



PLANNING BOARD MEETING

Monday, November 14, 2016 7:00 PM
Council Chambers, City Hall

MINUTES

Approved 11/28/2016

Mr. Wahrlich called the meeting order at 7:00 PM and asked for the roll call.

I. Roll Call

Present: Marilyn Harris, William Greenrose, Richard Wahrlich, Bruce Kolenda, James Short, Charlene Lovett, Victor Bergeron, Marlene Jordan, David Putnam

Absent: Rois Neil Ward, Jr., Nicholas Koloski

City Staff: Michael McCrory, City Planner

II. Review of Minutes – October 24, 2016

Motion: To accept the minutes of October 24th

Amendments/Corrections:

Pg. 2, paragraph 8: strike the phrase, “to the next workshop”

Pg. 4, 2nd paragraph: change “OEP” to “NHMA”

Made by: Mr. Greenrose **Second:** Mr. Short

Vote: Unanimous in favor with the corrections

III. Old Business

- A. **(PL 2016-00016) Farhan Yaqoob, 10 Royce St, Claremont, NH** - The applicant is seeking a Special Use permit to convert an existing two-family home to a three-family home at **154-156 North Street**. Tax Map 107, Lot 280. Zoning District PR. (Cont. from 10/10/2016)

Mr. McCrory said the application has been withdrawn. The cost and scope of fire and life safety code requirements to make the three units code-compliant exceeded the applicant’s expectations, so he has decided to withdraw the application and maintain the two units.

IV. New Business

- A. **(PL 2016-00017) Zhang Realty LLC, 154 Washington St, Claremont NH** – The applicant is seeking to amend an approved site plan for **150-154 Washington Street**. Tax Map 108, Lot 119. Zoning District B2.

Mr. Wahrlich read the public notice.

Planner’s Report

Mr. McCrory read for the record a letter of agency from the applicant authorizing Mike Hurd to represent and speak for him in this proceeding.

This application seeks a site plan amendment to shift some parking spaces forward. He said no new site plan was submitted with the application because the applicant felt it wasn’t necessary for this request. The application seeks to change the original conditions of approval from the December 2012 decision.

The applicant has requested a waiver of the requirement to submit a formal site plan. The application itself contains all of the necessary information. The request for the waiver should be completed before finding the application complete. There are two criteria that the board must find before granting a waiver request, which Mr. McCrory read to the board.

The applicant submitted with the application a copy of the 2012 approved site plan with the requested changes hand-drawn on it. The board received 11 x 17 copies of that plan.

Mr. Wahrlich asked for a description of the difference between the original plan and the proposed amended one. Mr. McCrory drew attention to the “10 space display area” shown as cross-hatched parking spaces behind the restaurant building. (These spaces have been circled on the submitted plan.) They would be changed to regular parking. The display spaces would be transferred to the Washington Street frontage.

Mr. McCrory stated that this could have been an administrative decision, but staff has deferred to the board because the request calls for a change in the planning board’s conditions.

He referred to the notice of decision dated January 3rd, 2013. The conditions define where the display area could be.

Mayor Lovett asked why the display area was limited by the board to the back of the building. Mr. Wahrlich and Mr. Kolenda said the applicant requested it because sales were to be via the internet only.

Mr. Putnam pointed out the areas circled on the revised plan include more than 10 spaces for display. He asked if the display spaces were to be limited to 10 spaces or was the board allowing more? Mr. McCrory said that Mr. Hurd would address that, but the concept is for there to be no more than 10 spaces displayed in the areas circled (there are two areas circled on the plan).

There was discussion about enforcing the number of cars being displayed. Mayor Lovett said she didn’t want to see the city get caught in the same circle as the board is in with this situation. She pointed out that the applicant didn’t comply with the conditions that were in place previously. She was puzzled as to why the applicant would once again request such a limited number of spaces given the number of spaces that are available in the lot on Washington Street. Mr. McCrory said that’s a question for the applicant’s agent.

