



Planning Board Meeting
Monday March 10, 2008, 7:00 p.m.
City Council Chambers, City Hall, Claremont, NH

Meeting Minutes
Approved 3/24/2008

Meeting Called to order by Chair Alan Grigsby at 7:05 pm.

I. Roll Call

Present: Richard Wahrlich, Peter Guillette, Paul LaCasse, Andy Austin, Alan Grigsby, Lori Richardson, Russell Fowler, Erwin Caplan

City Staff: Jerry Coogan, City Planner; Allan Britton, Director of Planning & Development; Michelle Aiken, Boards and Commissions Coordinator

Absent: Mayor Deborah Cutts

II. Minutes of February 11, 2008 Public Meeting Minutes

Motion to: Approve the February 11, 2008 meeting minutes as amended

Made by: Mr. Guillette **Second:** Ms. Richardson **Vote:** Unanimous

III. New Business

- **(PL2008-00004) Jerome Doolittle, 152 Washington Street, Claremont NH 03746** – Applicant desires Site Plan approval to convert a vacant storage building into retail and storage space on the corner of **North Street and Elm Street**, Tax Map 107 Lot 287; Zone B-1.5. Property Owner of Record McCusker Stringer Funeral Home.

Mr. Coogan advised that Mr. Doolittle is located at the Imperial Buffett on Washington Street and his intention is to purchase the property at North and Elm. This site has a 744sqft building. He will keep the building that is on site and add space for a 2900sqft building for a total of 3600sqft building. This has gone through the TRC and one of the recommendations from DPW that the driveway be moved further down Elm Street away from North Street as much as possible. There will be more landscaping, any excess drainage will flow into the city's drainage system, City sewer on site. They will work with the Fire Dept to meet fire protection requirements and there are standards for handling chemicals. The parking requirement is for 8 spaces which is provided. The parking area will have an apron area that is paved and the other area would be blue stone. The City will require security for the project in terms of entrance, landscaping and the paved area.

Ms. Richardson asked what is required for security. Mr. Coogan advised that a bond or letter of credit be required to make sure that the improvements are completed. Mr. Guillette asked if the entrance as requested by DPW is different than what is shown on the plan. Mr. Coogan advised that DPW recommended it be moved further down Elm Street and is reflected on the plan.

Motion to: accept application as complete

Made by: Mr. Fowler **Second:** Mr. Guillette **Vote:** Unanimous

Mr. Mark Thompson from Daniels Construction Company presented the plan for the applicant. They are going to leave the structure and remove the existing roof system and then add the addition. They are using blue stone for the driveway for cost savings and they will be using concrete bumpers and they will have a free standing handicapped sign. There is a fair amount of landscaping already and they will be adding more. They will re-use the existing sign system with Mr. Doolittle's current sign. Mr. Thompson provided elevations of the proposed building.

Mr. Thompson pointed out on the plan where the additional shrubbery and trees will be planted. Mr. Doolittle's plan is to snow blow the snow which will keep the blue stone in the driveway and off the road and grass.

Mr. Lacasse asked what the elevation was for the handicapped rise. Mr. Thompson advised that there will be an apron and a slope for the handicapped area and they will mark the area with a freestanding sign. Ms. Richardson asked where the front entrance is. Mr. Thompson advised it is on the East side of the building. Mr. Fowler is happy that the entrance on Elm Street is being moved and he is comfortable with the blue stone as long as the bumper stops are installed. Mr. Austin asked if there would be any employees. Mr. Doolittle has stated that there are usually no more than 4 employees. Chair Grigsby asked if the double door left of the main entrance is going to be used for loading supplies and materials and Mr. Thompson confirmed. Mr. Lacasse asked what the amount of traffic is at the site Mr. Thompson advised that it is usually no more than 2 or 3 customers at a time.

Open Public Hearing – Abutter Gary Neil present

Mr. Gary Neil advised he is an abutter to the property and provided some visuals for the board. He advised his only concern is the proximity to the property line. He is concerned with how close the building would be to his property and his house. He is worried about the view. Mr. Neil showed a photo of his bay window that will look out onto this new building they are proposing.

