



**Joint Planning Board, Zoning Board
& Conservation Commission Meeting**

Monday June 9, 2008, 7:00 p.m.
City Council Chambers, City Hall, Claremont, NH

Meeting Minutes
Approved July 14, 2008

Meeting Called to order by Planning Board Chair Alan Grigsby at 7:02 pm

- I. Roll Call PB** – Chair Alan Grigsby, Vice Chair Lori Richardson, Richard Wahrlich, Peter Guillette, Paul LaCasse, Mayor Deborah Cutts, Erwin Caplan, Brian Rapp, Adam Burke, Andy Austin **Absent:** None
- Roll Call ZBA** – Chair Michael Hurd, Vice Chairperson Robert Woodman, Jim Hanson, Carolyn Towle, Pierre Caouette **Absent:** Ed Friedman
- Roll Call CC** – Chair Steve Wood, Vice Chairperson Robert Woodman, Russell Fowler, Mayor Deborah Cutts, Dianne Raymond **Absent:** Dennis Osgood
- City Staff:** Eric Giles, City Planner; Allan Britton, Director of Planning & Development; Michelle Aiken, Boards & Commissions Coordinator

Chair Grigsby introduced a new member to the Planning Board Mr. Adam Burke. Chair Grigsby also advised that they have a full board although are still looking for alternates.

II. Preliminary Discussion

- o **New Community Center for Claremont, Inc** – Preliminary hearing

Mr. John Napsey thanked all the boards for attending tonight. He is hoping everyone is up to date as to where they are. They came to be where they are now by speaking with the board of trustees at Claremont Savings Bank in regards to their commitment to a Community Center. They announced a \$3 Million pledge with land on the corner of Broad Street and South Street. The requirement of their gift was that they were to use that piece of property for the Community Center and that is how they got to this process. They have also purchased two pieces of property next to it belonging to the same people, one is a parcel with a single family house and the other is a vacant lot.

Mr. Hunter Ulf, an architect/principal with UK Architect and Mr. Chris Kennedy also an architect/principal of UK architects presented a power point slide show describing the process by which they have come to choose this site. Mr. Ulf advised they became involved with looking for a site for the Community Center about 5 years ago. They looked at several city owned sites, park sites, etc and when this site came forward they had been involved long enough to know this was the appropriate site. The site is at the top of Broad Street and in between the Middle School and the High school. It is also across from the Technical School and there is great proximity to Arrowhead ski area, Monadnock Park and the Rail Trail. The positioning of the site among other community amenities and assets couldn't be better; it makes it very accessible to school children and neighborhood. The site is right up against the rail trail and in front of the Middle School. The site does wrap around another residential site.

Mr. Ulf advised the site drops off steeply on the Broad Street side and there is an area in the NW corner that is designated wetlands. The thought is that there is some drainage creating the wetlands area. The corner of Broad and South Street is the flattest and along the back area it drops off at a 14ft difference in elevation. In thinking about how to place a building on the site they provided a concept plan that shows the layout of the building wrapping around the wetlands area that was created by Civil Engineers and Landscape Architects. They are making use of all the flat area on the Eastern part of the site for parking and the parking count is 125-150 spaces. They feel that the number of spaces on the plan falls short for this facility, but there is a large parking lot for shared parking at the Middle School. It probably will not reach the capacity of this lot, but after school hours you can see an increased demand for parking and they would be able to use some of the existing parking around the street. They are trying not to create more impervious surface and making use of some parking that is adjacent to the site. The facility is approaching 45k sqft with 2½ stories. The building encroaches into the setbacks of this site on Broad Street and South Street. There are two reasons for this placement, it is an important

civic structure that should engage the community and it mimics other buildings in the City and the building needs to hold a prominent visible location and they are trying to avoid the wetlands as much as possible. There is a parcel of land that is City property and the thought was that if this parcel could be used then it would provide them with a 35ft setback and would be 5ft from the southern lot line and 15ft from South Street. The adjacency to the street on South Street would create a campus environment.

