarily used by the public as access to the parking or loading facility, a landscaped strip of land shall be constructed or maintained along the entire street frontage, except for any necessary driveways, as provided herein.

**G.3 – Perimeter Landscaping – Parking Lots and Loading Facilities.** The perimeter of the parking lot and loading facility shall be surrounded by a landscaped strip..

**G.4 – Interior Landscaping.** The interior areas of parking lots (exclusive of loading areas) shall also be landscaped. The minimum amount of interior parking lot landscaping shall be provided in accordance with the following table:

Total Area of Parking Lot	Minimum Percent of the Total Parking Lot Area That Must Be An Interior Landscaping Area
20,001 to 50,000 sq. ft.	8%

The total area of the proposed parking lot is approximately 28,700 square feet.

**G.5 – Building Landscaping.** Pavement for parking areas, exclusive of loading areas and driveways, shall not directly abut the wall of any principal building facing any public street which provides lot frontage. There shall be a landscaped area between the parking surface and building waif of at least three (3) feet in width.

## Regulatory Considerations

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The project is subject to the requirements of the Subdivision and Land Development Regulations primarily for landscaping standards, as well as the parking standards of Article 7 of the Zoning Ordinance:

*Subdivision and Land Development Regulations - Article IV – Special Requirements, Section G: Landscaping – General Standards and Specifications:*

- As outlined within the waiver section above.

*Zoning Ordinance - Article 7, Section 711: Minimum Off-Street Parking Requirements:*

- A parking space including aisles shall be no less than 350 square feet per vehicle.
- Public Service Buildings require 1 parking for every 350 square feet of floor area.

## Technical Review and Applicant's Response

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This application was reviewed with the applicant at the Technical Review Committee meeting on September 8, 2021. Upon review and discussion with the applicant's project team the TRC granted **conditional approval** of the application with the following conditions subject to confirmation by the Planning Board:

1. That the applicant will evaluate the turning radii of the three (3) parking spaces, the width of the travel lane, and the orientation of the parking spaces adjacent to the southwest portion of the fire station building to accommodate adequate turning movements;

In response to this condition the applicant has indicated that **"JCE (Joe Casali Engineering, Inc.) has evaluated numerous options for the small, three-stall parking area located to the west of the proposed fire station building. As is clear, this site's geometry presents several challenges when working through the site layout and design. In addition, presenting a design that achieves Union Fire's project intent while maintaining screening and limiting visibility to the neighbor to the immediate west, further limits what can be achieved in this area. It is important to provide a small quantity of spaces for the public to park on the site that are separate from the Department's parking area, to limit potential vehicular interactions between the public and the Department's apparatus.**

**That being said, we have considered angled parking (i.e. 45-degree spaces, 60-degree spaces), however – the geometry of these types of angled spaces requires more stall length than a traditional 90-degree space, which would further reduce the available drive-aisle width (typically, angled parking requires a stall length of 20-ft). Further, in an angled space scenario, vehicles exiting these spaces would be required to drive down the main driveway, to the rear of the site, to turn around to ultimately exit the property. This maneuvering causes potentially unnecessary vehicular interaction between the public and fire/EMS staff, equipment, and vehicles.**

**Ultimately, it is our professional opinion that the best scenario for this area is traditional 90-degree parking stalls. To aid in providing adequate area for turning movements, we have designed the stalls in this area to have 10-ft width (1-ft greater than the required/traditional 9-ft width). Further, we have worked with the Architect to shift the building 1-ft towards the east and have shifted the proposed westernmost berm 1-ft to the west, which allows us to slightly widen the drive aisle to 22-ft (from the previously proposed 20-ft). Finally, we**

have incorporated an additional 4-ft-wide striped island between the two traditional parking stalls to allow for additional area for maneuvering.

**While this scenario still requires relief from the Zoning Board of Review for less than the required drive aisle width (24-ft required, 22-ft proposed), this proposed width coupled with the widened spaces and additional striped island, provides adequate real estate for all vehicles to pull into and out of the three (3) spaces located to the immediate west of the proposed building. Updated AutoTurn analyses with the modified drive aisle geometry are included within Appendix C of the revised Project Narrative and Stormwater Management Report.”**

2. That the application employs root pruning of existing vegetation along the western property boundary in the area where shrub removal is proposed;

In response to this condition the applicant has indicated that **“The Existing Conditions and Site Prep. Plan (Sht. 1 of 9) has been updated to specify that the Contractor employ root pruning techniques, by a licensed Arborist, to protect existing root system to remain along the western property boundary in the area where shrub removal is proposed.”**

3. That the applicant modifies the Site Plan to clearly show the venting of the septic system preferably with the vents located to the east side of the auxiliary ambulatory building or routed through the building to a roof vent;

In response to this condition the applicant has indicated that **“The Utility Plan (Sht. 3 of 9) has been updated to include the location of the proposed OWTS system vent, located at the northeastern corner of the parcel, well east of the proposed EMS Building.”**

4. The applicant shall provide fire protection service and a meter pit at the property line if the domestic service water line is longer than 100’ with a minimum 4” line;

In response to this condition the applicant has indicated that **“The Utility Plan (Sht. 3 of 9) has been updated in include a 2-inch polyethylene domestic water service and a 4-inch cement lined ductile iron fire protection service from the existing 12-inch main within Matunuck Schoolhouse Road. The domestic and fire protection services will be routed to the southeast corner of the proposed Fire Station Building, where the necessary meter and backflow can be implemented (inside the proposed building). The service entrances to the building lie approximately 52-feet from the property line, which does not necessitate a meter pit at the property line.”**

5. That applicant shall install bollards on any parking space abutting and perpendicular to the building in lieu of curb stops.