Chair Grigsby asked if the setbacks were being followed. Mr. Coogan advised that the requirement is 25ft and the building department will make sure they follow that. This property is in the B-1.5 district and the City asked the applicant to add as much landscaping as he could and to speak with Mr. Neil because we knew that he had concerns. Mr. Coogan advised that this property is in the B-1.5 zone which is a transition zone of residential to business and the City requests landscaping in the B-1.5 zone when possible.

Mr. Neil is worried that he is going to have to give up his view. Mr. Neil asked if the building would be a wooden or brick building. Mr. Thompson advised that the building would be made of wood with siding and stained.

Closed Public Hearing

Mr. Fowler asked if they are allowed to consider the neighbors view. Mr. Grigsby advised that he does not believe it is within the boards' ability. Mr. Grigsby advised that he is concerned with the blue stone and feels that paving is better.

Mr. Austin commented to Mr. Neil that his property definitely compliments the City and this building may help shield him from all the traffic that is going to be generated. Ms. Richardson asked why they are moving. Chair Grigsby is under the impression that they would like their own property and complete an expansion.

Mr. Lacasse asked if it could be clap boarded instead since most of the buildings in the area are clapboard. Mr. Lacasse and board engaged in a conversation of maybe moving the building back further away from North Street. Chair Grigsby advised that this is probably as far back as the building and parking area can be placed.

Ms. Richardson asked what type of roof it would be. Mr. Thompson advised that it will a shingled roof.

Mr. Coogan advised that he thinks that the board could make a request that clap board be used although the City lacks design guidelines so the applicant can choose whether or not they want to do so.

Chair Grigsby asked if the regulations allow the board to ask for the area to be paved. Mr. Coogan advised that the regulations require a hard packed surface which could be paving, blue stone or gravel. Mr. Fowler wanted to be sure that there is enough blue stone there that there will be a hard packed surface and wanted to know how much blue stone would be installed.

Mr. Wahrlich asked what kind of guttering they will be using and wanted to make sure that it will not be impeding the growth of the hedges. Mr. Thompson advised that they will not be used any gutters. The site is so flat that it is hard to create even a 1% grade and runoff will find its way to the City storm drains. T1-11 is not his first choice of siding but with the character of the color and format will be attractively decorated. There is a lot of shape going on with the building, being T-shaped etc. Mr. Doolittle has been at his current site for 14 years and the facility is kept in impeccable shape. He will keep this property in the same condition. To answer Mr. Fowlers question regarding the blue stone there is silty sand there that is a well drained material and there will be 6" of crushed gravel and 4" blue stone. Mr. Austin asked what size fuel tank they will be using. Mr. Thompson advised that they have changed to a fuel oiled boiler and the oil will be kept in the building.

Mr. Lacasse wants to make sure that the signage is within the zoning requirements. Mr. Coogan advised that they were not requesting a larger sign, but will be required to meet the City Sign Ordinance.

Motion to: approve the plan as presented and the applicant provide security and to make sure that best management practices for chemicals are followed

Made by: Mr. Austin

Second: Mr. Fowler

Vote: Passed – 6-2

Mr. Wahrlich – Aye

Mr. Guillette – Aye

Mr. LaCasse – Aye

Mr. Austin - Aye

Mr. Grigsby – Nay

Ms. Richardson – Aye

Mr. Fowler – Aye

Mr. Caplan - Nay

○ **Request for Waiver of Site Plan Review from the Claremont Soup Kitchen**

Mr. Coogan advised that the Soup Kitchen is being evicted from their current location at St. Mary's Church and they found space at the Knights of Columbus Hall on Central Street and they would like to purchase it and rehab it. They would like to be waived from Site Plan review. The Soup Kitchen will make the same request because the use will be similar to what it is currently and he has been advised that many of the people will walk or be dropped off.

Mr. Bob Haight, an architect working with the Soup Kitchen, made the request for a Site Plan waiver. They would like to have more space; the soup kitchen provides one meal a day at the dinner hour, 5 days a week. They currently seat 35 people in their current location and they would like the program to grow and it is the match of the need and donations and contributions that they get. One of the reasons it works for them is that many of the people live in the neighborhood. Most walk and if any do drive it would only be a few. They are making virtually no changes to the site plan; they will be adding an emergency exit. They have shown 20 parking spaces and as far as restaurant parking requirements if they had 50 seats they would be required to have 1 for every 4 which would be 12 or 13 spaces.