Mr. Greenrose suggested cross-hatching the 10 spaces on the plan rather than leaving it ambiguous, unless there are other circumstances not yet discussed. Mr. McCrory said there is a certain number of parking spaces available. By going with the 10 spaces, there is no change to the number of spaces occupied by those vehicles, which eliminates the need to re-evaluate the number of spaces needed based on the various uses on the site. Staff viewed this request as a “shuffle” rather than as an addition.

Mr. Wahrlich asked Mr. McCrory if Mr. McCrory felt the application is complete. Mr. McCrory said yes, with the waiver granted.

Motion: To find the application complete with the waiver.

Made by: Mr. Putnam **Second:** Mr. Short

Discussion on the motion:

1. Strict conformity with the regulation would pose an unnecessary hardship to the applicant and would not be contrary to the spirit and intent of the regulations.

Ms. Harris said that the cost incurred with the minor change seems prohibitive. The other board members concurred.

2. Specific circumstances of the development/use proposal or conditions of the land indicate that the waiver will properly carry out the spirit and intent of the regulations.

Mr. Greenrose said there be no substantive change to anything. It is simply a move of 10 spaces from one side of the building to the other. He felt this was within the spirit and intent of the regulations. The other board members concurred.

Vote on the motion: Unanimous in favor

Mr. McCrory said he had received requests for documentation regarding when the owner was notified of violations. He included in the board's packet letters and other documentation and correspondence. He said he had done a quick review based on the requests. It is his understanding that since 2013 the owner was contacted twice by letter and then otherwise by phone about the violation which was on and off throughout that time.

Mayor Lovett said she had a question about the process in general for when individuals are not in compliance with site plans. She said this was more of a workshop discussion than pertinent to this (application), but she said she would like to have that discussion.

Mr. Bergeron asked what makes the board think (the owner) will abide by this decision. Mr. Putnam said that that goes back to his earlier concern (about how many spaces would be used). Mayor Lovett said that this was why the board should clearly define what the process will be when people are not in compliance. But she said that is a discussion better had in a workshop type of forum.

Mr. Wahrlich called for input from the applicant's representative.

Applicant's Presentation

Mr. Hurd said the applicant didn't realize when he started in the used car business what's involved in selling used cars. He didn't want a display area out front, preferring to only sell cars on the internet. In the process of his business growing from 2012 to 2016, the parking for the body shop and the service area is now becoming "tighter and tighter quarters". In order for him to keep pathways/roadways open, there were times he moved cars out front. He shouldn't have so he'd moved them out back until the parking lot became full again and the process was repeated. Mr. McCrory had asked Mr. Hurd four or five months ago, to speak to the owner about this. Mr. Hurd preferred to wait until Mr. McCrory was working for the City full time, at which time he would sit with Mr. McCrory to work things out.

Mr. Hurd said that the owner wants to sell "10 cars or less". He doesn't want to have more than 10 cars for sale at any one time. The owner and the owner's brother are the only ones handling the used car portion of the businesses owned by the applicant.

Mr. Hurd said the spaces circled on the plans are to accommodate snow storage in the winter. The owner wants the flexibility of moving the cars between the spaces circled as needed. The distribution between the two areas may change, but there would be no more than 10 cars for sale at any one time. The owner also wants to eliminate car-viewing from occurring behind the restaurant and near their home, which is also in the back. Customer parking would be in the back; used cars would be out front under the lights.

Mr. Hurd said with regard to Mr. Bergeron's question, "will it happen again?", he said "hopefully not".

Mr. Putnam asked if these 10 spaces are currently used for anything else and will a hardship result if they are dedicated to used cars. Mr. Hurd said that the requested spaces are not used by the restaurant even during their busiest times. He said parking most heavily used is along the E & D building, the two strips in the middle of the lot and occasionally in front of the former Doolittles building.

The board had no further questions.

Public Hearing

Mr. Wahrlich asked for the abutters roll call. Mr. Wahrlich open the public forum following the roll call.

