

**TOWN OF EXETER
PLANNING BOARD
NOWAK ROOM
10 FRONT STREET
APRIL 23, 2026
DRAFT MINUTES
7:00 PM**

I. PRELIMINARIES:

BOARD MEMBERS PRESENT BY ROLL CALL: Chair Langdon Plumer, Vice-Chair Aaron Brown, John Grueter, Clerk, Gwen English, Jennifer Martel, Marty Kennedy, Alternate Dean Hubbard, Alternate Sam MacLeod, Alternate Elaine Hayes, and Select Board Representative Nancy Belanger.

STAFF PRESENT: Town Planner Dave Sharples and Carol Ogilvie

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

III. NEW BUSINESS:

1. The continuation of application 26-3 for J. Caley Associates for site plan review for the proposed demolition of the existing dry-cleaning building and proposed development of a 4-story building for 22-room hotel
C-2 Highway Commercial Zoning District
Tax Map #65-125
Planning Board Case #26-3.

Chair Plumer read the public hearing notice.

Mr. Sharples noted that this case was continued from February because of noticing issues but was not accepted by the Board. He noted plans and supporting documents dated 1/27, 1/29, and 3/16 were submitted. Shoreland CUP was reduced and there was no review by the Conservation Commission. TRC met on February 19th and a letter is included in the Board's packet.

Ms. Ogilvie noted the case was ready to be heard.

Ms. Belanger motioned to open Planning Board Case #26-3. Mr. Grueter seconded the motion. A vote was taken, all were in favor, the motion passed unanimously.

Christian Smith of Beals & Associates presented the application on behalf of Jeff Caley who was present. Also present is Attorney Josh Lanzetta and traffic engineer Kim Havarsian.

42 Mr. Smith noted the Board reviewed at the last meeting how the application was different than the
43 previous. The plan is for a 22-room micro hotel with workout facility, a coffee shop, and a small lounge
44 on upper floors for the guests. They have eliminated the kiosk out front and head in stalls. He discussed
45 porous pavement and walkway. There is no change to the existing footprint. He discussed stormwater
46 infiltration and treatment. They are requesting two waivers, one for close to 5' from no disturbance
47 zone and light spillage toward the manor because existing lights on 20' poles are drowning them out.
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49 Mr. Grueter asked about parking spaces, and he indicated 26 with 4 of those for employees.
50

51 Chair Plumer asked about snow and Mr. Smith showed temporary snow storage areas on the plan for
52 smaller storms. He noted they can't store snow in parking stalls so it would be trucked off. Ms. English
53 asked where people would go to park while snow is being removed. Ms. Hayes agreed with concerns
54 that they would go to the bank lot. Mr. Grueter recommended the desk provide instructions to guests.
55 Mr. Kennedy noted they had enough parking as far as zoning goes and the easement agreement allows
56 it also. Attorney Lanzetta noted the average maximum occupancy, statewide, is at about 62% which
57 would leave 12 open spots regularly.
58

59 Mr. Kennedy asked about a loading space. Mr. Smith described small deliveries dealt with by the
60 manager/owner. Mr. Kennedy noted he believed they are required to have a loading space.
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62 Ms. Martel asked about the garbage and delivery truck movement pattern. Mr. Smith showed on the
63 plan how he believes the drivers would enter and exit. Ms. English noted a parking spot would block
64 movement through the manor. Ms. Martel noted it would be helpful to see the exit movement on the
65 plans which only show entering. Mr. Smith noted the dumpsters for the Manor and the proposed
66 business are next to each other and the truck for the Manor is likely to do the same maneuver. Attorney
67 Lanzetta noted they have been sharing the trash burden for decades. Vice-Chair Brown agreed there
68 was no obvious alternative location. Chair Plumer questioned conditioning no late night pick up of trash.
69 Vice-Chair Brown noted he was uncomfortable with the loading issue. He recommended numbering the
70 spots and reserving some for loading. Mr. Sharples agreed with Mr. Kennedy that the site plan
71 regulations require a loading zone (section 9.2) for a service establishment so they should be prepared
72 to submit a waiver request, but he needs to review it further to make sure it can be a waiver and not
73 trigger a variance.
74

75 Ms. English asked about the lounge area and it being used by people not staying there. Mr. Smith noted
76 it is intended for guests. Mr. Kennedy noted if they are bringing people from outside that changes
77 things. Mr. Sharples agreed that a restaurant or bar would require one parking space for every three
78 seats. Ms. Hayes asked how they would deter people from coming from outside.
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80 Ms. Martel asked about drainage. Mr. Smith described the downspout to pervious pavement system.
81 Ms. Martel referred to peer review and stormwater draining off site currently and if they had explored
82 ways to remediate that. Mr. Smith noted there was not enough room and the slope and ADA access.
83 Pavers are not feasible in the drive isle but there is going to be a reduction of flow in two points.
84

85 Attorney Todd Fahey representing Needham Bank noted that Margaret Watson, Senior VP was present.
86 He provided handouts to the Board. He expressed concerns with pedestrian flow with traffic and a lot of
87 trucks and the bank's drive through location, use of the lounge which is super important and snow
88 removal. He questioned what kind of hotel it would be, such as extended stay. He noted he still has
89 concerns with the reciprocal easement and doing a lot on such a small parcel. He stated that the
90 applicant could not offload their ambitious burdens onto his client.

91
92 Margaret Watson stated that Boards in Massachusetts are strict about drive-through lanes and she is
93 concerned with trucks coming through the drive-through lane and safety.

