

These minutes are subject to possible corrections/revision at a subsequent Exeter
Planning Board Meeting

Exeter Planning Board

Draft Minutes

October 23, 2014

1. Chairman Ken Knowles called the meeting to order at 7:02 pm in the Nowak Room of the Exeter Town Offices on the above date.

2. BOARD MEMBERS PRESENT: Pete Cameron, Don Clement, Langdon Plumer, Ken Knowles, Kelly Bergeron, Katherine Woolhouse, Kathy Corson and Gwen English. STAFF PRESENT: Sylvia von Aulock (Town Planner), Sarah McGraw (Recording Secretary). IN ATTENDANCE: John Merkle (Heritage Commission), John Hauschildt (Zoning Board).

3. NEW BUSINESS

Jeff Highland and Ms. von Aulock presented on the “form based code” or the Flexible Zoning Initiative, subcommittee to the board.

The presentation gave a look into establishing form based code for the Portsmouth Ave. Corridor as a case study. There were three areas of the corridor the committee studied: the Mixed Use Transition Zone, Business Zone, and the Highway zone. Goals for form based code included walkable, “complete” streets, signage, architecture, and landscaping. A walking tour survey was conducted in January 2014 to gauge how 29 residents perceived portions of the Portsmouth Ave. Corridor. Questions on the survey were broken up into Walking Experience, Driving Experience, and Biking Experience. The results of the survey can be found on file at the Exeter Town offices in the Planning Department.

BOARD QUESTIONS: Mr. Cameron asked if there was a specific distance on the survey in relation to how far people needed to bike to a location along the corridor. Ms. von Aulock said there was no set distance; it was from the perspective of each person surveyed.

Mr. Highland described that form based code makes for more livable communities, and development around existing businesses. Along the corridor there are businesses that share adjacent lots and buildings built in different time periods. A case study of Las Olas, Exeter Rental and a dentist office showed how form based code differs from a typical redevelopment. The typical redevelopment showed minimal land, and parking out front. Form based code created more of a destination business, a place to experience with outdoor seating, and “pocket parks.”

Mr. Knowles wanted to reiterate the case study was not an actual proposal but a demonstration for form based code.

Mr. Highland said form based code encouraged quality development, by utilizing a point system weighted by what decision makers found was important.

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Planning Board Meeting

BOARD QUESTIONS: Mr. Knowles asked why the subcommittee chose Portsmouth Ave. Ms von Aulock responded that was a lot of residential buildings with commercial buildings along the corridor and the committee thought it was a good place to start the process.

Ms. von Aulock pointed out the packet of site and sub regulations with changes that would occur if form based code was established.

Mr. Clement asked for an explanation of the point system. Mr. Highland said the point system was like an architectural guideline with ramifications for approval of a project.

Mr. Clement said without a good point system established yet he was concerned about rushed approval of projects.

Mr. Cameron asked if the Flexible Zoning Initiative was going to apply to open space or existing buildings.

Mr. Hauschildt said the form based zoning would be optional for applicants. Mr. Highland said the same site has the potential to be developed in different ways, form based code produces greater “yield.”

Mr. Plumer asked if there were other towns with the form based zoning. Mr. Highland said in New Hampshire, Laconia was the only town with this type of zoning at the moment.

Mr. Highland said that the planning board would always have the final say in a decision even with the point system.

Ms. Bergeron asked what the maximum would be for the point system. Mr. Highland said the point system was flexible with the possibility for point thresholds depending on the area.

Ms. Woolhouse asked if there were any drawbacks to form based code. Mr. Highland said the document evolves over time as a living document.

Ms Corson said because the zoning regulations would be in the site and sub regulations the changes would not require a town vote.

Mr. Clement asked if form based code would apply to businesses that recently completed work on Portsmouth Ave.

Mr. Knowles said they would have the option to go to the board.

Other communities with form based code are Stratham, Hampton and Seabrook.

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Planning Board Meeting

Mr. Knowles said it would be difficult to implement a new regulation without the point system to get on to the March warrant.

Mr. Knowles asked if the board was in general favor of the point system.

Mr. Hauschildt said all form based code has a point system taking away restrictions. He said that form based code was actually used in ancient times. The typical zoning is relatively new. Form based code is easier to understand and a win- win for developers and the public.

Mr. Knowles recommended to the subcommittee to move ahead with establishing the point system and come back to the board at a later date.

PUBLIC HEARING

Continued public hearing on the application of 27 Chestnut Street, LLC for a multi-family site plan review for the proposed construction of two (2) 48 unit apartment buildings and associated improvements on the property located at 27 Chestnut Street. The subject property is located in the R-5, Multi-Family Residential zoning district, Tax map parcel# 64-53. Case # 21408.

Ms Corson and Mr. Plumer were the alternates for the meeting.

Jonathan Ring from Jones and Beach Engineers Inc, presented on behalf of the above project.

A letter was submitted to the Planning Board on October 16, 2014 which addressed the concerns of the planning board from the Hearing on September 25, 2014.

Mr. Knowles noted that granting approval would not grant the waivers that were submitted.

Steve Pernaw from Pernaw & Company talked about a memo from May 22, 2014 with an expanded study to a four way stop. He discussed the results from a traffic study done to the area affected by the proposed construction. He said there was no need to widen the Greenhill Road approach and based on observations, it does not meet the criteria for a four way stop. He mentioned that stop signs should not be used for speed control.