Jacqueline Ferguson-Pierce said she is an abutter of the Zhang property. She said she would like to see these 10 spaces moved to the front. She has frequently called the police for "noise distraction"; not only on the side where the cars are parked now, but in the back. She said there are cars "in and out of there all night". She said that at times there is activity at 3:00 in the morning. She said she has asked "for this" before. She said she remembered the meeting in 2012 and said she wasn't sure why "he wasn't granted that in the beginning". She said "it has caused a lot of traffic" and congestion. She said it was her understanding that people coming from Washington Street onto Bowen that "there's people going in and out of there and it's

just crunching. When it comes to a snowplow, they hit my fence because there were people coming out of there.” She said it is “becoming a real problem” and that she would “really like to see this happen.” She said the partial fence that divides the properties makes it difficult for her to see when she is trying to come out of her yard. She asked the board to grant the request for her sake and the sake of others on her street.

There were no other comments from the public. Mr. Wahrlich closed the public hearing.

Mr. Wahrlich called for comments from the board.

Mr. Short said it “makes perfect sense”. He said the change should make it easier for the owner to sell cars and grow his business.

Motion: The planning board approves amending the December 26, 2012 Site Plan Approval for Zhang Realty LLC at 150-154 Washington Street (Map 108, Lot 119) with the following conditions of approval:

1. The display of no more than ten (10) vehicles for sale is permitted in the parking area adjacent to Washington Street. There shall be no more than 10 vehicles on display for sale on the entire property at one time.
2. All other conditions of prior Site Plan Approvals remain in effect.

Made by: Mayor Lovett **Second:** Mr. Putnam

Vote: Unanimous in favor

- B. **(PL 2016-00019) Albets Properties LLC, 976 E Prospect St, Woodmere NY** – The applicant is seeking a Special Use permit to convert a single-family home to a two-family home at **13 Prospect Street**. Tax Map 131, Lot 74. Zoning District CR2.

Mr. Wahrlich read the public notice.

Planner’s Report

Mr. McCrory said that the applicant is asking to make a modification to an existing building without any changes to the footprint. He would like to add another residential unit within the existing building. There will be interior modifications. He said the main question is whether the site has the capacity for certain things. The board can request additional information if it feels the need.

He said the lot size is approximately 13,000 SF. It is an existing single family residence. The application is to make it into a duplex. According to the zoning density for that district, it is allowable.

Ms. Harris asked where the parking spaces would be located; what is the snow removal area and where will the trash go. Mr. McCrory said he would defer to the applicant on those questions.

Mr. Greenrose said the minimum size is not contained in the application. He asked if there were any concerns about what the size actually is. Mr. McCrory said he believed the building has sufficient space for it. He said this might be a process “we might have to iron out a little bit” because typically applications go through the land use planning process and then they go to the building inspector for architectural plans and that is where the modifications to the building are shown. He said if the board feels it needs to know architectural information, the request should be in “future iterations of” the application. He said there were no specific plans available for this application at this time. “But”, he said, “we should hold to those requirements as a condition of approval.”

Mayor Lovett asked what the minimum square footage is for a unit. Mr. McCrory said it is 550 SF for a studio/one-bedroom unit and up to 850 SF for a 2- or 3-bedroom unit. The Mayor said she would like to see more information for a variety of reasons. She said, in addition, that when she looks at the Master Plan and the statistics for the type of housing units that there are in Claremont, she doesn’t “get a clear sense of what is our goal”. She said the 2016 figures show approximately 46% of the housing stock is “non-single family”. She said there has been discussion about how much of the housing stock does (the City desire to be) multi-family units. This application takes a single-family home that, from the outside, “looks like it needs a lot of work” (she acknowledged that one of the goals of the application is to bring the house back to code) and

convert it to a duplex, which will again increase the percentage of multi-family homes and decrease the percentage of single-family homes. She said she didn't think that was the direction "we want to go in".

