



Planning Board Meeting
Monday February 8, 2016 7:00 PM
Council Chambers, City Hall

MINUTES
Approved 2/22/2016

I. Roll Call

Present: William Greenrose, Richard Wahrlich, Marilyn Harris, Charlene Lovett, James Short, David Putnam, Neil Ward, Victor Bergeron

Absent: Chris Belvin, Bruce Kolenda

City Staff: Michael McCrory, Interim City Planner

Mr. Wahrlich asked Mr. Putnam to sit in for Mr. Kolenda and Mr. Ward to sit in for Mr. Belvin.

II. Review of Minutes – January 25, 2016

Motion: To accept the minutes of January 25, 2016.

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

Vote: Unanimous in favor

III. Old Business

There was no old business to discuss.

IV. New Business

- a. **PL 2016-00003 Jeff Barrette, 14 Bailey Ave:** Application for Special Use Permit to convert vacant space to light industrial and storage at **13 Water Street**. Tax map 120, lot 24. Zone: MU

Mr. Wahrlich read the public notice. Mr. McCrory suggested Mr. Wahrlich read the second notice as well so that both applications can be discussed simultaneously.

- b. **PL 2016-00002 The Ink Factory, 13 Water Street:** Application for Site Plan Approval to convert vacant space to light industrial, commercial, retail and storage at **13 Water Street**. Tax map 120, lot 24. Zone: MU

Mr. Wahrlich read the public notice.

Planner's Report

Mr. McCrory said the project is located in an older building that will be renovated to house a range of uses that may include light industrial, commercial, retail and storage. Light industrial uses (in this case printing t-shirts) are allowed in the Mixed Use (MU) district in which this project is located with a Special Use permit as per section 22-

387.17 of the City Zoning Ordinance. Mr. McCrory read the MU purpose statement for the Board:

The purpose of this district is to be the center of the community, providing commercial, recreational, educational, institutional, light industrial and mixed uses that are primarily oriented toward pedestrian access. The mix of uses, including entertainment options, is also intended to strengthen the downtown core as a place of tourism.

The Board is authorized to place conditions on Special Use permits that will protect the integrity of the surrounding neighborhood and the City as a whole.

Mr. McCrory then reviewed the Special Use review criteria with the Board.

The project is located in an existing building. Renovations will all be primarily interior to the building, although some exterior renovations will be made relative to access to the building. He noted that there is some overlap between the Special Use permit criteria and Site Plan review criteria. He asked the Board to bear in mind that this project is located in the Historic District and that exterior changes will require review and approval of the Historic District Commission.

Mr. McCrory stated that the information and plan submitted with the applications are sufficient to be deemed complete. There will be a request to waive the parking requirements of the Zoning Ordinance.

Motion: To accept the site plan as complete.

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

Vote: Unanimous in favor

Motion: To accept the Special Use permit application as complete.

Made by: Mayor Lovett **Second:** Ms. Harris

Vote: Unanimous in favor

Applicant Presentation

Mr. Barrette stated that 13 Water Street used to be the women's dorm for Monadnock Mills, built c. 1820. The building has been vacant for 12-15 years. There is much disrepair. Exterior changes will be made only for access purposes. A second door must be added on the Broad Street side (2nd means of egress) and a handicap ramp must be added on the Water Street side for handicap accessibility. A door will be added on the Crescent Street side to provide access to storage on the second floor of the building. The Ink Factory will use approximately 80% of the first floor. He would like to add a secondary retail space that is accessible through a vestibule on the inside of the building. The second floor will be used entirely for self-access mini-storage (approximately 30 units, each about 100 SF, but this is not finalized). There is a loading dock on the Crescent Street side. There are five parking spaces and one handicap space. There is additional space for parking on the west side of the building that is not marked as such on the plan. Ms. Harris noted that Ramuntos is currently leasing some of the parking spaces. Mr. Barrette said the leasing will be discontinued once he is ready to occupy the building. The spaces that

belong to the City could also be used by patrons of the project. Mr. Barrette said he has four employees, and the City spaces will most likely be used by them.

The size of the storage units lends them to residential use, but there may be an occasional moving truck stopping by. Mayor Lovett expressed concern regarding traffic patterns and vehicle access. Mr. Barrette said that it is most likely that larger loads will use the dock and that there is sufficient room at the dock to get around a standard size pickup truck when it is parked at the dock.

Mr. Barrette said he receives shipments for his business twice a year by 50-ft. tractor trailer. Everything else comes in by UPS.

