

**SOMERSWORTH PLANNING BOARD
MINUTES OF MEETING
APRIL 17, 2019**

MEMBERS PRESENT: Ron LeHoullier, Chair, Harold Guptill, Vice Chair, Bob Belmore, City Manager, Paul Robidas, Chris Horton, and Jason Barry, Alternate

MEMBERS ABSENT: Jameson Small, David Witham, City Council Representative, Jeremy Rhodes

STAFF PRESENT: Shanna Saunders, Director of Planning and Community Development

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

LeHoullier appointed Barry as a voting member for the meeting.

1) APPROVAL OF MINUTES

Motion: Robidas MOVED to approve the minutes of the March 20, 2019 meeting

Seconded by Horton.

The MOTION CARRIED with a 6-0 vote.

2) COMMITTEE REPORTS

Land Use Board Reports (ZBA, HDC, Conservation Commission, SRTC)

No discussion

City Council Report

No discussion

Minor Field Modifications Report

No Minor Field Modifications this month.

Strafford Regional Planning Commission Update

No Discussion

Vision 2020 Report

Saunders stated that they continue to work on their final presentation to Council which will be presented after the budget hearings.

3) OLD BUSINESS

No discussion

Motion: Robidas MOVED to rearrange the agenda in order for the second applicant to present first, since the first applicant had not yet arrived.

Horton seconded the motion.

The MOTION CARRIED by a 6-0 vote.

3) NEW BUSINESS

- A) Ocean Breeze RV Center is seeking site plan approval for Site Development for RV Sales on property located at 355 Route 108 t, in the Commercial/Industrial (CI) District, Assessor's Map 48, Lot 24A, SITE #03-2019.

Saunders clarified with the Board that this agenda item is a conceptual plan. No abutters were noticed, there are no decisions to be made tonight and no public hearing will be held. The applicant is looking for input from the Planning Board on several proposed waivers as well as some items of concern referenced in an SRTC memo.

Bob Stowell, Tritech Engineering, outlined the proposed project. Ocean Breeze RV Center is looking at 4 acres of land on Route 108 to construct a new facility for RV sales and service. They currently have a facility in North Hampton, NH and they are looking to relocate to this area of the seacoast. They plan to build a 6000 sqf building with a small portion used as office space and a larger service area. There will be parking out front and multiple areas for display of the RVs and trailers.

Stowell stated the proposal is a lot like a car dealership, but with some differences. They are asking for a waiver to allow gravel areas in the lot for the purpose of parking trailers. The gravel serves two purposes; there will be trails and these gravel areas to allow a campground-type feel to the lot. There are also leveling systems used for the RVs which will puncture through asphalt due to the weight, so gravel is preferable. Stowell said he would like feedback from the Board on this waiver.

Stowell stated that due to the large size of the RVs and the need for large areas required for them to turn and move around, the property will need to have large travel ways with lots of pavements. They will be requesting a waiver for the back portion of the property to eliminate the requirement of 5% interior green space / landscaping to allow the trailers and RVs adequate room to move around.

Stowell stated that they will be seeking a waiver for the opaque screen requirement between the business and the road. They are looking to place a more traditional screen such as trees and plantings so the product will not be blocked from patrons.

Stowell reported that in the back of the property there are wetlands and they will be looking for conditional use permits to handle drainage.

The Applicant presented a sketch of the proposed building, which he stated should fall within guidelines for appearance standards although they have not worked through specifics of site design.

Stowell said that the RV dealership is good for other local businesses and they do feed business to car dealerships and in particular, truck dealerships.

Horton thanked Stowell for the proposal and said that this business would be a great addition to this stretch of road. Horton said that he understands the need to have the product seen and not blocked from the road; maybe the applicant can allow for some landscaping along the road where appropriate. He stated he does not see any issues.

Horton asked if the applicant they are interested in adding a propane filling station on the property.

Stowell answered that they would propose there be a propane filling station out towards the back of the property.

LeHoullier asked Saunders what the city would require for this application regarding opaque screening.

Saunders stated there had been similar waivers applied for through a local car dealership. She would have to check for the approval wording. The Board can also look at what was done for Cumberland Farms on Route 108 as well; there is no opaque screening between that property and the road.