Mr. Putnam said that when the City Center project did its survey of the residential streets, it was recognized by the participants that a large percentage of what were single-family homes – he said maybe 75% - are now multi-family homes. When the committee recommended going to a "hybrid form" of form-based code, which recognizes building improvement permits based on conditions that are already being in the neighborhood, he said it is hard to say "no" to this application because Prospect Street already has a large number of what were once single-family homes that are now multi-family homes. He said he didn't feel the board was denying the application, just that it needed more information. He said parking is always one of the board's biggest issues because it is a safety issue. Snow removal is also a concern. He said dumpster location was a "huge issue" for the City Center group because "they generated so many eye-sores in the neighborhood". He said if the planning board is going to follow the vision of the Master Plan, that we wish to clean up how we look, then dumpster location, dumpster screening, is a priority that he said he will continue to focus on. He said too many of them are placed near the front door of the house. He said when people come to visit the city, they see the dumpsters and cars parked "helter-skelter" or cars that aren't registered parked in the lot, he said "we're not looking very nice here."

Mr. Putnam told the applicant he could draw things onto an enlarged copy of the aerial photo of the lot, working with the Planning & Development office, and not hire a surveyor. He said he didn't want to ask people to spend a lot of money to do this. He asked Mr. McCrory if it was appropriate for the P & D department to assist applicants with such plans. Mr. McCrory said the department does not typically engage in design services for applicants, but he does provide source material as needed. Mr. Putnam said he wasn't asking Mr. McCrory to do the work, just provide some guidance.

Mr. Bergeron asked if the other unit is owner-occupied. Mr. McCrory said he didn't expect it to be, that it is not required for a duplex. Mr. Bergeron said the city has a lot of absentee landlords that don't take good care of their properties. Now the board is being asked to allow the conversion of a single-family home to a duplex and wondered if this property would follow the same path. He wanted to know when the city would start taking steps to prevent this from happening. Mr. McCrory said that sounded like a higher-level policy discussion, with which Mr. Bergeron agreed.

Ms. Harris said there is a "For Sale" sign in front of this property. She said, given that this property might change owners, that it might make sense to request more information.

Mr. Bergeron said he agreed with the Mayor and Mr. Putnam, that the board needs more information and it's time to start "looking at these a lot closer and making sure that what Claremont is after through the Master Plan is done."

Applicant's Presentation

Alan Perahia said he owns several buildings in Claremont and recently has seen a lot of people requesting one-bedroom apartments, which is what he plans for this property. He said he has turned down a lot of people lately. He said there is plenty of room in the building – there is "a whole section that's not being used". He said he just has to reconfigure it to make it work.

Mr. Perahia said as to the garbage, he said it would be put next to the fence on the side of the property and that it wouldn't be seen from the street. He said the outside of the building would be redone. He said, "I understand the cleanliness thing." He said he tries to make his properties nice, but the tenants don't always keep them that way.

When asked about the parking spaces, Mr. Perahia said it is a very large lot on the side and that "you could probably put 10 cars there if you wanted to". He said the spaces were drawn on the aerial phot submitted with the application (they did not photocopy very well, making it hard to see them). Ms. Harris asked that the parking spaces be better indicated on a plan.

Mr. Perahia addressed Mr. Bergeron's concern by saying he is only asking for a one-bedroom, that there aren't enough of them in Claremont and that he can't supply what's needed nor did he think anyone else could either.

The board had no further questions.

Mr. Wahrlich called for comments from the board.

Mr. Putnam said he didn't think it is unreasonable for the board to request a sketch for any application of this type so there are no questions about the site. Also, when the application is approved, there is a tangible document showing what is being approved. The board discussed how the plan would be created and what information they wanted. It was agreed that the board wanted a dimensioned line drawing indicating the position of the buildings, parking spaces, dumpster and snow storage.

Mr. Wahrlich asked Mr. Perahia if he thought he would have a problem providing the board with more details. Mr. Perahia said he didn't think so.

Mr. Putnam said he would like a drawing (he could use the GIS aerial photo as an outline) that locates the buildings, parking, rubbish removal, and what the plans are for snow removal. Mr. Putnam said this should always be required for these applications, which the board agreed with.

Mayor Lovett asked for more information about the apartment itself. Mr. Perahia said, "there is a large room above the garage". He did not finish the sentence.

Mr. Putnam asked that the main entrance to each unit also be shown on the plan.