At the Jady Hill circle there is currently a T-stop, Mr. Pernaw wondered why the board wanted a speed table and a four way stop. Ms. von Aulock said people did not stop when turning right and watching out for pedestrians. She asked if the radius could be restricted to slow people down.

At the "big intersection" of the proposed plan, Mr. Pernaw suggested a raised median island with signs saying to keep right with the downside that tractor trailers would have

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Planning Board Meeting

to find an alternate route. He also suggested doing a painted median with a crosswalk identification device.

At the crossing of Chestnut Street and String Bridge Mr. Pernaw talked about the elimination of on street parking because it blocks the view at the intersection. Mr. Pernaw talked about the possibilities of changing the bridge width. Ms von Aulock said that was reviewed and the bridge will not be made wider.

Mr. Pernaw concluded that with 60 new apartments there will be 60 new trips per hour. He noted there would not be a significant change to the traffic.

BOARD QUESTIONS:

Ms. English asked how the construction traffic would get in and out of area. Mr. Pernaw said he was not responsible for answering that type of question turned it over to Mr. Ring.

Mr. Knowles said the Planning Board could ask for a traffic management plan with the application.

Mr. Ring said the trucks would take route 27 to the construction site. Leaving the construction site would have to be worked out.

Ms von Aulock said at the Technical Review Committee they discussed the narrowing of the island.

Mr. Pernaw said the traffic volume did not come close to needing a four-way stop at the Green Hill Road intersection. Ms. von Aulock said people were speeding at the cross walk.

Mr. Pernaw said if the radius is changed people will still speed. The raised median would slow people down.

Mr. Knowles noted on the site plan the driveway approach was an impervious area and the first tier parking dumps into the catch basin. He asked about further storm water control.

Mr. Ring said the rain garden was sufficient to catch the storm water. The applicant needed an alteration of terrain permit. Mr. Ring noted that there is no drainage for the site today.

Mr. Ring explained the items concerning the fence areas. On the site plan the chain link fence would remain and the Chestnut Street one would be removed.

Mr. Cameron confirmed that if the fence is "breached" they would take down the fence. Mr. Ring said that is what they would do.

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Planning Board Meeting

Matt Asia representing the project said that the fencing was not noted at the ZBA meeting but that the fence height is noted on the C3 map.

Mr. Knowles read a letter from Paul Morrin to Ms. von Aulock, Mr. Knowles and Barbara McEvoy which said that the fire department was “all set with the plan,” and access points.

Mr. Ring talked about the parking calculations with 180 required spaces and 157 parking spaces provided. There is a waiver request for a Parking Count Reduction for Shared Parking, Zoning Article 5.6.5.

Mr. Knowles said the calculation sheet was helpful and asked to dash in spaces that may be required at a later time.

Ms. von Aulock noted from ZBA minutes that an abutter had asked about the height of structures with some kind of landscaping for screening for abutters.

Ms von Aulock said at a neighborhood meeting they had talked about mature landscaping and fencing.

Eric Chinberg said they had discussed the options with neighbors and offering landscaping on private property. After that meeting he had not heard from the abutters about any comments or complaints. He noted that a screen will not block the 60 foot building.

Mr. Ring discussed the Exeter Squamscott watershed project. Sources of nitrogen were studied and the majority of nitrogen came from septic system and animal waste. The applicant did agree to use low nitrogen fertilizer. Mr. Ring also commented that the applicant was looking to seek approval for the waivers along with the application.

Mr. Knowles suggested an anaerobic zone at the bottom of the point.

PUBLIC COMMENT:

Mr. Ed Logan from 30 Jady Hill Road noted that at the intersection of Chestnut and Jady Hill Road there is a blind spot going around the corner.

He also talked about his and his neighbors concerns for the undeveloped area at the west end of the property. They did not want duplexes constructed.

Mr. Knowles said that the applicant could not construct anything that was not included in the current plans. The applicant would have to come back to the board for approval at another public hearing.

Mr. Logan submitted a list of 24 signatures from the neighborhood noting their concern of the undeveloped area on the property.

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Planning Board Meeting

The letter was read into the record.

Mr. Plumer moved to act on the plan for case number 21408 with the waiver at the
November 20, 2014 meeting.

MINUTES:

***Mr. Plumer moved to approve the minutes as amended from September 25, 2014
second by Mr. Cameron. Ms. Corson abstained. VOTE: Unanimous***

The minutes from October 9, 2014 were held for approval until the next meeting.

OTHER BUSINESS:

Mr. Cameron noted at 1 Franklin Street there was an issue with a merged lot.

Ms. von Aulock said a decision was made about the lot. On the historic district map the
lot where the “little station” was is in the historic district. The other part is not in the
district. If the lots were merged it would not change.

TOWN PLANNER ITEMS:

Ms. von Aulock noted pages 1-4 in the packet she gave come from the site and sub
regulations and pages 5 on are from the zoning regulations.

There is a library fundraiser selling raffle tickets to win baskets. Trick or Treat is 4-7

The meeting was adjourned at 9:51 pm.

Respectfully submitted

Sarah McGraw