



TOWN OF MILFORD, NH
OFFICE OF COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT

1 UNION SQUARE, MILFORD, NH 03055

TEL: (603)249-0620

WEB: WWW.MILFORD.NH.GOV

STAFF MEMO

Date: February 15, 2024
To: Town of Milford Planning Board
From: Terrence S. Dolan, Community Development Director
Subject: **Hitchiner Manufacturing, Inc., 594 Elm Street, (Tax Map 13, Lot 6), 117 Old Wilton Road, Map 13, Lot 7) and 97 Old Wilton Road, (Tax Map 14, Lot 6).** Public Hearing for a major site plan application to construct a new 57,000 square foot industrial manufacturing/administration (two phase) building and related parking, drainage/stormwater management, landscape and lighting improvements.

BACKGROUND:

The applicant is presenting the formal site plan application to the Planning Board. They were last before the Board on May 22, 2018 for Major Site Plan Approval for the *now existing* Plant Building #3 in the northeastern portion of the campus site.

The new project proposal includes the construction of a two-phase 57,000 square foot, manufacturing/administration facility with two floors (with a partial second floor only) to be built along the Hitchiner industrial/manufacturing campus property frontage, located along Old Wilton Road, running from *Hitchiner Way* Right of Way at its westerly end, easterly to the western boundary of the far eastern lot (Map 14 Lot 6), with additional parking spaces (explained below), stormwater management system, and related landscaping and site lighting plans.

VOLUNTARY LOT MERGER AND ADDRESSES:

A separate application has been received from the applicant to merge all three adjacent “campus” lots:

- The *primary* campus lot located at 594 Elm Street, Map 13 Lot 6
- The lot at 117 Old Wilton Road, Map 13 Lot 7, &
- The lot at 97 Old Wilton Road, Map 14 Lot 6.

As a note of project history, it should be stated that the previous design for the *Bldg. #3 Major Site Plan* proposal (May 22, 2018 Major Site Plan Approval, by the Planning Board) left a deficit of approximately 11,000 sq feet of required open space at that time; thus, the applicant (then) opted to voluntarily merged the former Map 13 Lot 7-1 with the larger existing Map 13 Lot 6, in order to make up the shortfall of required Open Space % in order to bring the site proposal up to the required 30% Open Space.

EXISTING USE:

All three of the properties (i.e. lots) are situated within Industrial (“I”) Zoning District. The campus property to be now merged, collectively located at 594 Elm Street, 117 Old Wilton Road and 97 Old Wilton Road currently contains 245,000 sq feet of manufacturing/administration building(s), which includes manufacturing, some additional warehouse and office space; with 415 total approved parking spaces, combining all on-site parking spaces along with the use of surrounding property sites’ total parking spaces (both owned or otherwise leased parking from other lot owners). With the addition of the newly proposed 57, 000 square foot manufacturing/administration building, the new total campus total shall be 284,750 square feet of floor area.

LOT AREA:

Lot 13-6 (primary campus lot): ±11.84 Acres (514,008 SF)

Lot 14-6 (eastern-most lot along Old Wilton Road): ±1.8 Acres (78,408 SF)

Lot 13-7 (NE Corner lot at Old Wilton Road and Hitchiner Way): 1.0 Acre (43,560 SF)

Total Site (post-merger): **14.636 total acres**, and merged to become Map 13 Lot 6, as revised once the Voluntary Lot Merger is approved.

APPLICATION STATUS:

The application is complete and ready to be accepted. The Board will need to make a determination of regional impact. (please refer to *SoRLAC* note below)

NOTICES:

Notices were sent to all property abutters on February 8, 2024. No calls, comments or correspondences of any form have been rec'd by the Community Development Office in regards to this project proposal.

ZONING DISTRICT/INFORMATION:

The subject property is within the Industrial “I” Zoning District: The intent of the Industrial “I” District is to provide areas for manufacturing, processing, assembly, wholesaling, research & development. The proposed industrial development campus and site improvements meet the intent of the Industrial District, and meet all dimensional requirements as stated in Section 5.06.

With the pending *Voluntary Lot Merger for three campus lots described above*, the required (30%) Open Space shall be met for the entire industrial/manufacturing campus, with 31.6% retained.

The overall property site also falls within the *West Elm Street Gateway District*, and subject to the relevant design and performance standard relative to industrial development. The intent of this District is to encourage economic development in the West Elm Street Gateway District by enhancing, preserving and protecting the natural, historic and cultural resources of the Town.

The proposal meets the intent of the District by providing a building design that is functional, aesthetically pleasing and harmonious with the architectural heritage of the community as well as providing positive economic return to the Town and property owners. The development reflects the intended character of Milford’s industrial neighborhoods relative to massing, height, lot coverage, and setbacks, and enhances the streetscape and visual character of the corridor (please see architectural renderings provided as a separate link, within the Overall Plan Set).

