

**SOMERSWORTH PLANNING BOARD
MINUTES OF MEETING
December 16, 2020**

MEMBERS PRESENT: Jason Barry, Bob Belmore-City Manager, David Witham, City Council Representative and Mark Richardson, Alternate, Harold Guptill- Vice Chair, Jeremy Rhodes, Paul Robidas and Chris Horton

EXCUSED MEMBERS: Ron LeHoullier, Chair, and Keith Perkins – Alternate

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 # 1-603-841-2936, 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: **Guptill, Robidas, Barry, Rhodes, Horton, Witham, Belmore and Richardson** were in attendance remotely and alone. Director Mears and Secretary Crossley were also present remotely.

Guptill appointed Richardson as a full voting member for the meeting.

1. **Approval of the minutes of the meeting of November 18, 2020, workshop and regular meeting minutes.**

Motion: Robidas MOVED to accept the workshop minutes.

Seconded by Barry.

The MOTION CARRIED by an 8-0 roll call vote.

Motion: Robidas MOVED to accept the regular minutes.

Seconded by Richardson.

The MOTION CARRIED by a 7-0-1 roll call vote (Belmore abstained)

2. **COMMITTEE REPORTS**

Land Use Board Reports (ZBA, HDC, Conservation Commission, SRTC, Minor Field Reports):
No Comments.

City Council Report: Witham stated he had no report for tonight's meeting.

Belmore stated the City was successful in securing a nearly \$98,000 grant to clean up the old Police Station of hazardous material. He stated once he receives the formal paper work they will be moving forward in accepting the grant.

Belmore stated the Mayor nominated the Director of Planning and Community Development to sit on the SRPC, MPO technical advisory committee. He stated Council will vote at the next meeting on this matter.

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**

- A) **Somedowntown LLC, is seeking a site plan amendment to relocate interior trash storage and bench revisions for a property located at 8 Government Way, in the Business (B) District, Assessor's Map 11 Lot 209, SITE#09-2019A PUBLIC HEARING**

Mears stated there was no public comment received regarding this application. She stated this is a site plan amendment request to move the interior trash storage to the outside of the building and revise the bench specifications. She stated this meets zoning requirements and the trash area will be screened with metal aluminum paneling.

David Baker of Somedowntown LLC, **Liz Nguyen** and **Don Provost (without a microphone)** were in attendance remotely to represent the application.

Nguyen stated the original conditions of approval included a requirement that the trash storage area be inside the building. She stated they feel this interior trash storage would create a health hazard and nuisance inside the building. She stated they are requesting to relocate the trash storage to the rear of the building. She stated there is a 0' setback requirement in this zone. She stated they have proposed an enclosure for bins behind the building and stairs to access it. She stated these will all be within the property area. She noted that it was recommended to them by the SRTC to work with the adjacent property owner in regards to access to the dumpster.

Baker stated the Dentist office located at 1 John Parsons had an issue with a trash location. He stated he reached out to them to the property owner to discuss an easement for access and that he would provide space for them to use in the trash enclosure and he agreeable to this.

Nguyen stated per the recommendation of the SRTC they will be using a sliding gate for access to the enclosure. She stated this will also prevent the gate from blocking the alley way access.

Baker stated he had positive discussion with the dentist office to allow an easement for access to the trash enclosure, a bin in the enclosure for 1 John Parsons and some parking options during parking bans. He stated he is happy to help the neighbor out. He stated there will be little impact on the amount of trash. He stated there will be one commercial unit and three residential units.

Nguyen stated there is a revised sheet in the Board's packet to reflect the discussion at the SRTC meeting. She stated shows the additional bin area.

Nguyen stated the bench that fits the City standard is a beautiful historic style bench. She state this building and the surrounding buildings are in the modern architecture style. She stated they are proposing to put in a simpler bench with a wooden top that would be more in line with the landscape changes that are being done to the site. She stated they are proposing an alternate bench from the City's standard bench.

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Baker noted they will be adding quite a bit of green space and porous concrete. He stated it will add to the entire Plaza area and hopes when that is developed it will all flow and tie in together.

Guptill opened the public hearing.

Mears stated there were no public comments.

Guptill closed the public hearing.

Witham stated he really likes the trash enclosure area idea and agrees removing it from the building makes sense. He stated he believes they have found a way to make a trash enclosure look good. He stated he loves that they are working together with a neighboring property and hopes to see more of that within the community. He stated he does like the City's historic benches but does agree to have the bench be tied in with the existing surrounding buildings and has no qualm with their proposal. He stated he is good with both amendments.

Rhodes stated he is also glad to see neighbors working together. He stated he thinks the bench is a good change. He stated he is glad they were not proposing concrete casting. He stated he is in favor with this. He stated there was a comment from the SRTC about potentially locking the trash enclosure and in his experience is people will take advantage of a place they could dump their trash.

Baker stated he is definitely going to be putting a lock on the enclosure.

Richardson clarified the bench image within the packet is the new bench they are proposing.

Nguyen stated yes, the photograph in the packet is the proposed bench.

Richardson noted that the bench is a recycled product and will not require staining.

