



**TOWN OF WINCHESTER
PLANNING BOARD MEETING
TUESDAY, JANUARY 28, 2020 @7:30PM
SELECT BOARD ROOM**

	BUSINESS
7:30PM	Open Planning Board Meeting, Updates, Subdivision Close-out
7:35PM	654 Main Street (Fells Hardware) conceptual redevelopment
8:50PM	Executive Session: Employee Performance Evaluation
9:35PM	19-35 River Street traffic concerns
9:50PM	New Business not known at the time of the posting
10:00PM	Adjourn

	CORRESPONDENCE
	Winchester Historical Commission – 3 Wickham Road (Residence) Please proceed with issuance of the demolition permit for residence located at 3 Wickham Road.

	City of Medford – Public Hearings	(GREEN BOOK)
	City of Woburn – Public Hearings	(GREEN BOOK)

2020 MEETINGS	
Monday Feb. 10	Joint Master Plan Steering Committee and Select Board Public Hearing for the Master Plan Select Board Room, Time TBA
Tuesday Feb. 11	7:30PM Planning Board Meeting, Select Board Room
Tuesday Feb. 25	7:30PM Planning Board Meeting, Select Board Room
Tuesday Mar. 10	7:00PM Master Plan Steering Committee Meeting, Select Board Room
Tuesday Mar. 17	7:30PM Planning Board Meeting, Select Board Room
Tuesday Mar. 24	7:30PM Planning Board Meeting, Select Board Room



TOWN OF WINCHESTER

PLANNING BOARD

71 Mount Vernon Street
Winchester, MA 01890

BRIAN SZEKELY
TOWN PLANNER

Petition Number	CBD-10
Address	648-654 Main Street
Zoning	CBD: North Core Subzone
Applicant	Christopher H. Mulhern/Harrison Mulhern Architects
Owner	Fells Realty, Inc.
Application Date	August 30, 2018
Planning Board Hearing Date	September 25, 2018
Planning Board Decision Date	December 17, 2018
Planning Board Filing of Decision Date	

Application: Dimensional Special Permit needed for Height and FAR, in order to build a mixed-use, mixed-income 5-story structure.

Decision: ACCEPT A WITHDRAWAL WITH PREJUDICE

Planning Board Chairperson Diab Jerius

For further information concerning this decision, please contact Brian Szekely at 781-721-7120, or bszekely@winchester.us.

DOCUMENTS SUBMITTED

The applicant submitted Form D, a narrative explaining the project, civil engineering drawings and portions of the stormwater and floodwater analysis. All other necessary forms and a site plan were submitted to the Planning Office on August 30, 2018.

FINDINGS

After review of the documents submitted to the Planning Board by the Applicant, and comments received from the Police Department, Fire Department, The Historical Commission, Health Department and the Design Review Committee, and review and consideration of the applicable requirements and criteria set forth in the Winchester Zoning Bylaw, the Planning Board makes the following findings:

1. The applicant had a pre-application meeting with the Town Planner on May 23, 2018 and submitted a nearly full application at the time of submission.

HISTORIC RESOURCES

2. The proposal entails the replacement of an existing single story commercial building used as a hardware store as well as of 63 Vine St, a two-story structure built circa 1860 for residential use, and currently used as an ancillary structure to the hardware store.
3. 63 Vine St. has been designated as an historically significant building within the CBD on Map 7.3.4 of the Town of Winchester Zoning Bylaw.
4. The Bylaw and regulations are clear that demolition of a structure deemed historically significant is presumed detrimental, and that the proponent must present clear and convincing evidence that its replacement would outweigh the adverse impact of its demolition. The Board did not find that the evidence presented met the required standard, and concluded that the beneficial impacts of the proposed project do not outweigh the negative effects of the loss of the Historic Resource.

SCALE AND DESIGN

5. The scale of the structure is not consistent with the surrounding neighborhood, and a step-back is suggested as an alternative on the upper floors.
6. Architectural design uses multiple styles (traditional windows with contemporary corner windows for example). Architectural design should be more cohesive. The tower on Main Street is a significant architectural feature which does not seem to have a specific purpose.
7. The proposed building is not a “timeless, subtle, and elegant structure that will always feel comfortable and inviting to the general public.” The scale and presence of the structure is appropriate to a much larger urban setting, not to the more village like nature of Winchester Center. It does not promote the neighborhood character within the CBD and does not meet the requirements that it not be “an isolated, individual architectural statement that relates only to itself” or that it “should be carefully conceived and executed to the mutual benefit of its immediate neighbors.”
8. Not enough of the frontage along Main Street is active pedestrian space. It is rather filled with mostly blank walls masking the parking behind, and does not enhance the pedestrian

experience along Main St. The street should be activated with commercial space or possibly a residential entrance.

9. The proposal does not avail itself of the opportunity to create additional commercial units, which would in part offset projected increased municipal costs for the expected increase of children of school age resident in the units.
10. The pocket park in the rear of the property should be ADA accessible if it is to be deemed a public amenity. It is awkwardly positioned and would be better situated closer to Main St. so that it is more available to the public.
11. Section 7.3.15.5 outlines general standards for Site Plan Review. Below is the list of standards that the Planning Board found not to be adhered to as part of the proposed project.
 - a. Protection and preservation of existing historic structures, vistas and natural features
 - b. Avoidance or mitigation of visual impact of parking, storage, and other outside service areas.
 - c. Consistency with character and scale of surrounding buildings, CBD areas and neighborhoods
 - d. Consistency with Design Review Guidelines in Section 7.3.17
 - i. The town promotes an active setting along its main downtown streets.
 - ii. New structures must be compatible with Winchester's historic architecture and send of place. The Town seeks new buildings that are timeless and subtle.
 - iii. The objectives of the CBD do not support isolated, individual architectural statements that relate only to themselves.
 - iv. All developments must include an integrated pedestrian circulation system with particular strong connections to the public way and between the adjacent residential neighborhoods.
 - v. Regardless of any preconceived development configuration for any particular use, new development is expected to reinforce the CBD's existing street pattern; to break down any building type's typical massing to relate to the historic character and mass of Winchester's CBD; and to avoid a monolithic appearance.
 - vi. All new buildings should maximize visibility and transparency through ground floor retail or possible future retail space as determined by the Town. The Town realizes that future additions of storage rooms, toilets and restaurant kitchens will limit transparency, but it is the Town's objective to locate these areas to maximize visibility and transparency where it is desirable.
 - vii. All new buildings should provide human-scaled balconies at appropriate locations overlooking public open space. The balconies must be detailed so that they are inviting, highly usable and relate directly to the character of the adjoining open space.

DECISION

The Board concluded that the proposed structure complied with neither the intent nor the letter of the Bylaw and regulations. In addition to the demolition of the historical structure, this proposal seeks the maximum FAR permitted in the North Core. Either condition would require significant effort to maximize beneficial and minimize negative impacts to the surrounding commercial and residential areas. A proposal which combines both must meet a very high standard. The Board acknowledges that the proposal provides a significant number of appropriately located residential units, both market rate and affordable, and

provides for the continued operation of the Fells Hardware Store, a much appreciated local institution. These benefits, however, are not sufficient to overcome the project's negative impacts.

The Planning Board hereby accepts the applicant's Withdrawal with Prejudice, per the letter dated December 17, 2018.

Voting in the affirmative to ACCEPT the Withdrawal were Planning Board Members M. Meister, H. von Mering, H. Hannon and D. Jerius constituting a majority vote of the members of the Board, 4-0-1. Ms. Cregger was absent at the time of the vote.