Mr. Chris Kennedy explained they have been working on the building and he wanted to let the boards know what the use of the building would be and why people would be coming here. On the lower floor there will be an aquatics center with a 25m pool with 6 lanes that could be a competitive pool for swim meets. There will be an on deck play/splash area, a recreational amenity. There will be locker rooms, family storage area, a pool office, a small activities room. They are considering a walk out area on the back of the pool, maybe a garden area.

Mr. Kennedy explained the layout of the main entry floor which would have an entrance on South Street. There is an aerobics/exercise area, and full size basketball court. The main entrance will also have a larger community room for meetings, receptions, etc. as well as a babysitting area, a lounge area, check in desk, office and a small kitchenette. There is an upper floor that would have a suspended track, open cardio fitness area, weight training area and a mechanical space.

There is a retaining wall in front of the wetlands area that is flattened out for a tent area for various activities. There is also access here to the Rail Trail. The impact to the wetlands would be less than 3000 sqft so the idea would be to minimize the construction impact on the wetlands and that works well if they are able to push the building forward and right up to the property line. There are approximately 3 zoning issues: setbacks, the potential merger of a portion of the adjacent property and the parking would be less than what zoning allows, although they could work with the school for shared parking. They are using green and sustainable aspects in their plan and trying not to pave over more area than necessary, staying out of the wetlands and maximizing the space.

Chair Grigsby explained that this is not currently a City project and they will not be voting on anything at this time just asking questions.

Chair Grigsby asked what happens to the current Community Center facility. Mr. Napsey advised that the property is still owned by the City. Their choice would be to sell the property to help fund the new facility, in the form of building the project or in the form of an endowment since they would probably be using the old facility right up until the date of the new facility opening. This facility when completed will be a non-profit group called N3C would give the Community Center and parcel to the City to be managed by the Parks & Recreation Department.

Ms. Richardson asked how far the parking falls short. Mr. Kennedy advised they have not determined an exact number because it is not in the Zoning Ordinance. They will be working with the Zoning Administrator but they know that they will fall short at times. Mr. Ulf advised they have also made accommodations for pedestrian, bicycle access and walking etc. Mr. Napsey mentioned the proximity to arrowhead which is under utilized and there is parking behind the technical center, there is parking at the middle school and they have a preliminary parking agreement with the school.

Chair Grigsby asked about the school's parking entrances and if they would be reconfigured as it appears in their plan. Mr. Napsey advised that they are not sure and do not want to dictate what is done with property they do not own but they are concerned with the pedestrian access. Chair Grigsby asked if their plan put sidewalks down Broad Street and South Street. Mr. Napsey advised there are already sidewalks on Broad Street and it goes down to the rail road bed.

Mr. Hanson asked about purchasing the adjacent parcel. Mr. Napsey advised they have had preliminary discussions with the homeowner although they do not feel that there is a need for that particular property. Mr. Caouette asked if there is any consideration for a trail crossing the property for ATVs from Arrowhead through South Street. Todd Menees is a Civil Engineer with Engineering Ventures on the project and they have looked at maintaining the traffic use of motorized vehicles on the rail or going across to Arrowhead. They are trying not to do too many offsite improvements since this is a project that is going to be given back to the City. They have had to try to figure out how to make it viable with all the needs of Claremont and how this is going to be worked out is where they are now. They are at a point where they have worked out a lot of different issues and now they are trying to get feedback on these issues. The thought was that the parking spaces closest to the residential home would be used as the trail. Mr. Caouette advised that if that is used as the trail you will want to be sure that it is wide enough for a groomer to pass through. Mr. Hurd advised that picks from snowmobiles could tear up the parking lot.

Mr. Hurd is concerned with where snow removal is going to go and if the acquisition of the city property along Broad Street is done what would that dimension be. Mr. Ulf advised it would be 10ft from curb and then it would be a new property line and it would be 35ft where 25ft is required, it would fine if they could acquire that city property and then it would just be the front setbacks and the parking issue. Mr. Menees advised they have not had snow storage or removal discussion and that will be something that they will address at the application time. They are anticipating a 13month construction schedule. In concept they have worked out storm water drainage and the existing scenario is some goes into the wetlands and some into the city storm water and the city engineer has advised that they do not want anymore drainage added to that system. They will propose to divert the impervious runoff and install a storage chamber/system under the parking lot, catch basins and some natural treatment, the high level overflow will go into the stream and the intent is to take roof and parking runoff treating onsite, they have this in concept and have not come to the time where they having anything finalized with hard calculations, etc.

