

**SOMERSWORTH PLANNING BOARD
MINUTES OF MEETING
February 17, 2021**

MEMBERS PRESENT: Ron LeHoullier, Chair, Jason Barry, Bob Belmore-City Manager, David Witham, City Council Representative and Mark Richardson, Alternate, Paul Robidas Keith Perkins – Alternate and Chris Horton, Jeremy Rhodes

EXCUSED MEMBERS: Harold Guptill- Vice Chair

STAFF PRESENT: Michelle Mears, Director Development Services, Dana Crossley Planning Secretary

The Meeting was called to order at 6:30 PM.

Director Mears stated due to the COVID-19/Coronavirus crisis and in accordance with Governor Sununu's Emergency Order #12 pursuant to Executive Order 2020-04, this Board is authorized to meet electronically. The public has access to watch to this meeting through the Local Government Cable Access Ch. 22 (Comcast), and streamed live through the City's website at www.somersworth.com. Although this is a public meeting, the public is encouraged not to attend and instead to leave comments or concerns at the following phone number # 1-603-692-9519, by emailing planning@somersworth.com or by sending written comment to Planning Board, 1 Government Way, Somersworth NH 03878. Comments must be received no later than 4pm the day of the meeting. She stated all votes will be taken by roll call votes.

Roll call attendance was taken: **Robidas, Barry, Horton, Witham, Belmore, Rhodes and Richardson** were in attendance remotely. **Perkins and LeHoullier** was in attendance at City Hall Council Chambers. Director Mears was in attendance remotely. Secretary Crossley was in attendance in City Hall Council Chambers.

LeHoullier appointed Richardson and Perkins as a full voting members for the meeting.

1. **Approval of the minutes of the meeting of January 20, 2021**
Motion: Robidas MOVED to accept the minutes.

Seconded by Barry.

The MOTION CARRIED by an 8-0-1 roll call vote. (LeHoullier abstained)

2. **COMMITTEE REPORTS**
Land Use Board Reports (ZBA, HDC, Conservation Commission, SRTC, Minor Field Reports):

City Council Report: Witham stated the Council finalized various actions with Continental Paving for road resurfacing of a dozen City Streets. He stated Nadeau Street is included in this and explained that it was recently discovered to not be a City owned street. He stated after discussion and negotiations with the residents of Nadeau St. a betterment district is being established, the road will be brought up to City standard to become a City owned street.

Witham reported that the Complete Street Cemetery Road project is out to bid. He stated they anticipate it will take two construction seasons, wrapping up in Spring of 2022.

Strafford Regional Planning Commission (SRPC) Update: No comments.

3. **OLD BUSINESS**

- A) Any old business that may come before the Board.
No other old business.

4. **NEW BUSINESS**

Robidas MOVED to re-arrange the agenda to allow Fire Station presentation first.

The MOTION is SECONDED by HORTON.

The MOTION CARRIES by a 9-0 roll call vote.

- A) **City of Somersworth, is seeking conceptual site plan review for the construction of a new fire station on a property located at 195 Maple Street, in the Recreation (REC) District, Assessor's Map 22 Lot 50B, SITE#03-2021**

Mears stated this has been reviewed by the SRTC and is now before the Planning Board for a courtesy review.

Kelly Davis of Port One Architects, Earle Blatchford of Hayner/Swanson INC and Chief George Kramlinger were in remotely in attendance to present the new fire station project.

Davis stated the project is to replace the existing Fire Station with a new station on the same site. He stated this will take place in a phased construction effort. He stated in the first phase, one of half of the station will be demolished while the crew operates from the remaining half. He reviewed the phased construction plan. He stated the demo and site work is expected to start in May/June and for the project to take about 16 months to complete.

Blatchford stated there will also be a lot line adjustment as part of the project. He stated the existing site is about an acre large. He stated the new fire station will be a larger structure than what exists. He stated the lot line adjustment will be with the Park property owned by the City. He reviewed the existing site and proposed changes. He stated the apparatus bay doors will face Maple Street and have a curb cut there and access from Parkview Terrace. He stated there will be a new stormwater management system installed. He reviewed the two construction phases and lighting plan.

Richardson inquired if there was a walkway that will connect the parking spaces along Parkview Terrace to the building. His concern is foot traffic on Parkview.

Blatchford noted that Parkview Terrace will also be widened as part of this project. He stated there is a sidewalk along the parking spaces and the front of the building, or they would cross the rear driveway.

Richardson asked if they currently have a dumpster at this location.

Blatchford stated the new location of the dumpster is still being determined but it will be appropriately screened.

Witham stated he reviewed the notes from the SRTC meeting. He stated he thinks that by widening Parkview Terrace will alleviate issues with cars backing onto it, along with the fact that there is minimal traffic on the road. He noted the existing utility pole on the Southeast side of

the property is a secondary feed and the primary feed is underground. He stated he appreciated the stormwater design and is happy with what has been presented.

Rhodes stated the elevations appear to be significantly improved in the appearance standards. He stated he was glad to see the stormwater treatment system being updated and feels the rain garden will help significantly. He advised they speak with the UNH Cooperative Extension when considering plantings, they have found minimal plantings and less landscaping has fared better. He stated he is overall very pleased with the proposal.

Horton stated he thinks this is a great design and really highlights what is happening in Somersworth. He stated he hopes they will not see seam in the completed project with it being done in two phases. He also noted that he hoped the completion of the parking lot pavement will wait until the entire site has been constructed.

Blatchford stated when they put down the binder for phase 2 they will also put down the wearing course for all of the pavement.

Horton stated he did not see the curbing detail, but imagines it would be consistent with the industry standard.

Blatchford stated yes.