LeHoullier asked if this property would be considered a new vehicle dealership.

Robidas addressed the applicant regarding design standards. He said he felt conflicted on steel buildings; although it looks like there are some upgrades to the design, there have been issues in the past with this type of structure.

Stowell stated the front portion of the building is proposed with siding, a metal farmhouse roof and a farmer's porch. The back portion will be taller and metal, but with much less visibility from Route 108.

Robidas suggested that to gain approval, the applicant can perhaps do something more decorative on the rear metal building such as striping to break up metal wall. He said there had been a tire store on Route 108 place blue stripe on a side wall for this same reason.

Stowell answered they would work on that aspect of the design.

LeHoullier asked how close to this property is to the subdivision as far as visibility is concerned.

Stowell stated there is approximately 150 feet between the back edge of the lot to the property line, with another 500 feet until you would reach the first residence. Altogether there is approximately 800 feet between the property and the closest house. Some of this land is wooded, others swampy offering slightly less screening. .

LeHoullier asked if the business will offer RV repair.

Stowell answered that there would be repair and vehicle modifications done in the rear portion of the site.

Saunders clarified that there would be no engine repair on site, those repairs would be outsourced to a separate location. There will be no risk for fluids spills.

Guptill agreed that it will be nice to have a business on that stretch of Route 108. He said that initially the issue with the use of gravel in the lot, but he now understands the reasoning and would be inclined to approve the waiver.

Guptill inquired about the fire hydrant on site and whether or not it had been discussed.

Stowell answered that the hydrant on site has not been discussed and he is unsure if it's the right size for water access and what the rights are to access, but stated that he will look into it before coming back to the Board.

Guptill concurred that the upper façade of the rear building needs to be addressed, to make it more appealing.

Barry said he felt the proposal is a great concept and appears well thought out. He also suggested breaking up the additional height on the rear building to “fancy up” the façade and make it more visually pleasing. He said he has no problem with the proposed gravel areas.

Barry inquired about the access road which goes into adjacent lots and asked whether or not these lots are owned by applicant.

Stowell stated that the adjacent lots are owned by the same person that owns this lot. There currently an access easement ending midway into the property. They will look to extend this easement all the way to the back of the property. They intend to have the access easement built into the purchase.

Barry asked if the applicant will come back before the Board for lot resizing.

Stowell answered that the lot lines will stay the same, there will simply be an access easement.

- B) Piccadilly Properties LLC is seeking a site plan approval to convert office space into 6 residential units at 97 High Street, in the Residential Business Zone with a Historic District Overlay(R/BH) Assessor's Map 11, Lot 37, SITE # 02-2019.

Saunders explained that there are two revisions which were proposed as this application went through review and SRTC.

Saunders explained that this property has a footbridge which crosses an abutting property into a non-abutting lot which is not contiguous with this property. The lot where this footbridge leads contains the parking for this property. These two parcels have gone together via deed for several years, and this was one of the City's conditions of approval; that the lots continue to be sold and used together.

Saunders said that part of the site plan regulations for multi-family conversions require that any parking needs to be screened. Therefore the parking lot will need to be screened from Highland Street.

Saunders stated that the site plan regulations discuss a Park and Recreation area which must be provided for multi-family developments. This property is in a more urban area, and in similar circumstances developers have provided an interior community room to fill this need. Saunders said it has been discussed with the property owner and they are willing to provide this interior space

Saunders stated the rest of the conditions are standard; water and sewer, storm water maintenance, and outdoor lighting. The building inspector did recommend a structural evaluation of the footbridge because it has not been evaluated in recent history. This structural evaluation cannot be required because the bridge is not being rebuilt or renovated, but it was strongly recommended and the property owner is open to this evaluation.

Horton inquired about the sprinkler system in the building and asked what is being supplied for water in the property.

Saunders indicated that the applicant had followed up with the Water Department following SRTC to get answers on this. The applicant stated he had not received an answer yet, but he believes there is $\frac{3}{4}$ inch domestic sprinkler service to the building. He stated that he had just recently purchased the property and had been unable to get many answers from the previous owner. The sprinkler system has been in place for 15 years, but he is unsure of the dimensions. .