Mayor Cutts expressed her excitement and complimented the group for all the work they have done. The campus type feeling she was concerned about the speed of the vehicles and hopes that they can take that into consideration. She has questions about the swimming pool and asked if there is an observation deck for visitors. Mr. Napsey advised there will be roll away bleachers that can be put away when not in use, also the thought with splash area is that it could serve as a staging area for swimmers.

Mr. LaCasse asked what they mean by a campus community. Mr. Napsey advised they have 3 buildings that are community facilities that support the schools. Mr. Feleen advised the Community Center now is a place where people can go to and access a program and then leave. A true Community Center is a place where families can go and disperse into different activities and spend a significant amount of time all in the same facility. The concept of a campus atmosphere is that there will be many activities where people can stay for the day, there are 3 community buildings, and there is the rail trail, the Claremont Farmers Field and some green space for public access right in the heart of the downtown. They feel that once the project is done it will feel like a highly pedestrian building/intersection and will be safe. They have talked to the school system about this and they are very interested and willing to work with them on this.

Mr. Feleen advised this process has been driven by a survey they did 7 or 8 years ago, if they did it today he does not believe it would be much different. This project shows what they heard from the community and what they wanted. They are going to work on the issues with the motorized vehicles the same way they have dealt with the other issues and see what the community wants. Does the community want a crossing area there next to its new Community Center or does it not. Mr. LaCasse advised that he does not use the rail trails because of the ATVs in the area and he is worried about the speed on that trail and not in favor of having this area continue as a motorized area. Mr. Feleen advised that they do have a 10mph speed limit on the trail. Mr. Feleen advised the City Council and City Attorney gave permission for the ATVs and Motorized vehicles to use this trail and made a 10mph speed limit and if the community wants it to continue then we will figure out the best way. Mr. Hurd advised that the section of the rail trail gave the OHRVs approval and the state would have to be reimbursed \$400k if they choose not to let them use it since it was a grant. Mr. Menees advised this information is why they have come here tonight. They have options of ways to make the vehicles slow down, such as obstacle courses, a gate, etc if it is a problem. Mr. Feleen advised that he thought from the metal gate towards Newport there were no restrictions because it was "ISTEA" money, although he has the deed in his office where it was deeded from the railroad to the City. Mr. Hurd advised that the City only bought a portion of it and the City didn't pay the full tab.

Mr. Hanson is glad that they are working on the drainage issues because the current system is struggling now and he recommends doing whatever they can do to keep additional water out. Also he is concerned with them as an abutter with the cars and lights. He is also concerned with the snow storage. Mr. Feleen advised they are in discussion with that property owner, although even with that particular parcel, they are not sure if it would be green space or used up for parking. Bruce Temple has been adamant that not another drop of water goes east of this property and they are working on that.

Mr. Rapp asked about parking for OHRV's if they are permitted to use the area. Mr. Feleen advised that they have thought about it but they have not finalized the plans for that. He did not feel you would want them parking in the front area. Mr. Rapp thought maybe there is a possibility of a small lot for such motorized vehicles. Mr. Fowler asked if the snowmobile or ATV club use this as a staging area now. Mr. Caouette advised that there is some use at Arrowhead and behind the middle school.

