



Planning Board Meeting Minutes
Tuesday, March 8, 2022, at 7:00 pm – Zoom Meeting

Members Present:	Diab Jerius, Chair	Sally Dale, Vice Chair/Clerk	
	I-Ching Scott	Cheryl Wolfe	
	Kurt Spring		
Also Present:	Brian Szekely, Town Planner	Bryan Manter, Asst. Town Engineer	
	Mina Makarious, Town Counsel	WinCam	
	Nancy Polcari, Recording Secretary		
Others Attending:	Ian Gillespie	Jamie Devol	David Tabenken
	Jan Steenbrugge	John Suhrbier	Tara Doubman
	Maura Sullivan	Deborah Johnson	Jeff Calabrese
	Ellen Spencer	Fred Spencer	William Foucher
	Philip Chen	Charlene Band	Michael Bettencourt
	Lee Wooten	Denis Fullerton	Jon French
	Nabil Ibrahim	Richard Leaf	Diom O'Connell
	Joe Martignetti	Frank Fantasia	Rosalyn Nazzaro
	Philip Vita	Reed Pugh	Zenia Marchant
	Dylan Forester	Paul	Harry
	Rob		

A quorum being in attendance, Chair Jerius calls the Winchester Planning Board (PB) meeting to order at 7:01 pm, noting that the meeting is being video recorded via WinCam and Zoom. Roll call of PB members: Dale, Scott, Spring, Wolfe, Jerius in attendance.

1. Public Hearing for 10 Converse Place Special Permit CBD Petition #14 Continued:

Chair Jerius: Opened the Public Hearing for 10 Converse Place Special Permit. Today's focus is to finish reviewing comments, specifically from Engineering; those from the Sustainability Director will be available next week. Mr. Chen has also provided recommended conditions to the permit.

Mr. Manter: Submitted comments and many have been addressed; the Developer has indicated any remaining will be addressed in the future and will work with Engineering to finalize the details.

Chair Jerius: PB sent a list of comments/questions to the Developer and have received their response.

PB Comments/Questions:

- What is the process? Many items are noted that they say will be addressed. Should these be conditions?

Mr. Makarious: Best to answer now if possible. If not, recommend adding language in the conditions "to the satisfaction of the town". Also, set the parameters to meet the design guidelines. The conditions need to be specific enough to enable the Building Inspector to meet the guidelines.

- How can the Town be assured that the green space will remain open to the public? The occupants might decide to put limits on the use of that space in the future.

Mr. Makarious: Make it a condition of the permit and put it under the Town Manager, making it flexible enough to avoid having to return to the PB. Make a policy on how the area is to be used as a balance between the condo association and the Town.

Mr. Chen: Presented his list of conditions for the permit, noting many of these items relate to late and/or less developed areas.

PB Deliberations:

Chair Jerius: Provided the introduction to this part of the process and started with the Special Permit Criteria (Section 9.4.2).

1. Community needs are served by this proposal.

Ms. Wolfe: Meets the need for housing, the most important aspect of this project.

Mr. Spring: In addition, it contributes to the economic vitality of our downtown and provides more parking than that required in a location that is not visible (underground).

Ms. Scott: Housing is the most important community need. It also adds diversity and provides access to transit. The building is a good example of sustainability.

Chair Jerius: Housing is most important and returning the Mill Pond access to the public. Praised the addition of 3-bedroom units as affordable.

Ms. Dale: It is important to add housing units to the town. But is it possible to increase the numbers? Not comfortable with the robotic parking. Concerned whether the bike path will serve the needs of the community. Also concerned that the building will block the view of the Mill Pond, taking away from the community. A narrower building would allow for the watershed views.

2. Traffic Flow, Safety, Parking, Loading.

Ms. Wolfe: There is always work to be done. Like the way Converse Place will come to life and the downtown feel on Mt. Vernon Street. The bike path is a new traffic area to consider. This project will improve the way we live. Parking is a wider problem downtown.

Mr. Spring: Concur with Ms. Wolfe. The parking provided is more than required, an additional benefit.

Ms. Scott: Commended the designers for the innovative parking elevator solution. Also agree that there is a need to address the bike path at the pinch point.

Chair Jerius: Concerned about Converse Place. There are reasonable ways to accommodate the parking and other activities. Questioned how to accommodate electric vehicles in the garage. Also concerned about safety on the bike path.

Ms. Dale: Concerned with the loading of vehicles in the parking garage especially regarding the other activities on Converse Place.

Mr. Szekely: Provided a visual of a proposed solution for Converse Place that moved the drop-off area.

3. Adequacy of Utilities and Public Services.

Ms. Wolfe: Applicant has addressed the utilities. Screening of the mechanical equipment should be a condition.

Mr. Szekely: This is one of the items with Engineering.

Mr. Spring: Noted that the applicant is pursuing all-electric, making it a "green" building.

Ms. Scott: Concurred with previous comments.

Chair Jerius: Requested the ability to add photovoltaic panels to the roof and electric vehicle charging stations in the garage.

Ms. Dale: Asked about access for fire trucks to the east and south sides of the building.

4. Impacts on Neighborhood Character.

Ms. Wolfe: The design concept addresses the neighborhood character. The materials are appropriate for downtown. She is 100% behind this design.

Mr. Spring: Referring to Mr. Chen's report, concurred that the function and scale are successful for this site, keeping in mind the future and the vision for downtown.

Ms. Scott: The materials match the existing area. The designers have minimized the scale. It will be initially out of scale. It has a contemporary look for the time.

Chair Jerius: This melds the old and the new. It adds visual character and has a richness of detail. The brick fits with downtown. This area is zoned for a large building. It is not out of scale for what is proposed and what the zoning intends to accomplish. This is the first large building. Would like to see the building narrower to accommodate the bike path and the watershed view corridor.

Ms. Dale: There are large sheer 3-story facades that contribute to the height of the building. Would like the height to drop to four stories. The materials work. The top floor is chaotic. The scale is too big for our town.

Mr. Spring moved to continue the Public Hearing for 10 Converse Place Special Permit CBD Petition #14 to Tuesday, March 15, 2022, at 7:00 pm. Ms. Wolfe second the Motion. Vote: Dale, Scott, Spring, Wolfe, Jerius in favor. Motion passes 5-0-0.

2. Executive Session:

Ms. Scott moved to continue the PB meeting in Executive Session. Ms. Wolfe second the Motion. Vote: Dale, Scott, Spring, Wolfe, Jerius in favor. Motion passes 5-0-0. Open Session of PB Meeting ended at 9:11 pm.

Sally Dale, Clerk

Nancy Polcari, Recording Secretary