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Myer R. Singer (1938-2020)

351 Pleasant Lake Avenue  
Gilmore House/Cape Cod Technical High School)

Case No. 2023-32  
Submitted 10.19.2023

## **HARWICH PLANNING BOARD- SITE PLAN REVIEW**

### **SUMMARY OF REASONING**

Introduction.: The Co-Applicant/tenant, the Young Men’s Christian Association d/b/a Cape Cod YMCA, Inc. (the “YMCA”) and the Owner, Cape Cod Technical High School District (jointly, the “Applicant”) seek to re-use and redevelop a portion of the Cape Cod Technical High School (CCTHS) campus commonly known as the “Gilmore House” which it has recently leased from CCTHS. The YMCA, an educational non-profit which has a prior record of successfully working with CCTHS to provide a both early childhood education and care as well as certificate training for CCTHS students in early childhood education and care. The YMCA seeks to reinvigorate that history by repurposing the Gilmore House structure which is currently used for limited educational purposes by CCTHS as a modern, childhood education and childcare center, serving an anticipated maximum of 36 qualifying infants, toddlers and preschoolers.

The parcel leased, the Gilmore House, is a portion of the larger, 67-acre CCTHS campus located at 351 Pleasant Lake Avenue. The Gilmore House and larger campus are located in the RL zoning district and are shown as Lot A-1 on Map 82 of the Harwich Assessor’s Map. Mapr. The Gilmore House is accessed from the Cape Cod Tech’s main drive but also shares frontage

along Pleasant Lake Avenue from which it seeks to limit access (see below).

Proposed Project: The Gilmore House will be updated but its exterior will be minimally altered in form (primarily three (3) new exit doors in existing locations). The interior of the structure will be altered to accommodate three classrooms meeting state standards for childcare and early childhood education and support spaces for staff. Access to the structure will be enhanced with new railings at the existing ramp, an expanded staircase and conforming exterior lighting.

A fully-fenced and screened playground will be located to the rear of the structure.

Parking (14 conforming spaces including two handicapped spaces as proposed) will be expanded and redesigned to meet the requirements of employees (maximum of eight (8)) and caregivers dropping off and picking up children.)

The parking lot and interior lot area are designed to safely provide adequate spaces for the staggered early morning drop-offs and late afternoon pickups of children and include a crosswalk from the parking area to the main entrance to Gilmore House. Exterior lighting has been designed to comply with the Harwich Lighting By-Law. The Applicant proposes to remove the direct access to Pleasant Lake Avenue from the Gilmore House at the suggestion of the Town Fire Department official at informal department head review. Screening of both Pleasant Lake Avenue and the interior drive of Cape Cod Tech is robust. The Applicant has worked with Cape Cod Tech's facilities committee to develop this plan and the plan has the formal support of the CCTHS board.

The Gilmore House's education-based use, existing and proposed, will remain unchanged, as will the existing Gilmore House exterior façade, subject to the updates mentioned above. The Gilmore House's specific educational use has varied over time (from use for early childhood education and certification for CCTHS students to construction and work-space for CCTHS students most recently).

The proposed playground is the most ambitious feature of the proposed redevelopment. The playground is designed to provide appropriate areas of recreation for age groups served by the YMCA and, particularly for toddlers and pre-schoolers. A raised deck centered around a tree provides a focus for play. Turf with picnic tables provides outdoor gathering areas. Natural elements, including native plantings such as red cedar, oak and maple trees, butterfly weed, blue stem and beach grasses; natural surfaces- including stump seating, log scrambles, and balance beams; and water features, such a stone creek bed, water table, and a pitcher pump have been incorporated into the design.

Relief Requested. In order to complete the redevelopment as shown on the submitted plans, the Applicant is seeking a Site Plan Review Special Permit from the Harwich Planning Board in accordance with Section 325-55 of the Harwich Zoning By-Law.

Standards of Review. In order to grant the Site Plan Review Special Permit, the Planning Board considers if the proposal meets the requirements of the Zoning By-Law and looks at matters such as screening, vehicular and pedestrian traffic, and drainage. “If the site plan meets the requirements of this bylaw and the Planning Board Rules and Regulation ... governing Site Plan Review... the Planning Board shall approve it. (Harwich Zoning By-Law, Section 325-55 E. (1). (emphasis added).

The Applicant respectfully submits that the proposed redevelopment meets all of the requirements of the Harwich Zoning By-Law and Site Plan Review Special Permit standards because:

1. The YMCA’s educational use compliments the existing, longstanding educational use of the Property and is a continuation of the educational use;

2. The Gilmore House will remain intact and will be updated and brought into compliance with state and local requirements for early childhood education and care.
3. The Gilmore House and playground improvements will remain conforming as to height and building separation requirements;
4. Building, site and amenities coverage on the Property will remain conforming;
5. The renovated structure will meet all current fire, life safety, ADA, and environmental codes and regulations required for its proposed use;
6. The redevelopment will be screened appropriately from both Pleasant Lake Avenue and from the interior drive to the CCTHS and the playground area will be fenced with four-foot high black chain link fence as required for this use;
7. No negative change is anticipated in artificial light, noise, litter, and odor. All lighting will comply with the Harwich lighting regulations and will be dark-sky compliant.
8. The redevelopment will not cause or contribute to any undue nuisance, hazard or congestion. Whereas existing parking is not clearly marked or defined, parking as proposed will be conforming as to size and adequate in number (14 spots) to provide for staff and parents dropping off and collecting children as well as food service and special needs providers. Handicapped access to the Gilmore House and the playground will be provided via proposed ramps.
9. The Harwich Conservation Agent has reviewed the proposal and has determined that no resource areas or buffer areas will be affected by the proposed work. The Board of Health agent has reviewed the project and determined that the water features of the Playground, as proposed, do not need further permitting. The area

to be disturbed is less than one acre so will not trigger the need for a permit under the Harwich Stormwater Protection By-Law;

10. There will be no negative impact on the Town's water supply or site drainage and no harm to groundwater. Run-off is anticipated to be in the form of roof drainage and such drainage will be collected and treated on site; and the proposed redevelopment project includes stormwater management BMP's to manage and recharge/infiltrate stormwater runoff onsite from the roofs of the proposed buildings and hardscapes.
11. The site will continue to be served by required utilities and necessary public services;
12. No noise, litter, odor, lighting spreading off-site or other sources of potential nuisance or inconvenience to adjoining properties, public ways or neighbors are anticipated, and the proposal will not adversely affect the public good; and
13. The redevelopment will result in an attractive and complementary component of the Property and will be a benefit to the community.

For all of the above reasons, the Applicant respectfully requests that the Board make findings as set forth in Section 325-55 of the Harwich Zoning By-Law and grant a Site Plan Review Special Permit allowing the redevelopment to be completed as shown on the submitted plans.