Mr. Putnam asked if Mr. Barrette might ask his employees to use parking further away so the closer parking could be used by customers and clients. Mr. Barrette said he didn't expect his employees to use any of the parking on the front side of the building as it already a "log jam" there with the state workers. He said he didn't think anyone should be parking in those spaces all day long. Mr. McCrory pointed out that across Broad Street near CVS there is a string of all-day public parking spaces. He said these spaces are substantially underutilized. Mr. Short pointed out the parking garage at the other end of Water Street. Ms. Harris said that by 9:30 AM all of the parking spaces on Crescent Street are taken. She said that Revolution Cantina often has food deliveries on Crescent Street. It is not possible to get through during these deliveries. Mr. Barrette said he thinks that most of the storage traffic will be after 5:00 PM, but he could not substantiate his claim. Mr. Bergeron asked if some of the parking spaces on Water Street are already dedicated to certain businesses. Mr. McCrory said there are some public and private leases. He said the seven spaces for Mr. Barrette's site are all essentially on his property and that the five spaces behind the building are not being counted on as a "given" for this site.

Ms. Harris asked if there will be lighting over the 24/7 keypad (for the storage units). Mr. Barrette said yes as well as over the main access door and the loading dock door. He said he expects to use down-cast gooseneck light fixtures, subject to Historic District Commission approval. He said he is renovating the building to National Park Service standards to qualify for the 79E tax credits. He said the Park Service's standards are very stringent.

Mr. McCutcheon, surveyor for Mr. Barrette, said the bounds for this project will be set very soon.

Public Hearing Opened

Mr. McCrory read the abutters roll. Mr. Wahrlich invited comments from the audience.

Public Hearing Closed

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

The Board turned to reviewing the criteria.

Mayor Lovett asked if abutters had been given sufficient notification. Mr. McCrory said yes.

1. *The compatibility with and impact on abutting uses and the surrounding neighborhood;*

Mr. Putnam said this project is just what the City Center group had envisioned for the Mixed Use district they created.

2. *The proposed degree of renovation, if any;*

Mr. Bergeron said that an old building will be put back into use and that is the benefit of the project. There will be foundation and other work necessary to bring the building up to current codes. The degree is extensive, but the Board sees it as a positive thing in light of the fact that the renovations will maintain the (historic) look of the neighborhood.

3. *The location's appropriateness for the proposed development or conversion;*

The Board said the project would benefit the entire City and that there was no problem with the location.

4. *The provision or availability of adequate parking;*

Mr. McCrory said there is sufficient parking to meet the need on the property. There is also the public parking near CVS that staff would like to see utilized more.

5. *The impact on vehicular and pedestrian safety;*

Water Street is a busy street, but this project will not make it worse. There are sidewalks and a crosswalk nearby for safe circulation of pedestrians.

6. *The provision of appropriate related services and facilities;*

The City upgraded the infrastructure in this neighborhood when the Common Man Restaurant and Inn moved in. Nothing further is needed.

7. *The consistency with the intent and spirit of Claremont's Master Plan; and*

Mr. Putnam's earlier comments (see above) covered this criterion.

8. *The provision of adequate transportation, water, sewerage and other public requirement, including handicapped accessibility;*

The Board felt this had been discussed sufficiently earlier in the hearing.

9. *Other criteria as may be appropriate based on the specific nature of the application.*

The Board had nothing to add.

Motion: To approve the Special Use permit.

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

Vote: Unanimous in favor

The Board turned to the Site Plan criteria. Mr. McCrory stated that there is much overlap between the Special Permit criteria and the Site Plan criteria. He noted that this is a downtown property. The property boundaries are right up to the building's foundation so there is little opportunity for landscaping. There will be new lighting

at critical access points as well as improvements to access to the building. Mr. McCrory asked the Board for action on the applicant's request for a waiver of the parking requirements.

Mayor Lovett asked why no landscaping was being proposed. Mr. McCrory said there was little opportunity for landscaping as most of the lot is hardscaped already. Mayor Lovett asked; if there is an opportunity to remove some of the hardscape and provide some greenery for aesthetics and drainage management, why not incorporate it in the plans? Mr. Putnam asked if there were a feature that could be utilized to make the historic building more outstanding historically. He gave the Brown Block renovations as a successful example of his intent. Mr. Barrette said that all of the buildings in the Monadnock Mills have a particular type of brickwork on their gable ends. He said a lot of it is missing on his building, particularly where the building to left of it was torn down. He said this is a distinguishing feature. However, the Park Service does not want added features to highlight things. He said they will be restoring the doors, windows and awnings over the doors. The new door on the Broad Street side will have an awning over it with lighting.