Public Hearing

Mr. Wahrlich called for the abutters roll call. He asked if anyone wanted to speak to the application. There was no one wishing to speak, so Mr. Wahrlich closed the public hearing.

It was the consensus of the board to continue the hearing.

Motion: To continue the hearing to January 9, 2017.

Made by: Mr. Putnam **Second:** Mr. Short

Vote: Unanimous in favor

- C. **(PL 2016-00020) Richard Slattery dba Best Transportation, 425 Washington St, Claremont NH** – The applicant is seeking a waiver from site plan review per Article VII of the Site Plan Regulations to convert an existing residential garage into an office for a taxi company on property owned by Marguerite & Fernand Cyr at **4 First Street**. Tax Map 121, Lot 51. Zoning District B2.

Mr. Wahrlich read the public notice.

Planner's Report

Mr. McCrory said the applicant is requesting a waiver from site plan review under the provisions of Article VII. (Under the proposed amendments to the site plan regulations, this is a case that would go to the Technical Review Committee.) He said this technically would be an administrative waiver, but the staff is not comfortable granting such waivers as a policy. He said the site will not change, the building footprint will not change. There will be up to eight taxis. The owners of the property and taxi company owner were both present. He said this application requires a "yes or no" vote. The taxi use is allowed in the B-2 zone. This represents a substantial change in the use of the property. It has been a residential property.

Mr. Greenrose asked if the board could continue the hearing and request a line drawing showing where the taxis and other vehicles would be parked on the property and any other information the board may want. Mr. McCrory said that sounded like a site plan.

Mayor Lovett asked why the board wouldn't want a site plan. The lot is sandwiched between two residential properties, and now it will become a place of business and it will impact the neighbors and the small area of that residential road. She said in keeping with the aim of making improvements to the city wherever possible, a site plan would give the board an opportunity to see what that might look like.

Mr. Putnam said when the board sees a site plan (or drawing), the board truly knows what it is voting on. He said visuals are very important.

Mr. Wahrlich asked Mr. McCrory what is required from a site plan. Mr. McCrory said a recordable survey drawing of the property that shows parking layout, garbage, snow storage, drainage, screening, landscaping, etc. He said abutters were notified by certified mail and none of them seem to be in attendance. One of the abutters called the P & D office about the project, but had no objections.

Mr. Putnam asked if the board could grant a waiver of site plan review if a hand-drawn scaled drawing was included with the request for a waiver. Mr. McCrory said there would be no enforcement capability behind it. The board could accept a line drawing in lieu of a recordable site plan accompanied with a list of waivers from the various requirements of a site plan. This plan could be enforced but not revoked. The board questioned Mr. McCrory closely on various consequences of accepting a line drawing in place of a recordable plan.

Mr. Wahrlich asked what the requirements would be if the application had gone to the TRC. Mr. McCrory said the TRC requirements are less – a recordable site plan is not needed and if at any time the TRC felt it necessary, it could refer the application to the full board. There was concern and confusion expressed over the TRC and waiver processes. Mr. McCrory said the amended site plan regulations, that the P & D department is trying to get adopted, are totally different from what is in effect now and that seemed to clear the confusion.

Ms. Harris asked if the conversation about this could be continued after this application is resolved.

Mayor Lovett said she is concerned with consistency. She said this property will be used to operate a business. And every business that has come into the city with a business plan has come before the board to get that approval. Mr. Wahrlich and Mr. Putnam attempted to explain why that isn't necessarily the case.

Mr. Bergeron said he wanted to hear from the applicants. He said this property is in a commercial area and he wasn't as concerned about its impact.

Ms. Harris said to return to the waiver criteria as the means of making a decision about the waiver request. In considering whether or not the board asks for a site plan for what she sees as a minimal change because it is B-2 if they can meet these considerations and we could add that the board wants a drawing then maybe the board can see its way to granting a waiver. This would help understand why the board would not require everyone to have a full site plan.

Mr. Wahrlich asked to hear from the applicant.

