



Planning Board Meeting Minutes
Tuesday, January 7, 2020 at 7:00 pm
The Winchester Room, Winchester Town Hall

Members Present: Heather von Mering (chair) Diab Jerius
Heather Hannon (vice chair, clerk) Maureen Meister
Elizabeth (Betsy) Cregger

Also Present: Brian Szekely, Town Planner Savannah-Nicole Villaba,
Planning Dept. Consultant

Others attending: Chad Reynolds (and 2 on team from Leggatt McCall)
John Leavitt (owner), Alvaro Lucena (architect), John McConnell (architect).
Paul Soughley, Ad Meliora (owner/developer)
Larry Beals, Todd Morey, Beals Associates (engineers)
David Hacin, Hacin + Associates (architect)
Other Attendees: list given to Chair von Mering

A quorum being in attendance, Chair von Mering calls the Winchester Planning Board meeting to order at 7:00 pm.

Chair von Mering noted December 17, 2019 meeting had been cancelled due to snow.

Updates:

Mr. Szekely discussed the Public Information Session for the Local Historic District (LHD) that recently occurred. Sent out survey to 100 properties in the proposed district. Only 40 responses to date. Mixed responses. Most concerned with how it will affect them in terms of time and cost. Seeking more responses within next week. Will summarize results in an analysis and report to the Select Board.

ANR for Atlantic Gelatin/Kraft Foods (The Vale):

Mr. Szekely provided background on the ANR (Approval Not Required) process. The applicant seeks an ANR for The Vale project, property at 2 Hill Street in Winchester and Woburn. Mr. Szekely recommends endorsing the ANR with two modifications to the plan documents: add subdivided lots along Forest Street and note forested areas. Discussion ensued with the following comments:

- the three lots on Forest Street will be three single family lots.
- no plans yet for the fourth lot.
- there cannot be any access or impact to Sunset Road.
- Lot B is in Winchester, Lot A is in Stoneham; some of Lot B is wetlands.
- potentially owners will give Lot B to the Town of Winchester.
- only emergency access will be via Forest Street.

Chair von Mering indicated due to time, public comment will not be included; anyone wishing to voice their comments can either email or reach out to the Planning Department.

Applicant (Chad Reynolds with Leggatt McCall and two colleagues) summarized redevelopment plan for Lot A and their progress to date. He confirmed:

- no intention to develop Lot B nor to impact Sunset Road.
- only emergency access will be off Forest Street.
- potentially they would do a conservation conveyance for Lot B to Winchester.

Mr. Szekely noted that the Town boundaries are not identified on all drawings, specifically on Sheet 5, top left corner. Applicant willing to add the notation to the documents.

Ms. Meister moved to sign the ANR as following recommendations of the Town Planner. Mr. Jerius seconded the Motion. No discussion. Vote: Meister, von Mering, Jerius, Hannon, Cregger in favor. 5-0-0 Motion passed. Applicant wrote in the boundary notification to Sheet 5. Planning Board signed the documents.

10-16 Mount Vernon Street:

Owner requested to speak on an addition proposed for 10-16 Mount Vernon Street, seeking comments from the Planning Board. John Leavitt, owner of 10-16 Mount Vernon Street and a Winchester resident, attended with Alvaro Lucena (architect) and John McConnell (exterior architect). Mr. Leavitt noted he wants to add a third floor while maintaining the architectural integrity of the structure, specifically an attic story, above the principal cornice line of the building. Mr. McConnell provided pictures of a few examples. The goal is to keep the integrity of the building, add an attic story, include windows, and use a different material (not brick; stucco maybe, and lighter in color). Historical pictures of street views were presented and reviewed, showing different pedestrian perspectives. Discussion followed:

- concern about height and impact on adjacent buildings.
- question about adjacent buildings adding a level to their structures.
- concern about the service area on the roof (for elevator shaft and roof access); even though set back from front, still visible from train station; preference to keep roof as clean as possible.
- concern about maintaining historical character of a National Register property.

Mr. Leavitt appreciated Planning Board feedback.

10 Converse Place:

Mr. Soughley for the 10 Converse Place project introduced the team. They are seeking input as a pre-application discussion.

Mr. Hacin outlined the site, acknowledged the Planning Board's recently identified goals and issues associated with the Town, described his architectural background and several similar projects.

Additional comments:

- everyone adds to the process; goal of ownership of all participants.
- process will include deep dive in community history; identification of Town elements; urban site analysis; meeting goals and guidelines of the Planning Board.

Mr. Beals continued discussing site conditions and planning review. He presented preliminary design block diagrams to study building options (4-story, 5-story, 6-story).