Mr. Fowler wanted to know if the outdoor pool would remain open or will the new facility replace it. Mr. Hausler advised there is no intention to close the outdoor pool; there has been talk about the condition, upkeep and maintenance, etc of the

outdoor pool but no intention to close it. Mr. Fowler advised that the outdoor pool holds a lot of people and he does not see the new facility handling that many people. Mr. Hausler advised they have discussed what was needed and they have no plans to close the outdoor pool, the facility does need some work. Mayor Cutts feels the swim programs and activities have been underutilized, the outdoor pool provides a good resource for kids and keeps them busy. Ms. Richardson asked if the new pool would be for the school team. Mr. Napsey advised there is a school swim team although their meets are always away and there is a cost associated with meets being away. Mr. Hausler advised from the very beginning it was the intention of the non profit to build the building for everybody and large enough for a swim meet and regular recreational leisure and a place that is not right next to cinder block walls. It will be a facility for everybody. Ms. Richardson asked if there will be ample parking for buses for team sports. Mr. Hausler advised that they are using City park facilities now and they would continue to use it the way they have with track meets and other team sports, it is all coordinated ahead time where the buses will go. They have talked to the school about shared parking and everyone will work together.

Mr. Wood expressed his appreciation for staying as far away from the wetlands as they can and he would like to express his appreciation for their efforts and he hopes that the other boards will give the exceptions that are needed because it makes sense in this instance to do that. Chair Grigsby asked about the jogs in the building and wanted to know if they are for site or building reasons. Mr. Ulf advised that the jogs are to provide relief to the building, there are different portions of the building that have varied height of the building and they wanted a little more than just a block building. Chair Grigsby advised that they would like to see elevations when they come before the boards. Mr. Ulf stated they wanted the building to have an architectural and pedestrian feel to it and not just walking next to a 2 story building, they are going to break it up a little and in the front they are looking into some colonnades.

Mr. LaCasse asked if the front door was handicapped accessible. Mr. Kennedy advised that the ramp in the rear is handicapped accessible and the entire building is handicapped accessible, as required by law. Mr. Woodman asked there is a projected energy cost and the existing pool has had moisture problems and he hopes that that is taken care of also is there a projected cost of the total project. Mr. Ulf advised they are not at a point where they have determined the energy efficiency, although their goal would be to make it the most energy efficient building they can, they are looking at a lot of day lighting techniques although they have not gotten into the HVAC systems. The pool environment will have systems incorporated to help with moisture control. The cost of the building changes daily due to materials and labor and there is a fundraising goal associated with the project and they are working hard to make that work. As they get into the details they are trying to use durable long lasting materials and they are paying attention to more than the initial costs of the building and they are trying to keep the operational and maintenance expenses low through the lifetime of the building.

Mr. LaCasse asked if the Claremont Savings Bank donation was contingent on matching funds. Mr. Napsey advised it is contingent on matching funds/ in kind services/donation of endowment, life insurance policy /donation of land and there are a lot of ways that people can contribute. Mr. LaCasse asked how close they are in the process. Mr. Napsey advised this is the first step in the process and they need to make sure these boards accept, and can provide recommendations; they need to make sure this is going to be approved so they can ask for donations and they need to present to them a clear concept of the process. They receive funds monthly on a monthly basis, they have not received any naming funds, but they are continuing to work on this, it has been a 4 or 5 month process to get where they are tonight and they are moving forward.

Mr. Hurd asked if they are going to work on the acquisition of the city property before they go to zoning. Mr. Napsey advised that they have had a sort of technical review of the plan with the department heads. Chair Grigsby advised it appears this is a good plan and consensus from members present that this is a good project and they are happy to give them a little push.

III. Other

Planning Board continued

Mr. Giles advised the board will have a draft on the Historic District part of the ordinance and there is some wording that the City Manager is a member of the Historic District Commission. The change would be that a City Council member would be on the commission to be more in line with state law. The text amendment will go through the public notice procedure and at the next meeting there will be a motion. Mr. Giles advised we are just clarifying the Zoning to be in compliance with State law. Mayor Cutts advised this appears to be a paper clean up that has to be approved by the planning board and then the City Council.

Chair Grigsby advised that we are still looking for a Planning Board member to be on the Conservation Commission and if any of the new members are interested please let him know.

IV. Adjournment

Motion to: Adjourn

Made by: Mr. Richardson **Second:** Mr. LaCasse **Vote:** Unanimous

Meeting Adjourned at: 8:30 pm

Respectfully Submitted,

Michelle Aiken

Boards & Commissions Coordinator