Mr. Barrette said there is almost no green space at all on his property except near the fire hydrant where there is some potential as well as near the landing on the Broad Street side. He said with the City's permission he would be happy to maintain the island. He also said on the back of the building he has done some drainage work and added some crushed stone, creating an area he hopes his employees can enjoy. He welcomed suggestions from the Board. Mayor Lovett asked if the Board could require the applicant to provide landscaping where possible as a condition of approval.

Mr. Wahrlich asked about the dumpster location as it is not shown on the plan. Mr. Barrette said he had no plans for an outside dumpster. Trash collection vessels would be kept inside the overhead doors. Mr. McCrory stated that note #4 on the plan states "No outside dumpster".

Mr. Wahrlich asked Mr. Barrette to describe the parking needs for *The Ink Factory*. Mr. Barrette said he sees three to five people a day, usually all at once. A "heavy day" would be six or seven people. UPS deliveries are regular as well.

Mr. McCrory turned to section 22-527 of the ordinance which authorizes the Board to waive off-street parking requirements in certain instances – in this case the character of this lot and the availability of public parking nearby. The Board discussed how to address the parking on Water Street and how best to address it for this particular project. Mr. Barrette said the same cars occupy the same spaces in front of his building every day for eight hours a day. He said if these spaces were intended for customers, then they should be labeled as one or two hour parking only and the City should enforce it.

Motion: To grant a waiver of the parking per the recommendation of planning and zoning.

Made by: Mr. Bergeron

Second: Mr. Putnam

Vote: Unanimous in favor

The Board discussed how to address landscaping, especially in light of the limited space available on this project site. They ultimately chose a slightly altered version of criterion #10 of the site plan review criteria. Mr. Barrette agreed to the condition and said he would work with DPW to address the landscaping on the island next to the building.

Motion: To approve the site plan with the following conditions:

Conditions Subsequent

1. The applicant shall obtain and receive approval for all necessary permits as determined by the City of Claremont Planning and Development Department.
2. Prior to issuance of a Certificate of Occupancy, the owner/applicant shall notify the Zoning Administrator and Building Inspector that the project is ready for final inspection. Completion of the project shall be in substantial compliance with the application submitted for review and all conditions of approval.
3. Site Plans are valid for two (2) years from the date of approval. If a certificate of occupancy has not been issued before the two-year deadline, the site plan is no longer valid and must be recertified through the Planning Board.
4. Two (2) mylars of the final approved Site Plan that represents existing site conditions, in a form suitable for recording at the Sullivan County Registry of Deeds, shall be provided to the Claremont Planning and Development Department.
5. Applicant shall maintain landscaping which is in keeping with the character of the area where the site is located, the purpose of the development, and the location of buildings and improvements.

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

Vote: Unanimous in favor

V. Reports from Boards and Commissions

Mr. Bergeron said that the Mayor and the Council have created a new five-member policy committee (three Councilors, two members of the public). Mr. Bergeron is the chair. The committee will review all of the City's ordinances. He said the Council is also discussing an audit committee.

Mayor Lovett asked if there is a way to hold joint meetings for projects needing multiple board reviews to save applicants time. She said Mr. Barrette's project had already been before the City Council for 79E review, now he has come before the Planning Board for site plan and Special Use permit. He must also go before the Historic District Commission – all with the same project. She said the Planning Board Regulations authorizes the use of joint meetings and specifies how they are to be run. Mr. Wahrlich said the Planning Board and Zoning Board have met jointly in the past. He said he wasn't sure how it would work with City Council. He said he would talk to the chair of the Historic District Commission about

the idea. Mr. McCrory said the Special Use permit was incorporated into the ordinance as a means of streamlining projects in the City Center. With the new ordinance, the applicant can go to the Planning Board for both site plan and the Special Use permit whereas previously they would have had to go to the Zoning Board for a special exception permit and then to the Planning Board for their site plan. Mr. Bergeron said the City must be careful about which boards interact with each other because of the nature of their jurisdictions.

Mr. Putnam said the first master plan forum will be held on March 3rd at the Claremont Middle School with food and beverages at 5:30 PM. He encouraged everyone to invite people to come.

VI. Other

VII. Correspondence

Mr. McCrory handed out the 2015 - 2016 NH Planning and Land Use Regulation handbooks.

VIII. Adjournment

Motion: To adjourn the meeting.

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

Vote: Unanimous in favor.

The meeting adjourned at 8:33 PM.

Respectfully submitted,
deForest Bearse
Resource Coordinator