Discussion followed with Planning Board comments:

- appreciate the analysis and research to date.
- for the public use of land around building, more open space is better.
- enhance an already great center/community.
- most concern regarding design.
- want as much outdoor space (restaurants with seating, for example) and retail up to the street.
- underground parking is great.
- concern that roof line and character works with the adjacent and nearby buildings, treatments, fenestration, rhythm, scale.

- how handle peer review with consultant (Mr. Szekely addressing); recommendation to have one point of contact with Planning Board.
- preference to locate public space in back, and pull building to front near street for retail, allowing for larger back area.
- where would garage access be located? Preference not to use Converse Street for main access to building to avoid the “back of building” feeling.

Mr. Szekely also added his personal views: FAR of 3 is good; preference for 6 levels to provide more open green space; active retail on Mt. Vernon Street; open up Converse Street; current building is 62’.

Highland Ave. Guard Rail Redesign Request:

Ms. Rudolph provided a summary of this request from Mr. Miller, President, The Waterfield Design Group. The Abby Road project recently learned that their original guard rail design does not meet the AASHTO standards; the project requests approval to proceed with a new design that does comply. Ms. Rudolph indicated the original design is timber rails with steel posts. The new design is either all steel rails or steel backed timber rails with steel posts. Ms. Rudolph noted that the original design has been used in other Winchester street locations without issue and recommended remaining with the original design.

Ms. Meister motioned to keep the existing rail design. Ms. Cregger seconded the Motion. Discussion followed.

- safety concerns with weather, traffic.
- the railing runs along the entire road, not just the hammerhead.
- three options are possible: all timber rail (existing design), all steel rail, steel-backed timber rail.

Project representative spoke discussing the safety and liability concerns. Strong recommendation to go with the industry standard that are crash tested and approved. To maintain the aesthetic appearance, he supported the steel backed timber rails.

Ms. Meister withdrew her motion.

Ms. Cregger motioned to approve the design change to steel-backed timber rails with steel posts for the guard rail design for the Abby Street project, subject to engineering/planning review. Mr. Jerius seconded the Motion. Vote: Jerius, vonMering, Meister, Cregger, Hannon in favor. 5-0-0 Motion passes.

FY21 Budget Discussion/Goals and Objectives:

Mr. Szekely outlined the original proposal he made to the Town Manager:

- \$35k for professional services to support projects (open ended).
- \$40k for design professional (part time).
- remaining for full time Assistant Town Planner (FT ATP) position.

The Town Manager supports \$100k funding each year to implement the master plan, but not the \$40k for a design professional. Ms. Wong did support the other two items (FT ATP and \$35k for open ended projects). Discussion followed identifying needs and options:

- need more support in two areas: architectural design (housing projects) and economic development (master plan); challenging to find both abilities in one person or source
- currently have Town Planner (full time Town position) and consultant (part time independent contractor)
- reviewed potential needs: master plan, developments pending, potential projects, historical issues.

Concluded for budget plan/request: to include a full time Assistant Town Planner who is multiskilled if possible (historical, design, planning, urban, environmental, etc.) and an independent design consultant (architectural focus); request \$60k for each.

The discussion then focused on the \$100K open budget supported by the Town Manager. Main concern involved the time to access the funds; will it require Town Meeting approval?

Conclusions: Mr. Szekely will discuss with Town Manager

1. the mechanics of accessing the funds (process).
2. recommend that the line item be titled "implementation of master plan".
3. suggest establishing a master plan implementation committee who would then manage the budget.

Chair von Mering noted that the Planning Board needed a representative for the Waterfield RFQ/Selection Committee. Ms. Hannon volunteered.

Chair von Mering excused herself and left the meeting at 10:00 pm. Ms. Hannon served as chair for the remaining agenda item.

19-35 River Street 40B (Architecture and Design Discussion):

Mr. Szekely presented the proposed architectural design of the developer, including the elevations/perspectives. Zoning Board of Appeals requests comments from the Planning Board.

Discussion with following comments:

- façade is an improvement but still not attractive.
- concern with impact on neighbors; do not see any improvement on mitigating impact to single family home.
- recommend stepping-down the façade to reduce the mass.
- limited green space.
- concern with height (too tall).
- recommend flat roof; sloped roof is inappropriate for a building this long.
- are roof-top amenities open to all residents?
- it appears the building sits within the set-back limits along the front.
- the playground appears too small for the size of the development and is located too close to the parking lot.

Mr. Szekely noted he would forward these comments to the Zoning Board of Appeals.

Ms. Meister moved to adjourn the Planning Board meeting. Ms. Cregger seconded the Motion. Vote: Meister, Cregger, Hannon, Jerius in favor. Von Mering absent. 4-0-0 Motion passes.

Heather Hannon, Clerk

Nancy Polcari, Recording Secretary