Applicant's Presentation

Fred Cyr, owner of the property, spoke first. He said the entire back of the property is Hannafords. He said he lives next door to the property at 2 First Street. He said, "Everyone's excited about the taxi company." He said the garage is 24 ft. x 24 ft. There is parking for 12 vehicles; only 8 are needed. He said he didn't see the need for a site plan because nothing will be changed and there is plenty of parking. Richard Slattery, owner of the business, said the garage sits on the right side of the property and the rest of it is hard pack gravel surface. He said none of that will change. He said one side of the garage will be used for storage, the other will be used as an office.

Ms. Harris said she wanted to see a drawing because things can change. They are starting out with eight taxis... Mr. Slattery said he only has two taxis right now, but he is hoping to expand to eight... Ms. Harris continued asking where the people who come to work will park and how will the traffic effect the street

(which she said is narrow). She also wanted to know where the dumpster would go and where the snow would be plowed.

Mr. Bergeron asked if the “white building” is still on the property. Mr. Cyr said it was a carport and it is no longer on the property. (The carport shows on the aerial photo.)

Mr. Slattery said maintenance on the taxis would be done at Dexters. He said no maintenance would not be done on the property.

Mr. Cyr said “It’s 80 feet from the road to the parking and 20 feet of lawn. There’s 40 feet on the gravel part. Plus then there’s behind the garage.”

Mrs. Cyr asked how the board would want her to depict the parking if the canopy is in the picture. The board said she could just draw over it. She said they will be putting up a fence as well along the border to the property next to it. She clarified that the board wants to see employee and taxi parking, snow storage, and dumpster location, though she said it is unlikely that a dumpster will be needed. The board said it would be alright if a dumpster isn’t shown if one is not needed.

Mr. Cyr said Hannafords plows the snow up to their back fence and he does the same on his side.

Mr. Bergeron said the board could limit the approval to eight taxis plus employee parking. If he wants more he will have to come back.

The board had no further questions for the applicant.

Mr. McCrory said that if the board wants any written depiction of the site or limit to how they use the site, the board will then want to have a site plan review. The board will be denying this request for a waiver. By asking for a drawing showing the items they just listed, then the board is denying the request for a waiver.

Ms. Harris asked how this is different from the application on Prospect Street. Mr. McCrory said that was an application for a special use permit.

Mr. Putnam said this wasn’t fair – when the board wants more information it must request a site plan. Mr. McCrory said it is absolutely fair. Ms. Harris asked if it had to be a formal site plan or could it be what they had discussed. Mr. McCrory said it is a formal site plan submission – it doesn’t need to be a fully surveyed plan. They can submit a line drawing and request waivers to allow the line drawing.

Mr. Bergeron said if the board limits him to eight taxis, he (Mr. Bergeron) didn’t care whether he parks them on the right or the left – “that’s his business, not mine.” He didn’t think the board should be telling him where on the property to park his vehicles. He said the board’s problem is if he has the room to do that. He said the best way to do that was to limit it to eight taxis for this permit. “If he wants to grow, he has to come back.”

Ms. Harris said that that was not the intent of her request – she just wanted to be sure that there wouldn’t be parking on the street because it is a narrow street. Mr. Wahrlich agreed, saying it is difficult to discern from an aerial photo how many cars can actually be parked on the lot. He went to say, however, that he wasn’t certain that it was necessary (in this case) to draw those lines on a plan.

Mr. McCrory said that if the board grants the waiver, the board can’t address the number of cabs that would be allowed. Mr. Wahrlich then asked, if that’s the case, then could they have 30 cabs? Mr. McCrory said taxi businesses must obtain a license from the city to operate. The license specifies the number of cabs used in the business. The license is tied to the property from which the vehicles are operated. He said the zoning board can make the number of cabs a condition of approval in their review. He said this is not the optimum approach as there would be no standard (for limiting the number of cabs, as the standard would come from site plan review).

Mr. Bergeron said he felt it would be a hardship on the applicant to require a site plan review. He said it's in a commercial area, it's approved, and the requirement would cost the cab company a lot of money for something that, in his opinion, doesn't need to be done.