Saunders indicated that the applicant is required to submit a water sewer connection permit, and the information will be supplied at that time. If the water department does not have the tie card, it will be evaluated by digging a hole which will determine water connection and sewer fee.

Motion: Belmore MOVED to accept the application as complete.

The motion was seconded by Barry.

The MOTION CARRIED by a 6-0 vote.

Paul Delisle, applicant, stated that he purchased the property and intended to convert the 2nd and 3rd floors from office space into residential units. He stated that much of the building will not change; there will be the additions of kitchens and bathrooms for each units, but very little interior change otherwise. He stated they are currently finalizing the floor plans with fire engineer. They are hoping to rent out office space on first floor although they may return in the future to the Board to get approvals for more residential units if no office space is sold.

Delisle stated that the floor plan is proposed to include four 2-bedroom units and two 1-bedroom units (two units on the 3rd, three units 2nd). There will be 5 units split up between the second and third floors. There may be an additional unit proposed in the basement or on the first floor in the future.

Robidas clarified that the application cannot be approved for 6 units because the Board has not received plans for a 6-unit at this time. The approval would be for 5 units.

Saunders confirmed that the Planning Board could only approve for 5 units, although the applicant has gone to the ZBA and received approval for 6 units under density requirements.

LeHoullier invited members of the public to come forward and offer comments on the application. No discussion.

The Public Hearing was closed at 7:02PM.

Robidas asked how many spaces are available in the lot in back of the property.

Delisle answered that there are at least 18 spaces with a possibility of 20. The proposed design was for 20 spaces, but Delisle stated he had intended to consolidate to 18 spaces leaving space for a dumpster. He said there are also parking spaces directly behind the building on the bottom level.

LeHoullier asked if the parking would affect the white building between the two lots owned by the applicant.

Delisle stated that the white building, which is not owned by him, does have their own lot. The area behind is building is very tight, more like a passageway. He does not intend to rely on the spaces there for parking because there is not direct access to the building interior from those spaces. If those spaces were utilized, the residents would need to go around to the front or up the hill to the footbridge.

Belmore referenced the City's plan, which shows 16 parking spaces.

Delisle referenced the requirement for two parking spaces per unit.

Belmore asked if there would be any changes to the front of the building such as landscaping.

Delisle answered that the trim on the building would be scraped and repainted, and there would be some new landscaping. There is a potential that the front doorway will be changed, but Delisle said he understood that change would need to go before the HDC.

Belmore asked if there are any ADA requirements which need to be addressed.

Saunders said there are no ADA requirements which need to be addressed,

Barry inquired if the applicant had any intention of replacing windows or painting the outside façade of the building.

Delisle responded that they did not have immediate plans to do any work on the front of the building, although the windows may someday need replacement.

Barry asked if the parking lot is in the historic district and said there may be some regulations which the HDC needs to review.

Saunders confirmed that the parking lot is in the historic district.

Barry asked if there were any specific requirements from the HDC which might apply from for the parking lot.

Saunders stated that if there was site lighting, then it would need to be down lit and any landscaping does not have to go before HDC

Belmore asked if the parking lot is paved and if there will be lighting installed.

Delisle stated that the parking lot is paved. There is currently lighting on the footbridge, but there are no immediate plans for lighting in the parking lot. Delisle said it seems fairly well lit in the parking lot.

Horton said there is a standing moratorium for water on High Street. He inquired what the process would be if water service needed to be upgraded to this property.

Saunders said that the applicant understands that the moratorium is in place, and it lifts in October 2019.

LeHoullier inquired about right-of-ways behind the building and how it would work.

Delisle said he was unsure about the right-of-ways. He said he felt they were diminishing the use of building, which previously had 40 employees at their peak. These employees account for the need to park directly behind the building, which will not be an issue with the proposed residential use.

Guptill asked if the landscaping on the property will be brought up to code.

Saunders clarified that the only requirement is that the landscaping be kept up and that the parking is screened. There are also some low growth shrubs which need to be maintained.

LeHoullier asked if these would be market rate apartments.

Delisle answered that they would be market rate.

Robidas requested that Saunders to go through the plan revisions and conditions of approval.