Ms. Bunnell advised that there are approximately 5 staff members, 4 are part time and Ms. Jan Bunnell is the only full time. They are now operating 4 days a week and they are hoping to go to 5 days a week and most people they serve are walkers. They really have never used that many spaces at all in their current location. Mr. Haight advised that the main reason is that they are requesting a waiver is that they are not changing the structure and the current owner has used it for weddings, etc. on a less current basis, but the building itself could house up to 180 people and they are not even coming close to having anything like that.

Chair Grigsby asked if they anticipate renting the hall out. Ms. Bunnell advised that at Christmas and Thanksgiving they do have a large dinner and they have used this hall just for that and never had a parking problem. Renting the hall out would interfere with what they are trying to accomplish. They serve an evening meal at 4-5:30 M-F, even at Christmas and Thanksgiving.

Mr. Lacasse asked if there are plans for making the area handicapped accessible. Mr. Haight advised that it would be handicapped accessible on the first floor and they will also install a wheel chair ramp. Downstairs is the food shelf which will not be handicapped accessible and were advised by the access board in Concord that they do not have to make this accessible for the handicapped.

Motion to: approve the request for a site plan waiver

Made by: Mr. Fowler

Second: Mr. Guillette

Vote: unanimous

○ **In Accordance with NHRSA 674:4 Master Plan Adoption and Amendment, the Planning Board will consider adoption of the two sections of the Master Plan; Vision Section and Land Use Chapter, including the Land Use Action Plan and Land Use Maps.**

Mr. Grigsby advised that he is disappointed that there is no one here to discuss the Master Plan. The plan is on the City website and he wants to have people look at it and give the board some feedback. Chair Grigsby is interested in continuing this public hearing if the rest of the board agrees so that they can get more public participation.

Mr. Coogan provided a handout to show process and how many meetings the Master Plan Advisory Committee had. The document has been around since October 2007. The MPAC was established in January 2007. Appledore Engineering, UVLSRPC, and UNH Cooperative Extension assisted and there have been 3 public forums with great participation. Most everyone felt comfortable with the vision statement. In July, a community survey was initiated. The first draft of the Master Plan came out in October and public comments were solicited until the end of December. The MPAC met in December and January and finalized the land use map in February. A presentation was provided in January with a power point presentation. A lot of work has gone into the plan and it has been fine tuned and tweaked it to reflect Claremont's future needs and the ability for Claremont to grow in the next 5 to 10 years.

Chair Grigsby advised that he looked through his paperwork and he has information from Mr. Coogan dating back in 2004. Mr. Coogan has really been working on this since 2004 and he would like to thank Mr. Coogan for being a part of this for so long.

Open public hearing

Mr. Bernie Folta advised that he is a member of the Master Plan Advisory Committee. Mr. Folta had lightly mentioned to the MPAC that he was concerned with the format, towards the end there was more concern with getting the map satisfactory to all concerned. The land use chapter includes the land use and the visioning and he realized that for contract reasons the consultants worked on those pieces. He would like to recommend that those two items should not be packaged in the same chapter. Mr. Folta passed out examples of how other communities do their Master Plans. Mr. Folta advised that most communities don't do it that way.

Mr. Coogan advised that the City did it this way because these two areas, Land Use and Vision Statement are two requirements and due to limited funding. Under State Law, communities have latitude in how they complete the Master Plan and they felt it was a cost efficient way.

Mr. Folta advised that his issue is not with how it was done but how it is packaged going forward. In our Master Plan land use is chapter 2 and Lebanon's is chapter 12. There is demographic information in the land use chapter that he feels belongs in its own chapter. He is recommending that some of this information be pulled out for a demographic chapter. Because of the contract and the work, the visioning work was included in the land use chapter and others have made them separate chapters.

Chair Grigsby asked what the material gain is if we break these areas apart. Mr. Folta advised that it would make it more understandable and more accessible. Ms. Richardson agreed with Mr. Folta and finds it hard to dig through the Master Plan to find what she is really interested in. Mr. Austin advised that he agrees also that it is critical that we put land use in our first chapter since the land in Claremont is so important.

