

**TOWN OF EXETER
PLANNING BOARD
NOWAK MEETING ROOM
10 FRONT STREET
JUNE 27, 2024
APPROVED MINUTES
7:00 PM**

I. PRELIMINARIES:

BOARD MEMBERS PRESENT BY ROLL CALL: Chair Langdon Plumer, Vice-Chair Aaron Brown, Clerk, John Grueter, Gwen English, Jennifer Martel, and Nancy Belanger Select Board Representative

STAFF PRESENT: Town Planner Dave Sharples

II. CALL TO ORDER: Chair Plumer called the meeting to order at 7:00 PM and introduced the members.

III. OLD BUSINESS

APPROVAL OF MINUTES

May 23, 2024

Mr. Grueter motioned to approve the May 23, 2024 meeting minutes. Ms. Belanger seconded the motion. A vote was taken, all were in favor, the motion passed 6-0-0.

June 6, 2024 Site Walk

Ms. Belanger noted it was a joint meeting with the Conservation Commission and Keith Whitehouse was present.

Ms. Belanger motioned to approve the June 6, 2024 Site Walk Minutes, as amended. Ms. English seconded the motion. A vote was taken, all were in favor, the motion passed 6-0-0.

June 13, 2024

Ms. Belanger motioned to approve the June 13, 2024 Minutes. Ms. English seconded the motion. A vote was taken, all were in favor, the motion passed 6-0-0.

IV. NEW BUSINESS:

A request from the RiverWoods Group for a preliminary site plan consultation for the proposed construction of a new healthcare center intended to consolidate the existing healthcare components of

the three RiverWoods campuses into a centralized facility to be located on the property at the intersection White Oak Drive and NH Route 111 (Kingston Road).
R-1, Low Density Residential zoning district
Tax Map Parcels #97-23
PB Case #24-6

Chair Plumer read the request of the RiverWoods Group out loud.

Mr. Sharples explained that this is for a preliminary consultation and is not formal, non-binding, no action will be taken and no abutters were noticed. He explained that this conceptual review is different from design review not only in the sense that abutters are not noticed, but the discussion should be general and unspecific and not a discussion of specific designs. He indicated to Mr. Saari that a design review could be applied for and then the Planning Board could discuss more specific design details.

Erik Saari of Altus Engineering presented the conceptual site plan consultation on behalf of RiverWoods to construct a 200,00 SF healthcare facility to be centrally located at the intersection of White Oak Drive and NH Route 111 (Kingston Road). Mr. Saari indicated that also present were Erik Harmon, Robbie Woodburn, Julia Clark and Attorney Sharon Somers.

Mr. Saari posted the plan on the screen and showed existing Ridge and Boulders complexes and Campus Crossing on 204 acres of which 130 are encumbered by easements for Conservation, DOT, gas, a use easement and a view easement.

Mr. Saari described the proposed building which would be three floors. He pointed out the existing dog park and pickleball court. He noted a traffic study would be needed and the project would have review by Department of Transportation. Mr. Saari indicated there would be subsurface treatment.

Mr. Saari indicated he would not go into details tonight without a wetland scientist present but noted there would be AoT (State Alteration of Terrain) for the size of the project and Wetlands Conditional Use Permit, state and local for what he described as three degraded wetland areas.

Robbie Woodburn, the landscape architect, indicated on the plan the structures that would remain such as the park, pickleball, and loop but the gazebo would shift over and the shed would move. She did not go into specific detail but indicated there would be native street trees.

Erik Harmon, the architect, indicated the project went before the Zoning Board of Adjustment for variances which were denied. He indicated the building would be designed for assisted living and memory care and wrap around two enclosed courtyards. He indicated the change to Mansard treatment dormer style roof since the height variance was not approved. He noted there would be parking, an elevator and central building entrance and a multipurpose room. He noted the proposal for skilled nursing and rehab on the second floor and showed dining locations and staff training. Mr. Harmon indicated there would be a second phase in about a year and a half to build individual living units.

Chair Plumer opened the discussion to the public for comments.

Karen Prior of Pickpocket Road expressed concerns about the size of the building and the lot merger.

Fred Bird of 84 Kingston Road expressed concerns with impact to the neighborhood, noise from generators and a steady stream of shipping and receiving of food and construction noise. He requested a buffer of spruce, hemlock or fir trees that would not lose their leaves. Mr. Bird expressed concerns with traffic on 111 and the speed limit which we would like to see reduced. He noted the massive building doesn't fit. He noted he would rather see trees than a dog park. He expressed concerns with elderly persons having to cross the busy highway to see their loved ones.

