



Planning Board Meeting Minutes
Tuesday, February 11, 2020 at 7:30 pm
The Winchester Room, Winchester Town Hall

Members Present:	Heather von Mering (chair)	Diab Jerius
	Maureen Meister	Elizabeth (Betsy) Cregger
Members Absent:	Heather Hannon (vice chair, clerk)	
Also Present:	Brian Szekely, Town Planner	Beth Rudolph, Town Engineer
	Jillian Bargar, representative, Town Counsel	Jamie Devol
Others Attending:	Paul Soughley, Ad Meliora (owner/developer)	Nina Parker
	David Hacin, Hacin + Associates (architect)	Dawn Piccolo
	David Tabenken, Hacin + Associates (architect)	Diom O'Connell
	Evelyne Astier-Ibrahim	
	Craig Miller, Five Points Development	
	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 7:37 pm. Chair von Mering noted with apologies that the January 28th video by WinCam did not have sound. Tonight's meeting is being video recorded by WinCam.

Updates:

Mr. Szekely discussed the backlog of unfinished subdivision close-outs with following comments:

- involves mostly Planning, Engineering, Legal.
- most occurring between 1980 and 2005.
- no policy on file; he is working with legal to develop one.
- the two currently in process are Williams Circle and Magnolia Way.

Local Historic District (LHD) study committee issued an on-line survey to property owners and members in the district. About 50% noted "it is a good idea" but enthusiasm is low. Current plan is to summarize the work/findings with Select Board (SB). Suggestion made to schedule at a future PB meeting to allow more time and include SB.

Mr. Szekely provided an update on the neglected/abandoned house on Johnson Road. He sent a letter to Attorney General Maura Healy and awaits a response. After discussing, he will talk with legal to see what other options might exist.

Mr. Szekely provided an update on the MBTA project. Bid documents are expected to go out in May with construction scheduled for Fall 2020. The estimate based on the 90% design documents is currently \$5M overbudget (on a \$50M project); the MBTA is making cuts. Discussion included concern for the lighting under the viaduct to make it safe and welcoming without creating any light pollution to neighbors.

Chair von Mering noted that the Town Manager has approved the full time Assistant Town Planner position reporting to Mr. Szekely. PB members to forward comments on the job description.

10 Converse Place Redevelopment Discussion:

Mr. Hacin, with Mr. Soughley and Mr. Tabeken, presented the progress of their 10 Converse Place project:

- Summarized the primary “take-aways” from the previous PB presentation/discussion including: town values open space, FAR of 3.0, stay under 70’ height, outdoor space important, retail at ground level along Mt. Vernon Street, make Converse Street part of the “Town fabric”, site access from Main Street important, pedestrian views important.
- Today’s goal: present three different “massing concepts” and seek PB feedback, ideally selecting one.
- Presented three concepts, all included a 6-story structure: urban edge, soft edge, figural edge.

Discussion:

- Suggestion to have Design Review Committee provide comments.
- What happens on the top floor?
- Will there be shadow studies?
- Jamie Devol, 7 Dix Terrace resident: questioned the height as it relates to the existing building; wants to hide any mechanical equipment; suggested having three smaller buildings. Mr. Hacin responded that with the current guidelines, three smaller buildings would not provide enough square feet and the current building’s floor-to-floor heights are too tall.
- Nina Parker, 26-year office tenant at Converse Place: questioned the impact to the wildlife and will there be something to mitigate the floods, for the new building as well as the nearby businesses. Mr. Hacin noted that the added green space will support and promote wildlife. He also stated that the flooding concern will be included in the design, that he has had to address flooding and water issues in many of his past Boston projects, and that they will study flooding in the area to be able to provide a complete answer.
- Dawn Piccolo, 10 Winchester Place resident: questioned whether the parking will be for residents only or restaurant users too? Mr. Hacin indicated that he is not sure yet but recognizes the importance of parking.
- Evelyne Astier-Ibrahim, 20-year dental office tenant at Converse Place: raised a concern about the schedule of this project and that no one has communicated with the tenants about what is happening. Chair von Mering noted the PB is not the forum for tenant-owner communications and identified the review process.
- Diom O’Connell, Bacon Street resident: raised concerns about the 70’ height/mass being much bigger than the existing building, the potential to create a “wall effect”, and the importance of keeping the outdoor spaces communal (not private, just for the residents).

PB Comments:

- The PB acknowledged the competition for commercial vs retail space; needs to be a balance.
- The stepping-back the building floors will allow for private terraces.
- Prefer separate entrances for resident parking vs commercial.
- Preference among PB for figural edge option, but not with the variety of edges (curved, flat, jagged).
- Architecture needs to respect Town Hall, especially with the proposed height.
- Prefer no flat roofs.
- Open to car lifts.
- Parking for commercial is important.

Mr. Hacin noted his appreciation for PB comments; this is an advisory process. He proposed two more meetings with the PB to continue discussions on their design progress. PB suggested having the Historical Commission and Design Review Committee at the next presentation.

Abby Road Subdivision:

Mr. Szekely provided a summary of the subdivision project, referencing his memo of February 11, 2020. The applicant is seeking release of all five lots from subdivision control, and to set-up a tripartite agreement (bank, town, applicant) and bond to begin the close-out process. Engineering, Legal and Planning have reviewed the documents; Engineering performed a site visit. Ms. Rudolph provided details from her memo dated February 6, 2020, outlining the status of work in relation to the Development Agreement. Discussion:

- Location of infiltration and easements did not line up; need to be corrected.
- Tripartite agreement needs to be in place.
- Bond needs to be reviewed by outside consultant regarding the cost estimates.
- Catch basins, sewer manholes and as-builts need work to be considered complete.
- Need to confirm the developer does the work and Town retain funds to cover work not completed.
- Not yet at “substantial completion”.

Ms. Rudolph noted that Planning, Engineering and Legal met with the applicant to review the outstanding items. No lots should be released until the findings have been completed.

Mr. Miller, Five Points Development (the applicant): currently working on the list and will have it completed within the next two weeks. Must wait on: curbing and drainage on Highland Avenue and final paving (subject to Town moratorium).

Next PB meeting to revisit the Applicant’s request is March 17th.

Mr. Jerius moved to authorize Engineering to hire an outside consultant to provide a cost estimate/review as needed for a bond and other related tasks identified by Engineering. Ms. Meister second the Motion. Vote: von Mering, Jerius, Meister, Cregger in favor. Hannon absent. 4-0-0 Motion passes.

Ms. Cregger moved to continue PB meeting in Executive Session. Ms. Meister second the Motion. Vote: von Mering, Meister, Jerius, Cregger in favor. Hannon absent. 4-0-0 Motion passes.

Heather Hannon, Chair

Nancy Polcari, Recording Secretary