EXISTING CONDITIONS:

The overall campus property currently contains five manufacturing/administration/event buildings totaling approximately 245,600 square feet of space and 415 parking spaces, collectively with all three lots (to be merged).

Describing all three subject properties, **Tax Map 13, Lot 6** (pursuant the prior Lot 7-1 Voluntary Lot Merger in May 2018) is now a 11.636-acre parcel, located at the intersection of Elm Street (NH 101-A) and Hitchiner Way. The parcel is abutted by railroad tracks / Elm Street (NH 101-A) to the north, Old Wilton Road to the south, Hitchiner Way to the west, and other off-site industrial properties to the east.

Tax Map 13 Lot 7 is a 1.0 Acre developed (Hitchiner-owned) facility along Old Wilton Road/Hitchiner Way, that is roughly 17,870 sq feet and proposed to be demolished as part of Phase 2 of the newly proposed 57,000 square foot facility, producing a net campus gain of roughly 40,000 square feet of industrial and administration floor area.

Tax Map 14, Lot 6 is a developed 1.8-acre property containing two office buildings and private restaurant. Surrounding the property are industrial uses, Marmon Utility (Cable manufacturing site) is to the east and warehouse storage units to the south.

All three properties above-described are serviced by Town municipal water and sewer.

TRAFFIC AND ACCESS MANAGEMENT:

Vehicular egress and access to the property and new facility will be from driveways off of Old Wilton Road, Hitchiner Way and Elm Street. Internal drives and parking areas provide for sufficient emergency vehicle access and circulation.

The internal sidewalk system is being continued to accommodate employees and improve pedestrian safety. It is our understanding that the only larger delivery and transport vehicles will access/egress from the site via the Elm Street entrance. Staff recommends the inclusion of additional signage to minimize potential conflicts between larger and smaller vehicles. The anticipated increased number of employees (20-30), as a direct result of the new 57,000 square foot facility, would not necessitate a traffic impact analysis.

DRAINAGE:

As noted in the 2018 Staff Comments for *Building No. 3 (now #5)*, even though the project is not located within the 100-year flood plain as shown on the Flood Insurance Rate Maps, the entire Hitchiner campus site property falls within the Milford Groundwater Protection Zone 1 Overlay.

It is confirmed that the applicant communicated with *SoRLAC (Souhegan River Local Advisory Committee)* as required, due to a small northwesterly corner portion of the new facility being within the quarter mile distance from the Souhegan River shoreline. However, no comments have been as yet been received from the Advisory Committee. Staff shall follow up with the Committee.

The main focus of the development is the proposed two-story manufacturing/administration facility. The proposed building will add 57,000 square feet of rooftop area and contribute additional impervious surface in a portion of the property that once contained an industrial structure and onsite open space. The new building is proposed to be built in two phases.

Phase One will be approximately 40,000 sq. feet consisting of a full first floor and the partial second floor, for both manufacturing and administration offices. The building footprint for Phase One shall be located on the existing portion of Map 13 Lot 6 that fronts along Old Wilton Road. The entire existing building on Map 13 Lot 7, (along the corner of Old Wilton Road and Hitchiner Way @ 117 Old Wilton Road), consisting of approximately 17,000 sq feet, shall be demolished to then become the *Phase Two* component of the overall proposed 57,000 square foot manufacturing and administration facility.

This building addition is being engineered to fit as a component within the existing master stormwater (closed drainage) management system for the entire campus site. This project involves the partial redevelopment of the existing overall campus site, with the stormwater management system design focus being on collection, treatment, and detention of the stormwater from the areas of the site being modified. The applicant states that the drainage patters will be similar to the pre-development conditions.

On February 14, 2024, the applicant has submitted an Alteration of Terrain (AoT) permit to NHDES and the required local stormwater permit application to the Town Engineer, Nicole Crawford. Both applications are currently under review.

PARKING:

As described, the current Hitchiner Manufacturing Plant Campus runs 24 Hours per Day. Their updated shift scheduling is:

- 1st shift** **6:30AM – 3:00 PM with 313 employees**
- 2nd shift** **2:30PM – 11:00PM with 97 employees**
- 3rd shift** **10:30PM – 7:00AM with 27 employees**

Manufacturing campus facilities that employ multiple *shift schedules* have different parking patterns and demands, which are an important consideration factor when assessing overall project parking needs, both from the Town’s Development Standards requirements (that generally uses overall facility square footage to assess parking needs), as opposed to those facilities that utilize multiple shift work.

When the Major Site Plan for the (May 2018) proposed building (85,000 square foot manufacturing use Bldg. No. 3 (now referred to as #5, Case SP#2018-13) was approved by the Planning Board, parking needs were accurately met and followed the requirements of **Section 6.05.4 Table of Off-Street Parking** (Milford Development Regulations), without the need of a *Waiver Request*.