Mr. Kolenda asked for clarification, that if the waiver is granted, the applicant could have "many more" than eight cabs on the lot if he chose. Mr. McCrory said yes. He said he would try and track that at the licensing level. Mr. Kolenda then asked how that would work. Mr. McCrory said he could address it from various aspects (off-street parking, site layout, property maintenance) if an issue arises.

Mr. Bergeron said that if on-site maintenance were being proposed, he would have a totally different view.

Motion: To grant the waiver for site plan review and congratulate the applicant and wish them well.

Made by: Mr. Putnam **Second:** Ms. Jordan

Vote: Unanimous in favor

Ms. Harris asked if the board was supposed to state the reasons for granting the waiver (as part of the motion). Mr. McCrory said that the board had done that in its discussion.

V. Reports from Boards and Commissions

There were no reports.

VI. Other

CIP Update

Mr. McCrory said that the board had asked last year to be more involved in the development of the Capital Improvement Program update process. He gave the board a written memo to serve as a queue. He said the update process will begin in December and the planning board has been intentionally more involved in the process this year.

There are three distinct phases:

Phase 1: Discovery – (Dec 2016 – Jan 2017) The advisory committee, consisting of the director of the P & D department, the planning board chair and the director of the finance department, review the requests from the various department heads and develop a draft plan that's presented to the planning board. Planning board representation will be increased this year to include a second member of the board (it will be the board's choice).

Phase 2: Review – (Jan 23 – Feb 27) A series of planning board work sessions to review the plan. The sessions will be held ahead of the regular planning board meetings (5:30 – 7:00 PM; pizza may be involved...). The advisory committee will be present. Department heads may be invited as needed.

Phase 3 – (Mar 13) Public hearing to adopt the final CIP. It then goes to City Council.

Mr. Wahrlich said he sees the role of the planning board is to ensure that the CIP is in the spirit of the Master Plan. He said the board should not be looking at the CIP from a financial perspective and asked if that was correct. Mr. McCrory said the board should review the CIP and the CIP projects with regard to consistency with the Master Plan. It is the fiscal execution of the Master Plan. (He said the Master Plan is currently being updated and the board may see some things in the CIP that are consistent with the draft plan, but less so with the current adopted Master Plan. This can be discussed when the time comes.) He said the board should look at the CIP finances in the context of its execution of the goals of the Master Plan. It is up to the City Council to determine what can be done this year, the next two years, and so on.

Mr. Putnam said that last year the board recognized that there were two different perspectives in reviewing the CIP based on the planning board involvement and the finance director's involvement. It led the board to asking if the inclusion of a paragraph (in the letter to the City Council) where the planning board recognized its role from a visionary perspective versus the finance director's perspective in attaching dollar amounts to the visionary part of the plan. He said that made the plan complete. The board felt it had to differentiate itself from being tied to the plan financially. He said he would plan on doing that again.

Mayor Lovett thanked Mr. McCrory and said this is an improvement to the current process (referring to the memo).

Mr. McCrory suggested to the board that anyone interested in participating in the discovery process to contact Mr. Wahrlich.

Bus Services

Mayor Lovett said that in October Southwestern Community Services (SCS) came before the City Council requesting to give the Council a briefing regarding the transition of the bus transportation system (they are now the operators of what used to be Community Alliance Transportation System CATS). She said they have a shortfall in their budget. They said they would not be operating the service going forward if they cannot make up that shortfall. They are going to various communities requesting support. Historically they have received monetary support from the county, Newport, Charlestown, and a “very minimal amount from Claremont when they expanded one of their routes to the train station.” They are looking for more support to make up their shortfall.

Mayor Lovett asked that the planning board consider drafting a letter (one way or the other) as to how it feels about supporting that bus system, because it is part of the Master Plan, and she thought it would be beneficial to the Council to hear from the planning board what its position is on the city providing some support and what that support should look like. She said SCS has asked for \$30,000 (toward a \$60,000 shortfall). The Council has not made a decision about it one way or the other. It is on the Council’s agenda for their December 14th meeting.