Horton stated his comments fall in line with the Board comments. He stated he does agree moving the trash outside for sanitary purposes is a good idea. He stated he likes the by-pass doors provided and curious how the perforated aluminum will stand up over time. He stated he personally would like to see the bench consistent with the City style benches. He asked if this project had to have substantial construction started within 12 months of approval.

Mears stated yes that is typically a requirement and an extension could be applied for.

Baker stated he believes they are going to be starting construction in April. 2021.

Guptill clarified this application was originally approved in September 2019.

There was a brief discussion of the 79:E extension for this property.

MOTION: Belmore stated, I move that the request for a 1 year extension of SITE#09-2019 be APPROVED WITH THE FOLLOWING CONDITIONS:

1. Applicant shall submit formal request paper work to the Director of Planning and Community Development.

The MOTION is SECONDED by Robidas.

The MOTION CARRIES by an 8-0 roll call vote.

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MOTION: Belmore stated I move that the request of Somedowntown LLC to relocate interior trash depot to outside rear of the building and revise current park bench specifications be APPROVED.

The MOTION is SECONDED by Robidas.

Discussion: Horton stated he would like to propose an amendment that the bench conforms with the City Specifications. He stated he feels for consistency purposes, maintaining what the City have provided in place would be best.

Belmore stated he was on the fence because eventually the City will re-do Main St. with the City standard benches. He stated he is optimistic that they will redevelop the Plaza and in terms with that the developer may want to be more modern. He stated he thinks that would go better with the surrounding properties. He stated he is comfortable with going with the proposal but sees the value in the conformity.

Rhodes stated the idea of keeping a single look for the City has merit but matching the architecture of the area also has merit. He stated if this project was located on High Street he would be more in favor of the City Standard bench but in this location he is in favor of the proposed bench. He stated he feels what they submitted fits best with their property and its surrounding properties.

Robidas noted the surrounding buildings are in the same modern architecture and is in favor of supporting the applications submission.

The MOTION is CARRIED by an 8-0 roll call vote.

B) City of Dover, notice of intent to use land owned by a government agency for an extreme cold weather warming center at a property located at 30 Willand Drive, in the Commercial Industrial (CI) District, Assessor's Map 43 Lot 1H

Mears stated the previous use of this building was an athletic facility. She stated included in the Board's packet was a letter from the City of Dover explaining their intent for the building, a change of use application and the original site plan. She stated an additional letter and link to the Somersworth City Council meeting was emailed to them as well. She stated Dover intends to use the building for an emergency warming shelter. She stated Somersworth City Council waived the requirement for a public hearing on the matter by a 9-0 vote. She stated RSA 674: 54 requires notification of a Governmental change of use to the Planning Board and Council.

Belmore stated the Council also voted in favor of supporting the project. He stated it is a Tri-City effort between Somersworth, Rochester and Dover. He stated residents of all three communities will be able to use the facility. He stated any comments they have they can share with Dover and bring back more information. He noted that a public hearing for this would be nonbinding comments. He stated a certificate of occupancy with conditions has been issued to allow them to operate for this incoming storm.

Guptill inquired what the Board's roll tonight.

Mears stated they are looking for comments from the Board.

Rhodes inquired if the grant for the change of use would restrict the use of the buildings use in the off months.

Witham stated the grant had few strings attached to it but one was to be up and running in December. He stated the intent is to keep it open until March. He stated the disposition of the

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building after that is unknown at this time. He stated there is some discussion of selling the building after March and building a shelter in a better location for the use. He stated Council expressed some concern of it becoming a full time shelter but he does not think that is the desire of the City of Dover.

Richardson inquired how people will get to the facility.

Belmore stated that the City of Dover purchased a van for transporting people to the site and back the next day. He stated they are also going to work with COAST bus to look at the bus stops on High and Route 108.

Witham noted that van will bring the people back to their point of origin.

Horton stated he supports and understands the need for the shelter. He inquired if they had to vote on accepting the application, or hours of operation.

Mears stated no.

Horton questioned what happens if people want to stay in the area. He noted that people just hanging around could create a bigger issue. He stated he is glad all of the people are working together for this to happen.

Belmore noted the current owners paid the tax bill for this year. He stated moving forward Dover is putting together a PILOT plan in lieu of taxes.

MOTION: Belmore stated, I MOVE the requirement of a public hearing pursuant to RSA 674:53 be waived.

The MOTION is SECONDED by Witham.

The MOTION CARRIES by an 8-0 roll call vote.

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

5. WORKSHOP BUSINESS

- A) No workshop business.

6. COMMUNICATIONS AND MISCELLANEOUS

Mears stated the 2021 PB schedule was included in the Board's packet.

There was a brief discussion on the calendar. It was determined an updated one would be sent out.

Horton wished the Board a great Christmas and New Year. He stated he felt the City is moving in a great direction and it was great working with everyone. He thanked the staff and hope that they can all meet in person again soon.

Guptill stated he likes the work that was completed near Cumberland Farms and the vacant lot. He stated the pavement and reflective delineators to block the entrance were well done.

Belmore noted that Cumberland Farms paid for the paving and the City put up the delineators.

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MOTION: Robidas MOTION to ADJOURN.

Belmore SECONDS the motion.

The MOTION CARRIES by an 8-0 roll call vote at 7:15 PM.

Respectfully Submitted,

Dana Crossley, Planning Secretary