Mears stated no other action is required from the Board if they have no other comments or questions.

LeHoullier thanked the team for their presentations.

B) **Site Plan Review Regulations Amendment: to add a new Section 9. Formal Application Procedure for Conditional Use Permit and move the Riparian and Wetland Buffer District Conditional Use Permit Site Plan Requirements from the Zoning Ordinance to the Site Plan Review Regulations. PUBLIC HEARING**

Mears stated this is the public hearing for approval of the language discussed at the last meeting. She noted the Council had a first read of the new language of Section 13 Riparian and Wetland Buffer of the Zoning Ordinance at their meeting last night. She stated the proposed amendment to the Site/Subdivision regulations is to move the Site Plan Requirement language from the Zoning Ordinance and into the regulations.

LeHoullier opened the public hearing at 7:07PM.

Mears stated there were no public comments received through mail, email or phone.

The public hearing was closed at 7:07 PM.

Horton stated this move seemed logical.

Witham stated, I MOTION TO AMEND the Riparian and Wetland Buffer District Conditional Use Permit Site Plan Requirements be moved from the Zoning Ordinance to the Site Plan Review Regulations.

The MOTION is SECONDED by Barry.

The MOTION CARRIES by a 9-0 roll call vote.

- C) **Subdivision Regulations Amendment: to add a new Section 5.E Formal Application Procedure for Conditional Use Permit and move the Riparian and Wetland Buffer District Conditional Use Permit Site Plan Requirements from the Zoning Ordinance to the Subdivision Regulations. PUBLIC HEARING**

LeHoullier opened the public hearing at 7:09PM.

Mears stated there were no comments received by mail, email, or phone.

The public hearing closed at 7:09 PM.

Witham stated I MOTION TO AMEND the Subdivision Regulations by adding a new Section 5.E Formal Application Procedure for a Conditional Use Permit and move the Riparian and Wetland Buffer District Condition Use Permit Site Plan Requirements from the Zoning Ordinance to the Subdivision Regulations.

The MOTION is SECONDED by Rhodes.

The MOTION CARRIES by a 9-0 roll call vote.

- D) Any new business that may come before the Board.
i) No new business.

5. **WORKSHOP BUSINESS**

A) **Fidelity Committee Request: follow up information**

Mears stated the Board received information in regards to zoning changes made in Dover to encourage more affordable housing opportunities. She noted they have made duplexes permissible in all residential zones with appearance restrictions. She stated they have put forward allowances for up to 2 ADU's so long as one of the ADU has HUD fair market housing rate attachments. She noted with this she has provided a couple talking points to potentially begin conversation for here in Somersworth those being, looking at the density for multi-family units or starting discussion about rezoning a portion of Main Street from Business to something else that may allow for residential on the first floor.

Mears stated she reached out to Todd Marsh of Rochester who is also on the Fidelity Committee for more discussion of the request from last meeting. She stated he intoned that each community has its own DNA and will find the appropriate approach for that community.

Mears stated Sarah Wrightsman of the Workforce Housing Coalition has offered to do a presentation for the Board to explain workforce and affordable housing if the Board desired.

Witham stated he would be interested in the presentation from the WHC. He stated he thought it could be very helpful to dive into what the terms of workforce and affordable housing means. He stated the Main Street area is a good target area but the landlords are the ones that set the price point of the units. He stated allowing residential units does not mean they will be affordable.

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Richardson noted one aspect he appreciates about ADU's is that the owner must live in one of the units and therefore helps alleviate the absentee landlord issue. He stated he has a concern of increasing the amount of properties in the City with neglectful landlords.

LeHoullier stated he wasn't sure how much farther the City should take the ADU past what the State has required. He stated he also feels it is important with the ADU's having the owner on site to ensure the properties are better maintained.

There was a brief discussion on the Tara Fields development and where it falls for affordable housing.

LeHoullier inquired to what was being done in the communities South of Somersworth that is driving residents this way.

Witham inquired if this is just a conversation to be had or action is required by a deadline.

Mears stated just a conversation.

Belmore noted also included in the Board's packet this month is a list of proposed legislature bills in regards to housing. He stated at this time they do not have to make any action and would be fine with having a workshop presentation on the workforce and affordable housing.

Robidas stated he feels Somersworth has a variety of housing options to offer and would be in favor of not making a change until required.

Rhodes stated he does not want to encourage more absentee landlords. He stated he does think that the zoning on Main Street should be looked at and amendments be considered. He stated it would be good to see those properties improved.

Richardson inquired if there was something that defines low and moderate income housing. He expressed concern that the existing stock of low income housing is not in great condition. He stated he would like to look at what exists and if there can be incentives to improve those properties. He stated at this point he does not feel they should make any changes.

Mears noted that at this time there are a handful of ADU permits and developers have not had a chance to work with the Form Based Codes yet.

Witham stated he feels there is a desire for the presentation from the WHC. He stated he tends to agree there are a variety of housing opportunities in Somersworth and that the existing stock should be reviewed. He noted not all of the housing is well maintained and it keeps the property maintenance Officer busy.

6. COMMUNICATIONS AND MISCELLANEOUS

Mears stated NHMA has offered a free webinar for Planning Board members that information will be shared with the Board.

Mears stated the Flatley project in Rollinsford was denied by their Zoning Board. She stated she had reached out to SRPC in regards to regional impact and found that any development project for that portion of land would be required to gain approval from Somersworth and Rollinsford since the access point is in Somersworth. This is based on RSA 674:53.

MOTION: Robidas MOTION to ADJOURN.

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Belmore SECONDS the motion.

The MOTION CARRIES by a 9-0 roll call vote at 7:30 PM

Respectfully Submitted,

Dana Crossley, Planning Secretary