Mr. Greenrose asked for information on their routes. The Mayor said that information is not yet readily available, but SCS is looking at making the service more efficient and user-friendly. She said the Council received much feedback from the public about the need for this service when CATS was going out not only for people who need the transportation, but as an economic development factor (chapter 8 of the Master Plan).

The Mayor said that since transportation is an entire chapter in the Master Plan, it is important for the Council to hear the board’s position on this request.

Mr. Wahrlich asked what role the SCS plays in providing transportation to the community. The Mayor said it is a bus system such as was before.

Mr. Kolenda said he didn’t think the board should suggest and endorse a certain amount of money. The Mayor said she is asking the board to state whether (or not) the board supports public transportation and whether (or not) that support should include monetary support.

Mayor Lovett said that if the board does not support it, the likelihood of their continuing that service in this area “is slim to none”.

Mr. Bergeron said there is a budget freeze in the city right now and he would not (as a city councilor) support the request (for funds) unless they (SCS) are willing to raise their rates. He said he thinks the service is necessary and he has no problem giving money to it, but there has to be some middle ground.

Mr. Wahrlich said he is much in favor of public transportation, but he wanted to know how it will benefit Claremont specifically. Mayor Lovett said she would provide informational material for the board.

Mr. Short asked if the shortfall is that of SCS or if they inherited it from CATS. Ms. Harris said that SCS did assume debt from CATS. The shortfall is in the SCS budget.

It was agreed to continue discussing this issue at the next meeting.

Enforcement Actions

Mayor Lovett said this is a topic that must be discussed at some point in time.

Housing

Mayor Lovett said that despite having read the Master Plan multiple times and reviewing state statistics; she still does not have a clear idea as to what Claremont wants for housing stock. She said the decisions made by the planning board have repercussions, not just city-wide, about housing (e.g. parking). When the board increases the density in any given area of the community, it has other ramifications, other than just the number of people living in a building. She feels the board has to be very clear and specify what the board's goals are with regard to housing. She said Claremont's percentages are off from the state averages. Claremont is skewed in comparison to the county. "Affordable housing" is not the same as "workforce housing". She said what Claremont needs, according to local employers, is attractive, desirable workforce housing. She said it is not necessarily more single-family homes split up into small apartments. She said until the board is clear on what it wants and maps it out, it runs the risk of being inconsistent with applications that come before it. Fair and consistent deliberation is not possible with knowing what the board is trying to achieve with regard to housing.

Mr. Short said that Claremont's housing stock tends to be very old (pre-1830) and not many new houses are being built. The large old houses are being converted to multi-family units thereby increasing city density. Mr. Wahrlich said there are some huge old houses that can easily house more than one family and how does one afford that type of house?

Mr. Putnam said the Land Use chapter subcommittee has identified some areas of the city that could support workforce development. Attractive housing needs people who can afford them. People who can afford them need the better-paying jobs which Claremont has to work on attracting. But Claremont's workforce needs to be improved to attract the employers with the better-paying jobs. He said it's a conundrum that the city has to work on.

Mayor Lovett said she has spoken with employers who have employees who are looking for a place to live, but they cannot find the housing that's attractive to the people they are employing. That's why we need workforce housing.

She addressed Mr. Short's comment – if the board continues to say yes to the requests for additional units, the board takes the risk of further moving away from the need to have new construction. She said this doesn't increase the city's tax base and creates issues with density.

Mayor Lovett agreed that people are no longer having the large families that they used to, but in the case the board saw at this meeting, it wasn't a big home. She did not think a lot of tiny apartments is the desirable direction to go.

Mr. Short quoted from the Master Plan where it states that people are living in Claremont (and working in Lebanon) because it's cheaper to live in Claremont. He said he would rather have people want to live here, not because it's cheaper.

Everyone agreed that this was a discussion for another day.

VII. Correspondence

There was not correspondence.

VIII. Adjournment

Motion: To adjourn the meeting.

Made by: Ms. Jordan **Second:** Mr. Short

Vote: Unanimous in favor.

The meeting adjourned at 9:11 PM.

Respectfully submitted,

de Forest Bearse