In response to this condition the applicant has indicated that **“The Site Plan (Sht. 2 of 9) has been updated to include bollards at all parking spaces abutting the western side of the building as well as bollards at the front of the building (for fire apparatus).”**

#### **Decision Deadline**

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Pursuant to the Zoning Ordinance and Subdivision and Land Development Regulations, there is no deadline for Planning Board decisions on Development Plan Review applications.

## Required Findings

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With regard to waivers, the Regulations (Article VIII.B.1) require that the Planning Board find that:

- a. The waivers or modifications are reasonable and within the general purposes and intents of the Regulations; and,
- b. Literal enforcement of the regulation is impracticable and will exact undue hardship because of peculiar conditions pertaining to the land in question; or waiver or modification of the regulation is in the best interest of good planning practice or design as evidenced by consistency with the Comprehensive Community Plan and the Zoning Ordinance.

In accordance with Article IV.F(3) of the Subdivision & Land Development Regulations, prior to granting Development Plan Review approval the Planning Board shall find that:

- c. The granting of approval will not result in conditions inimical to the public health, safety, and welfare;
- d. The granting of such approval will not substantially or permanently injure the appropriate use of the property in the surrounding area or zoning district;
- e. The plans for such project comply with all the requirements of the Zoning Ordinance and the Subdivision & Land Development Regulations;
- f. The plans for such project are consistent with the Comprehensive Plan; and,
- g. Any conditions or restrictions that are necessary to ensure that these guidelines have been met have been incorporated into the written approval.

## Draft Motion

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The following motion with associated findings and conditions of approval is being offered for consideration by the Planning Board and should be amended accordingly if deemed appropriate or otherwise necessary.

“The South Kingstown Planning Board hereby grants advisory Development Plan approval to the Union Fire District for the Matunuck (Station 7) project which includes the demolition of the existing fire station structure and the reconstruction of a new 5,500± square foot fire station with an 1,890± square foot auxiliary ambulance building and associated improvements on Assessor’s Plat 86-2, Lot 32 located at 59 Matunuck Schoolhouse Road, Union Fire District of South Kingstown, *applicant/owner*. Development Plan approval for this application is based upon plans entitled *Union Fire District of S. Kingstown, Station 7, Matunuck*, 49 Matunuck Schoolhouse Road, South Kingstown, Rhode island, AP 86-2, Lot 32, Sheets 1 through 9, dated July 2021 with revisions through September 10, 2021, completed by Joe Casali Engineering, Inc., 300 Post Road, Warwick, Rhode Island 02888.

This approval is based upon the following Findings of Fact and Conditions of Approval:

### ***Findings of Fact***

- a. The granting of approval will not result in conditions inimical to the public health, safety, and welfare.
- b. With the required Conditions of Approval, the granting of such approval will not substantially or permanently injure the appropriate use of the property in the surrounding area or zoning district.
- c. With the required Conditions of Approval, the plans for the project comply with all the requirements of the Zoning Ordinance and the Subdivision and Land Development Regulations.
- d. The plans for the project are consistent with the Comprehensive Community Plan.

- e. Any conditions or restrictions that are necessary to ensure that these findings have been met have been incorporated into this approval.

In addition to the Development Plan Review standards listed above, the Planning Board further finds that:

- f. The requested use at the proposed location is sufficiently buffered in relation to any residential area in the immediate vicinity so as not to adversely affect said area.
- g. The exterior appearance of the structure is consistent with the exterior appearance of existing structures within the immediate neighborhood, so as to prevent blight or deterioration, or substantial diminishment or impairment of property values within the neighborhood.

***Conditions of Approval***

1. Approval is conditioned upon the applicant obtaining the required variances from the Zoning Board of Review associated with the proposed parking configuration.
2. Development of the site shall be in strict conformance with the approved site plan, unless amended by these conditions of approval.
3. The applicant shall obtain all required local and State permits prior to commencing any site improvements and obtaining a Certificate of Use or Occupancy.
4. Any proposed signage must comply with the requirements established by Article 8 of the Town of South Kingstown Zoning Ordinance and any future lighting considerations shall be dark sky compliant.
5. The applicant shall perform root pruning of existing vegetation along the western property boundary in the area where shrub removal is proposed.
6. The applicant shall provide fire protection utilities and service to the satisfaction of the Department of Public Services.
7. **And any other conditions deemed necessary by the Planning Board in consideration of this application..."**