



PLANNING BOARD WORK SESSION

Monday May 14, 2018 7:00 PM
Council Chambers, City Hall
Claremont NH

MINUTES

Approved 6/25/2018

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

I. Roll Call

Present: Allen Damren, David Putnam, Richard Wahrlich, David Pacetti, Marlene Jordan

Absent: William Greenrose, Marilyn Harris, Bruce Kolenda, Nick Koloski, Charlene Lovett, James Short

City Staff: Michael McCrory, City Planner

Mr. Wahrlich asked Mr. Pacetti to sit in for Mr. Kolenda.

II. Review of Minutes

A. April 23, 2018

Motion: To approve

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

Vote: Unanimous in favor

III. Old Business

A. Site Plan Regulation

Mr. McCrory distributed a table showing a summary of Article III of the site plan regulations. The table showed circumstances when site plan review is not needed, when a minor site plan is called for and when a project needs a major site plan.

Mr. McCrory said he reviewed the site plan regulations with regard to the Mayor's letter of October 9th. He then reviewed each of the categories in the summary table with the board.

No Site Plan Review

- Change in use that is strictly interior change to the building with no impacts greater than the existing use
- Example: conversion from restaurant to retail (assuming compliant with zoning) – impacts identified as parking, water & sewer demands - does it need extra water or sewer? In this case the water/sewer demands would be reduced as would the parking demands; thus, change of use with no site plan required

- Single family and duplex buildings; perhaps a conditional use permit may be required under certain circumstances
- Very minor changes to a site (bench, flag pole, sidewalk improvements, etc.)
- Other minor changes; site maintenance

Minor Site Plan

- Site improvements involving pavement, gravel, etc.
- Example – restaurant converts a small grass area to outdoor seating
- Development up to 3000 SF
- Adding 3 or more parking spaces (example – conversion from retail to restaurant needing additional parking) – sketch would go to TRC
- Increased water/sewer demand greater than 50%

Question: When can an existing site plan be used?

Answer: An existing site plan can be used as a reference, particularly in minor site plans. A marked-up version of an existing site plan could be used to present a project to the TRC.

Major Site Plan

- Substantial change to site characteristics – use of the property, water/sewer flows, more than 3 new parking spaces, substantial change in surface area (read “and/or” between each category in first block: increased parking demand 3+ spaces – AND/OR increased sewer loads greater than 50% AND/OR increased water demand greater than 50%)
- An existing site plan would be irrelevant; may reference in a conversation that it is a developed site being modified that qualifies for major site plan

Question: What about the total fee for the (Goddard) property (26 units increasing to 36)?

Answer: We don’t want to penalize someone who is renovating their building. We would be looking at the change in the number of units. That would trigger the site plan requirement. This also was incorporated into the fee schedule – the additional units, not the final total number of units.

Note: The Planning and Development Department has recommended to City Council some changes to the current fee schedule. Those recommendations reflect the structure discussed above. A higher-threshold minor site plan fee should not be that much different from a lower-threshold major site plan fee. (Staff looked at similar communities in the state.) This should address the question in the October 9th letter of how the fees are being managed. The fee schedule has been put to the Finance Committee for review. Hopefully the new schedule will be consistent with the site plan paradigm presented this evening.

Mr. Putnam said he wanted to see in the definitions of site plan reviews a very clear delineation of TRC responsibilities versus planning board responsibilities. Mr. McCrory acknowledged that the references are “a bit scattered” throughout the regulations.

Currently the larger, more complicated projects are reviewed by staff – police, fire, DPW, building, planning, etc. - before they are presented to the Planning Board. This is not the same as what the TRC would be. Staff review gives the developer full perspective on what to expect from the City. The Technical Review Committee (TRC), which would review minor site plans, is not active at this time.

Question: should those bodies be combined with a regular meeting schedule to be incorporated into the Planning Board process? It's something that should be brought up with the department heads to see how they would like to deal with it. Scheduling for staff review is more informal and public notice is not required. The TRC will have to abide by the right to know laws with public notice, abutter notices and minutes and probably a regular schedule of meetings.

The intent of the TRC is to deal with the smaller projects with a shorter process and a more responsive time cycle.

The TRC would pass on (to the board) minor projects that require waivers or minor projects that the TRC is not comfortable with or projects that they find are actually major projects. Applicants can appeal TRC decisions to the Planning Board.

There was discussion about when or how the Planning Board could address the appearance of projects and how the CVS and city center Cumberland Farms buildings might have been different with differing regulations. The actual Cumberland Farms site layout – which is substantially different from the design called for by the City Center Guidelines - was the result of an abutter's strong objections and a subsequent variance issued by the Zoning Board. The point being that there are multiple factors and parties at play in any given applications, not just the Planning Board. The Planning Board can ask for things (such as aesthetics) but it must be well considered as to why or how.

Conditional use permit applications will continue to be reviewed by the Planning Board.

Mr. McCrory recapped how items in the October 9th letter had been addressed in this discussion:

- How an existing site plan can be used;
- How a residential project that might have some renovation of existing units versus a residential project with an increase in the number of units and how these are two different cases;
- Recommended changes in the fee schedule that would address questions in the letter;
- How we are walking away from use of the term “site plan amendment” and simplifying it to “no site plan/minor site plan/major site plan”; these standards will be applied to all projects. An existing site plan will help an applicant in the process, but it doesn't determine what they are being charged for a fee or how the project is being reviewed. It doesn't today – a site plan amendment and a site plan review follow the same standards.

Mr. McCrory will finalize the mark-ups for this discussion and pass it through staff and then send it out for legal review. Once completed, it will come back to the board for final review

(probably in July). Mr. McCrory agreed to send it to the board by email before sending it on to legal review.

IV. New Business

A. Municipal Technical Assistance Grant

Mr. McCrory will be submitting the grant application in two weeks. He asked the board to sign a letter of support, which they agreed to do.

Motion: That we support signing the letter of recommendation for this grant application for technical assistance

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

The steering committee for this project will remain active through the life of the grant. The board will decide who the members will be.

Vote: Unanimous in favor

V. Reports from Boards and Commissions

There were no reports.

VI. Other

Reports to City Council

Mr. McCrory shared with the board copies of the Planning & Development Department Director's reports to City Council for March and April of 2018 so the board could see how their activities are being reported. The consensus of the board was that this was sufficient and no additional reporting was needed.

OSI conference

Several members of the board and staff attended the OSI training conference at the end of April. Conference materials will be available on the OSI website.

VII. Correspondence

There was no correspondence.

VIII. Adjournment

Motion: To adjourn the meeting

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

Vote: Unanimous in favor

The meeting adjourned at 7:56 PM.

Respectfully submitted,
deForest Bearse
Resource Coordinator