Mr. Folta advised that the action plan could also be broken out into a separate chapter. His suggestion is not to change the content, just change the format so that the visioning, demographics without consultants and maybe land use and an action plan their own chapters to make it is easier to read. He also knows that the MPAC has talked about future chapters and he hopes that they continue with the work they are doing.

Mr. Folta passed out a copy of Lebanon's strategic plan which serves as a supplement to their Master Plan, although he is not sure how this will fit into the Master Plan. The strategic plan refers to why the master plan matters, state law and it helps articulate why it is useful and necessary. Mr. Folta suggested that the Master Plan be separated into more normal and accessible chapters.

Chair Grigsby read an email received from James Ward who suggests encouraging smaller shops, and office commercial uses mixed with residence's in the core area and licensing.

Mr. Grigsby read a letter from Michael Grace who is the librarian which noted that the Fiske Free Library was left out. This has been remedied and is now included in the Master Plan in appendix D. The library is small and would need to grow to meet the demands of the future.

Mr. Grigsby read a letter from James Sullivan regarding zoning changes as suggested in the Master Plan.

Mr. Wahrlich advised he was on the MPAC and he liked how they went about creating this chapter. There were so many people involved and the more we look at it as a living document there are other things they can look at and add. He feels

that it has a good flow to it and he advocates keeping the document active and keeping it going to the people. He feels that the MPAC should keep working on the other chapters. Chair Grigsby advised that he feels that the board should also go through the chapter but he feels that maybe they should talk about what is next.

Mr. Caplan advised that he feels that it would help to have income generated above the first floor in the downtown area. Mr. Grigsby advised that in the chapter it does discuss generating income above the first floor. Chair Grigsby talked about a discussion he had with Jack Mettee of Appledore who advised that he did put smart growth techniques into the chapter. Mr. Grigsby felt that a closer look should be taken to some of the philosophies of the consultant.

Mr. Wahrlich advised the information in the Master Plan was taken from the public input, the consultant did not just write it the way he wanted, he took the information from the public forums, the surveys, etc.

Discussion among board members on the Master Plan process and Zoning changes. Chair Grigsby felt that everyone should make notes on their copy and go through all their questions before the plan is approved. Mr. Wahrlich felt that the board could accept it as it is now and it is a living document so we can make changes as needed. He feels that the board should determine what should be done next. Chair Grigsby felt that the board needs to go through the chapter before it goes to the public.

Mr. Austin advised after reading the Land Use chapter it contains suggestions on how to improve the City's condition. Most of it states that this is how the community could be better. Chair Grigsby felt that the consultant's opinion is throughout the document and he wants to look at it before it is passed through. Mr. Coogan expressed that the consultant didn't just make this information up from his own opinion; he attended all three forums, he reviewed the survey, talked to staff, board members and citizens and this is a compilation of what came out over a 6 month period and he used his own professional judgment having worked in a number of communities.

Mr. Austin felt that he would like to make a motion to approve the plan and change it as needed. Chair Grigsby felt that there should be more public input. Mr. Wahrlich advised that they have been told by the UNH Cooperative Extension that the City of Claremont has more public input than in other communities and he would second that motion in order to keep this going.

Chair Grigsby advised that he would not accept that motion but consider it a discussion as to whether or not there should be a motion.

Mr. Lacasse advised that he has been to some of the sessions and he is still not happy with everything in the plan and would like to discuss the plan further. Chair Grigsby advised that he has some areas he would like to discuss.

Mr. Folta felt that the opportunity for public input should be maximized.

IV. Correspondence

- Forest Management Public Forum
- OEP – Spring Planning and Zoning Conference
- Chapter 672 – General Provisions
- Notice of Decision for Tyler Mills Real Estate
- Notice of Decision for Claremont Parks & Recreation Skate Park Site Plan
- 700 Main Street Letter to Mr. Kevin LaCasse regarding Site Plan requirements
- Housing and Conservation Planning Program Grants
- Information on Open Space Development – American Planning Association and Draft OEP Conservation Subdivision Ordinance
- Consequences of Land Use Policy: Why and how NH communities can grow smart presentation March 18, 2007

V. Adjournment

Motion to: Adjourn

Made by: Mr. Lacasse **Second:** Ms. Richardson **Vote:** Unanimous

Meeting Adjourned at: 9:07 pm

Respectfully Submitted,

Michelle Aiken
Boards and Commissions Coordinator