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95 Attorney Chris Hilson, representing the owners of the Margarita's lot stated one of the owners, Steward
96 Sharf, was present and that he had the same concerns as with the last record and would like to bring
97 that record forward. He noted the application was very similar to what was denied, both for lodging and
98 more so going in and out with a hotel. Prior application had bare minimum parking, and this has bare
99 minimum parking. He noted it would burden the cross easement and that his client has parking rights,
100 but they are using all of their parking for themselves and access though the back of the bank lot and
101 exiting the Manor. He stated that there was no easement through the Manor. He expressed concerns
102 with pedestrian safety, doing too much on a small lot, and snow issues. He stated that the Board
103 reviewed the difference between applications, but he felt the decision was premature because they
104 hadn't heard the application first and encouraged them to revisit that. He stated they can't repeat the
105 application after being denied. The same problems persist and the application is not materially
106 different. He requested the Board deny the application in its current configuration.

107
108 Stewart Sharf stated that it was a tiny piece of land, and they were imposing a significant use and should
109 be required to take snow off site like he is. They are taking away their right to use spaces by fully
110 consuming the use of them.

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112 Attorney Lanzetta responded that he would like to bring the record into this hearing. Mr. Sharples will
113 check with town counsel on the process to bring the record forward. He noted he provided the chain of
114 title, and the easements were acceptable to the Board and town counsel. The Fisher doctrine is not
115 being correctly applied, and the Board has already ruled on whether the applications were different. It
116 is a different use in a different zone than MUND. The ingress and egress issues at Needham Bank were
117 moderated by the Planning Board. The configuration was used by Blue Ribbon for 70 years and the
118 other parties could potentially fill their lot too, so it cuts both ways. He noted the application complies
119 fully with the ordinance.

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121 Mr. Kennedy asked Mr. Fahey if he considered discontinuing the lower driveway shown 100' away and
122 working together with the applicant. Mr. Fahey responded that they are doing too much at their
123 expense and to now ask they expend expenses to reconfigure parking. Mr. Kennedy noted they could
124 get more parking and make it look nice. Attorney Lanzetta pointed out the mulch bed and noted they
125 offered to work with the bank to create parking in the underutilized space which could be 6-8 spaces.

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127 Ms. English noted she struggled with the access easement to Maclean Manor and asked if town counsel
128 could look at that. Mr. Sharples will ask.

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Ms. Belanger asked about the light trespass waiver and why it couldn't be kept on site. Mr. Smith noted the pole mounted light on the other property would wash out their dark sky compliant lights, but it was grandfathered. He indicated he could go back and look at it and will look at loading.

Vice Chair Brown encouraged Mr. Smith to look at the lounge use and limited snow storage.

Ms. Martel asked about ADA parking out back instead of in the front. This would require entrance through the back door while the entrance and lobby is in the front. Mr. Smith indicated he would try to reconfigure it but it has to be sloped to comply with ADA.

Ms. Martel asked to see the full truck turning in and out and expressed concerns with snow storage where there are three trees in back that can't be used for snow storage.

Ms. English asked to hear from the architect about the design. Mr. Smith will reach out to him.

Attorney Lanzetta confirmed:

- 9.12 loading zone including drive pattern
- Mulch bed issue
- Truck turn radius
- Clarify use of amenity space
- Lighting plan - evaluate for compliance
- Snow removal
- ADA space location

Mr. Sharples described limited-service hotel and noted it doesn't mean a café and bar.

Traffic Engineer Kim Havarsian noted the lounge was internal and noted he could have understated the 13 vehicle trips for a retail strip plaza.

Mr. Grueter motioned to continue Planning Board Case #26-3 to the Board's May 14, 2026 meeting at 7 PM in the Nowak Room. Vice-Chair Brown seconded the motion. A vote was taken, all were in favor, the motion passed unanimously.

IV. OLD BUSINESS

APPROVAL OF MINUTES - *Tabled*

February 12, 2026
April 9, 2026

V. OTHER BUSINESS

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- Master Plan Discussion

Mr. Sharples noted they met this morning to go over the Bike & Pedestrian Plan and had 50 recommendations. DPW is joining them

- Field Modifications
- Bond and/or Letter of Credit Reductions and Release

Mr. Sharples reported another return was picked up for Continental Drive.

VI. TOWN PLANNER’S ITEMS

Mr. Sharples reported that he applied for the Safe Streets and Roads grant, which is an 80/20 grant so if awarded the town would ask the voters for the 20%. He noted May 26th is the deadline and described the \$2.5 million up to \$25 million dollar grant and the project outlined on Epping Road to the CMS Middle School. RPC already did a safety action plan so that affords them to apply for the implementation grant.

Mr. Sharples reminded that election of officers will be done at the May meeting.

Mr. Sharples will look into the vegetation that was ripped out by the homes near the Mobil station which was a condition of approval.

VII. CHAIRPERSON’S ITEMS

Ms. Belanger asked about appointed Elaine Hayes to the Housing Advisory Committee.

Ms. English motioned to appoint Elaine Hayes to the Housing Advisory Committee as a representative of the Planning Board. Ms. Belanger seconded the motion. A vote was taken, all were in favor, the motion passed unanimously.

Ms. Belanger will follow up on renewals for members Brown, Martel and Hubbard at the Select Board meeting on Monday night.

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

IX. ADJOURN

Mr. Grueter motioned to adjourn the meeting at 9:25 PM. Ms. Belanger seconded the motion. A vote was taken, all were in favor, the motion passed unanimously.

Respectfully submitted.

Daniel Hoijer,
Recording Secretary (Via Exeter TV)