Paul Roberge of 15 Pickpocket Road expressed concerns that when construction happened before there were promises of planting and removing invasives and creating a ditch to keep the water out of his driveway and they were not maintained and water backs up.

Sheila Grinnell of 78 Kingston Road expressed concerns with the water table and underground construction. She noted since Boulders & Ridge, her five-acre backyard is water logged.

Ruth Hooten of 61 Kingston Road discussed the slope above her pond and runoff from the paved parking lot. She expressed concerns about lighting coming into her home, and blasting. She noted this is a rural area not a cityscape.

Laura Davies of Pickpocket Road expressed concerns about the size of the building, in the low density residential district, comparing the size to six YMCAs, three Hampton Inns or three former High School buildings, and Exeter Hospital which is 291,000 SF.. She stated that she did not feel this project was in keeping with the Special Exception approval. She opined that this was bypassing zoning with the lot merger.

Sheila Roberge of 15 Pickpocket Road referenced PEA and how they are a town within a town but have been here for 200 years.

Ms. English stated that she felt Riverwoods was an exceptional facility but expressed concerns with the separation of resident couples. She expressed concerns about traffic and the busy intersection and requested to be provided with the ratio of staff to residents and indicated she would like to see affordable housing for the nursing staff as a solution to the staffing issue because increasing the number of residents would only require more staff and not solve the issue. She indicated she would like to see the master plan, the big picture going forward, because a long time ago they said this is it, we're done. She indicated she would like to see the water issues addressed as she has seen Ms. Hooton's land and it is flooded.

Vice-Chair Brown questioned why there were no residents in attendance.

Karen Prior stated that she has been going through this for three decades and when Boulders and Ridge were built they came on the property to test wells without permission and haven't kept their promises.

Attorney Somers replied that there were no residents present because this is a conceptual discussion and it was premature to have them here now. She noted all permits were done properly and asked to see facts to support the accusation they were not.

Vice-Chair Brown noted there would be AoT for the project and that is a serious state process. The applicant has started the traffic study as part of the process. He noted the Board is sensitive to wetlands impact and also has a landscape expert on the Board. He noted the Board would get involved in lighting and do their best to ensure there are mechanisms in place for maintenance.

Vice-Chair Brown asked if the stuff in the upper left corner of the plan is in the buffer. Attorney Somers noted the pickleball court and dog park were part of the original approval.

Sheila Grinnell asked what body would be responsible for the water impacts underground. Chair Plumer responded that the state would be involved. Ms. Grinnell asked how they are represented here. Chair Plumer noted there would also be a wetland soil scientist and stormwater plan and annual reporting. Traffic is handled by DOT. Ms. Grinnell questioned how well the state did if so many parcels were inundated since Boulders & Ridge.

Mr. Roberge noted that he has backland that is not usable and does sugaring and is afraid his trees will die. He noted Boulders obstructs the natural flow of water and diverts the water to the neighbors.

Mr. Goodenough of 4 Pickpocket Road stated that the Jolly Rand trail is the lowest and there is a culvert under the road. He noted he has to cross to the road to get to his own barn. He noted the building would be 140 times the size of his home.

Ms. Martel agreed she would like to see more detail of the master plan as to future projects and the number of residents.

Ms. Belanger stated she would like to see Riverwoods offer transportation to the residents while it's not in the Board's purview.

Chair Plumer asked how the site was selected, and Mr. Saari stated it was the only available upland site not encumbered by easements. Mr. Harmon noted they wanted to have the healthcare component and not displace residents.

Fred Bird noted that with the nursing stations gone there would be more units built.

Ms. English asked about Campus Crossing and cars parking on the road. Mr. Saari indicated there were parking issues and their goal is to have surplus parking.

V. OTHER BUSINESS

- Master Plan Discussion

Mr. Grueter indicated they are waiting for the bike and pedestrian plan to be finalized.

- Field Modifications

- Bond and/or Letter of Credit Reductions and Release

Mr. Sharples indicated a bond was returned to the utility for Energy Way and that Ms. McEvoy has been busy releasing another batch of old accounts.

VII. TOWN PLANNER’S ITEMS

VIII. CHAIRPERSON’S ITEMS

Chair Plumer noted the next meeting is on July 11th.

IX. PB REPRESENTATIVE’S REPORT ON “OTHER COMMITTEE ACTIVITY”

Ms. Belanger indicated the All Board’s meeting would be rescheduled to sometime in September.

X. ADJOURN

Ms. Belanger motioned to adjourn the meeting at 8:41 PM. Ms. English seconded the motion. A vote was taken, all were in favor, the motion passed unanimously.

Respectfully submitted.

Daniel Hoijer,
Recording Secretary
Via Exeter TV