



Town of Merrimack, New Hampshire

Community Development Department

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Planning - Zoning - Economic Development - Conservation

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MERRIMACK PLANNING BOARD

MEETING MINUTES

TUESDAY, DECEMBER 20, 2016

Planning Board members present: Robert Best, Alastair Millns, Tom Koenig, Lynn Christensen, Desirea Falt and Alternates Nelson Disco and Jeff Sebring.

Planning Board members absent: Michael Redding and Vincent Russo.

Staff present: Planning and Zoning Administrator Jillian Harris and Zina Jordan, Recording Secretary.

1. Call to Order

Robert Best called the meeting to order at 7:02 p.m. and designated Nelson Disco and Jeff Sebring to sit for Michael Redding and Vincent Russo, respectively.

2. Planning & Zoning Administrator's Report

None.

3. Discussion of Capital Improvement Program for Town of Merrimack

Town Manager Eileen Cabanel presented major projects and funding sources in the 2017-2023 Capital Improvement Program (CIP) with a focus on 2017-2018. Public Works Director Kyle Fox answered the Board's technical questions. Both stressed the urgency of the Highway Garage Renovation & Replacement and the bridge replacements. Discussion ensued concerning the South Fire Station, sidewalks, DW Hwy/Wire Road Intersection, funding sources and schedules. Eileen Cabanel and Finance Director/Assistant Town Manager, Paul Micali explained that scheduling of projects is based on funding availability. That is why some urgent projects are scheduled years in the future.

On a motion by Lynn Christensen, and seconded by Nelson Disco, the Board voted 7-0-0 to rank the projects as follows: South Fire Station "Urgent", Bridge Replacement – Bedford Road/Baboosic Brook "Urgent", Bridge Replacement - US 3 (DW Highway)/Baboosic Brook "Urgent/Necessary"; Stormwater Drainage Improvements "Necessary", Paving-Infrastructure Improvements "Necessary", Paving-Infrastructure Improvements – Gravel Roads "Desirable", Paving – DW Highway "Desirable", Paving-Infrastructure Improvements Executive Park Drive "Necessary", Highway Garage Renovation & Replacement "Urgent", Wire Road Intersection Improvements "Desirable", Turkey Hill Road Intersection Improvements "Desirable", Merrimack River Boat Ramp Access Improvement (formerly Griffin Street) "Desirable", Seaverns Bridge Canoe Launch Ramp Access Improvement "Desirable", Daniel Webster & Baboosic Lake Sidewalks "Desirable", Baboosic Lake Road Sidewalk (Joppa Road to Madeline

Bennett) “Desirable”, Sewer Line Extensions (Mayflower & McQuestion Sewer Basins “Necessary”, Library HVAC “Desirable”, Library Sprinkler System “Desirable”, New Library “Deferrable”, New Athletic Fields “Deferrable”, Executive Park Pump Station “Desirable”, Wastewater Treatment Plan Phase III & Pump Station Upgrades “Necessary”, Four-year Sanitary Sewer System Evaluation Program “Necessary”.

The Board also made the following recommendations to the Town Council: More consideration of roundabouts in road projects where they make sense, enough width for bike lanes or wide shoulders on Baboosic Brook Bridge, and thanks for consideration of sidewalks.

4. Discussion of Capital Improvement Program for School Administrative Unit #26.

School District Business Administrator Matt Shevenel and School Board Vice-Chair Andy Schneider explained the process for developing the CIP, presented and explained the CIP items, funding and scheduling, and stressed the urgency of HVAC Equipment and paving. None of the items are new. Discussion ensued concerning Field Upgrades and Consolidation of Special Services/SAU Offices. Lynn Christensen and Alastair Millns suggested razing the green house and extending the high school rather than building new office space elsewhere.

On a motion made by Nelson Disco and seconded by Desirea Falt, the Board voted 7-0-0 to rank the projects as follows: HVAC Equipment and Consolidate Special Services/SAU Offices “Urgent”; Roofing, Paving/Sidewalk, Paving, Drainage, Asbestos Removal, Bleacher Upgrade, Field Upgrade, Window Replacement, and Technology Infrastructure Upgrade “Necessary”.

The Board also made the following recommendations to the School Board: Consider all options for SAU Office space and thanks for sidewalks on O’Gara Road.

5. 4 Executive Park, LLC. (applicant/owner) - Conceptual discussion of potential site plan options for either retail or residential re-development of the parcel is located at 4 Executive Park Drive in the C-2 (General Commercial) and Aquifer Conservation Districts. Tax Map 4D, Lot 076.

Jillian Harris said that conceptual plans show two potential concepts: full retail buildout of the parcel in comparison to a proposal for multi-family residential apartments and a clubhouse. The preferred residential plan would require relief from the Zoning Board of Adjustment (ZBA) for multi-family residential use west of the FE. Everett Turnpike, for density, and to allow residential use in the commercial district.

Attorney Greg Michael, Bernstein Shur, noted the Planning Board’s concerns about the Woodspring Hotel development. This site is 14.87 acres in the industrial corridor area. This is an economic revitalization area. The existing hotel/conference center is being demolished because it is unfeasible to fix and reuse. No one is interested in it. The site is near Shaw’s Plaza and abuts a residential area. It is difficult to attract commercial uses in this area. He listed other commercial sites in Merrimack and Bedford that are having difficulty attracting tenants. Several possibilities for this site did not work out.

Attorney Michael cited the Master Plan, which encourages greater flexibility, revitalizing underused and vacant sites and promotes mixed-use higher density development. A residential use would work well at this location. It would not require significant site improvement. 74,000 square feet of retail would increase traffic by 500 vehicles at p.m. peak hours. Sidewalks would be installed to Cinemagic. Shops and medical uses already exist that residential housing would support and to which residents could walk.

Attorney Michael predicted that a residential use would generate \$400,000 in tax revenue to the town. Residents could support area businesses without driving. PUD standards would allow 225-250 units, but only 200 one-, two- and three-bedroom units are proposed. New Hampshire lacks reasonable affordable housing for workers. Young people want to live near where they work.

This is a difficult site to develop because of the configuration of roadways.

Planning Board members supported a residential use, suggesting greenery and landscaping, amenities and making the traffic work. Tom Koenig was hesitant to approve yet more 3-4-story apartment buildings and to add to traffic at the intersection. Attorney Michael responded that commercial use would generate more traffic and that the applicant would do a traffic study.

There was no public comment.

6. Discussion/possible action regarding other items of concern

Chairman Best announced that the Planning Board's annual meeting with Town Council is scheduled for May 2017.

Chairman Best announced that a letter received from Beth Burns, 5 Spruce Street, concerning Monahan Companies and Merrimack Premium Outlets would be placed on file at the Community Development Department.

Nelson Disco announced a January 5, 2017, public hearing on ATP funding of the Souhegan River Trail.

CIP Deliberations:

The Board voted 7-0-0 to recommend the rankings of all Town Capital Improvement Program items, on a motion made by Lynn Christensen and seconded by Nelson Disco.

The Board voted 7-0-0 to recommend to the rankings of all School Capital Improvement Program items, on a motion made by Nelson Disco and seconded by Desirea Falt.

7. Approval of Minutes – December 6, 2016

The minutes of December 6, 2016, were approved, by a vote of 6-0-1, on a motion made by Lynn Christensen and seconded by Alastair Millns. Tom Koenig abstained.

8. Adjourn

The meeting was adjourned at 9:57 p.m., by a vote of 7-0-0, on a motion made by Alastair Millns and seconded by Desirea Falt.