In favor of reviewing unique property sites & land uses such as large-scale industrial campuses, the *Milford Development Regulations*, (in lieu of a *Waiver Request* being necessitated), provide for parking alternatives as described in **Section 6.05.7 Parking Substitutions** (Milford Development Regulations) that are now being requested by the applicant to be employed and accepted to meet the industrial campus’ strategic and locational needs, as well as specific new project expansion parking needs.

Although there is a proposed net loss of nine (9) additionally (required) parking spaces, based on the strict adherence to Section 6.05.4 Off Street Parking Requirements, the existing on-site parking spaces and the use of off-site (satellite) parking lots (described below) comprised of multiple adjacent properties, either owned directly by Hitchiner Manufacturing Co., or through parking lease agreements have been employed and put into place.

These onsite and off-site parking arrangements, (please see attached Exhibit “**Administration Building-Proposed Parking Exhibit, dated 2/15/24**) should comprehensively meet the overall intent and needs of the industrial plant campus. The parking master plan has been revised to include an additional 80 off-site parking spaces at the Hitchiner-owned property at 96 Old Wilton Road.

Based on current parking counts, following is the total parking provided throughout the campus:

Parking Provided:

Location:	Existing:	Proposed:
1. Plants 1&5	233	204
2. Suburban Propane Lease Lot	159	159
3. Metal Casting Technology	37	37
4. Administration	7	20
5. The Barn	7	7
6. The White House	10	10
7. 96 Old Wilton Road	80	80
Total Parking Provided	533 spaces	524 spaces

LIGHTING PLAN:

The lighting plan consists of a continuation of the previously-approved style of downcast LED wall sconces. No new (additional) pole-mounted LED lights are being proposed. Staff has no issues with the comprehensive lighting plan.

BUILDING ELEVATIONS:

The proposed building will replicate the architecture, materials, and massing found on the existing adjacent buildings. In an effort to mitigate the long building facades, the applicant incorporated such elements as windows and alternative metal side paneling. With the recommended enhanced landscaped design and inclusion the proposed architectural design elements, Staff finds that building meets the requirements of the Development Regulations and Zoning Ordinance. Please review the Architectural Renderings provided in the Plan Set.

INTERDEPARTMENTAL REVIEWS:

Ambulance: The singular comment from Ambulance Director, Eric Schelberg, made a request that only involves that the proposed elevator is wide enough to accommodate a stretcher of 6-feet in length. Additionally, the exterior entrance at the elevator door has a provided sidewalk ramp for stretcher movement.

Assessing: No comments. Administration work will be involved with the aforementioned three lots being voluntarily merged.

Building Department: No comments

Conservation Commission: No comments.

Town Engineer: Stormwater Management Plans have been submitted, including an application for the AoT permit (NHDES). Communication is on-going with the project engineer.

Fire Department: Please see attached memo from Deputy Fire Chief Riley Stanchina.

Heritage Commission: No comments/issues.

Police Department: No comments submitted.

Water Utilities: No comments submitted.

Zoning Administrator: No further comments.

Planning Department:

1. General Comment: As with prior site plan approvals for the Hitchiner Industrial Campus, given the total area of impervious surface related to parking and proximity within the watershed, winter maintenance should incorporate *Green Snow Pro* management practices.
2. General Comment: Consideration should be given to creating a dedicated pedestrian path allowing employees the ability to walk around the entire facility/property.
3. General Comment: Final approval should be conditional upon written confirmation of approvals for the AOT permit and local Stormwater Permit from NH DES and Town of Milford.

STAFF RECOMMENDATIONS:

The applicant should be prepared to address all of the comments raised by the Planning Board, Conservation Commission, Town Consultants, Staff, and public pertaining to the Site Plan Final Design and revise the plans/information accordingly. Pending the required *SoLRAC* review, any recommendations made by the Advisory Committee shall be incorporated, providing for compliance with the pending *NHDES AoT Permit Review*. Staff shall coordinate any remaining issues with both the *SoRLAC* and *NHDES*.

Staff finds that the majority of comments and recommendations by town staff involve plan revisions that could be managed administratively prior to Board signature.

Pending the input and recommendations from the Board, Staff recommends approving the application subject to the following conditions:

1. The Applicant shall submit written confirmation of approvals for the AoT permit and local stormwater permit from NH DES and Town of Milford.
2. The Applicant shall submit any/all revised plans, reports, and associated information referenced in the Staff memo dated February 15, 2024, to the Community Development Office for review and approval by the Town and its agents.
3. As with prior site plan approvals for the Hitchiner Industrial Campus, the Applicant shall attach "Dump No Waste" stickers to all storm drains.
4. The Applicant shall be required to use a certified Green Pro snow removal service to manage snow onsite or company receives certification and follow BMPs.

Town Approved Lot Merger of Map 13-6 and Map 13-7-1 in May 2018, into new Map 13 Lot 6 (for reference purposes)