Saunders said there are two revisions, parking lot is screened from abutting residences and that a Park and Recreation area be provided, such as the common room discussed earlier.

1. PLAN REVISIONS:

- a. Parking lot needs to be screened from the Public Way and from abutting residences per Site Plan Regulation 11.4.b.viii
- b. Per Site Plan Regulation 10, "Park and Rec area" must be provided for residential properties. I think in the case of this property – as we have seen with the Chinburg

Mill – a common room for building events or a work out room would meet the intent of this regulation.

2. CONDITIONS THAT MUST BE MET PRIOR TO FINAL APPROVAL

- a. Water and sewer connection permit must be submitted prior to Building permit approval. The applicant will be required to pay standard water and sewer connection fees assessed on new properties connecting to the water and sewer system. Water fees will be based on the size of water meter needed and the sewer connection fees will be based on estimate of water used and equivalent number of bedrooms;

3. CONDITIONS APPLICABLE DURING AND AFTER CONSTRUCTION:

- a. A copy of the completed Stormwater Inspection & Maintenance Log shall be provided to the Public Works Department annually on or before January 1st. This requirement shall be an ongoing condition of approval and noted on the final plans;
- b. All landscaping shown on plans shall be maintained and any dead or dying vegetation shall be replaced in a timely manner as long as this site plan remains valid;
- c. All outdoor lighting (including security lights) shall be down lit and shielded so no direct light is visible from adjacent properties and roadways; and,
- d. LANDSCAPING SURVIVAL SECURITY: Ten percent (10%) of the total cost of landscaping or a minimum of five hundred (\$500) dollars, whichever is greater, shall be held for a period of 2 growing seasons to guarantee the survival of the landscaping installation.

DURATION OF APPROVAL: All conditional approvals shall be valid for a period of 120 days in which time all precedent conditions must be met or the approval shall be null and void. The applicant may request an extension no later than 14 days prior to expiration.

APPEAL PROCESS: Pursuant to RSA 677:15, an aggrieved party may appeal this decision to the Strafford County Superior Court within 30 days of the date the Board voted to approve or disapprove the application, or to the ZBA pursuant to RSA 676:5, III within 20 days of the date the Board made its decision.

Belmore said that because a structural evaluation of the footbridge can't be required, it should not be included as a condition of approval.

Saunders stated she felt it was important to include this recommendation for the file and for the applicant, but it is worded as a recommendation as opposed to a requirement. She stated that the condition can be removed if needed.

Belmore reiterated that he felt it should not be a condition if it can't be required. The recommendation will be included in the minutes of the SRTC meeting as well as this meeting to reflect the suggestion.

Robidas stated that he felt the footbridge evaluation should be included as a condition if it is what the building inspector thought was important.

Delisle stated that regardless of whether or not it was a condition, he intended to have the footbridge looked at for insurance purposes.

Motion: Horton MOVED to approve the conversion of office spaces into 5 residential units approved with the following conditions and striking section 2B requiring the structural evaluation of the footbridge.

Guptill seconded the motion.

Barry said he would like to have the HDC review this application because it is in the district, especially if there were to be modifications to the façade of the building.

Saunders clarified that there would be no modifications to the exterior of the building besides the painting of trim.

Barry rescinded his request for the HDC review.

The MOTION CARRIED by a 6-0 vote.

5) WORKSHOP BUSINESS

A) Any workshop business that may come before the Board.

Saunders announced that the new land use secretary started yesterday and with this new staff in place, the Board will be able to start with workshops again in May.

6) COMMUNICATIONS AND MISCELLANEOUS

Belmore said he would like to place a draft for site plan modification for downtown parking on the next agenda. He asked that they have a proposal for review so they can move it to public hearing and take action.

Motion: Belmore MOVED to have the draft site plan modifications for downtown parking added to the next meeting agenda.

Horton seconded the motion.

The MOTION CARRIED 6-0.

Motion: Robidas MOVED to ADJOURN the meeting.

Belmore seconded the motion

The MOTION CARRIED by a 6-0 vote.

The meeting ADJOURNED at 7:17 PM.

Respectfully Submitted,

Cassie Givara

