

CITY OF LACONIA PLANNING BOARD
6:30 PM City Hall - Armand A. Bolduc Council Chamber
Accepted July 7, 2020

6/2/2020 - Minutes

1. CALL TO ORDER

Vice Char E. Bones called the meeting to order at 6:30 PM after reading the introductions for the electronic meetings

2. ROLL CALL

Members physically present: Charlie St. Clair, Ed Bones, Michael DellaVecchia

Members remotely present via Zoom: Sarah Jenna, Stacy Soucy, Jewel Fox, Kirk Beattie, Rich MacNeill,

Absent: Peter Brunette, Jay Forester, Brett Beliveau, David Bownes

Stacy Soucy was named a voting member and all remote members were alone in the room.

3. RECORDING SECRETARY

Kalena Graham

Zoom Host: Assistant Planner Rob Mora

4. STAFF IN ATTENDANCE

Planning Director Dean Trefethen and Assistant Planner Rob Mora

5. ACCEPTANCE OF MINUTES FROM PREVIOUS MEETINGS

5.I. Acceptance of minutes from May 5

Motion to accept the minutes from May 5 made by M. DellaVecchia, C. St. Clair seconded.

6. PRESENTATIONS

7. EXTENSIONS

8. CONTINUED PUBLIC HEARINGS, CONSIDERATION AND POSSIBLE VOTE Note: The purpose of this agenda section is for the Board to continue the Public Hearing for the applicant and the public to provide input. The Board may also deliberate the application, decide and conduct a final vote at this time.

8.I. PL2020-0003SP; 1330 Union Ave; proposal to construct 32 condominium units, garages, and open parking

Applicant: Jon Rokeh addressed the board via Zoom. He went through the engineering and site plan changes since the last meeting. The landscaping plan has been updated and there is a written agreement, which is included on the plan, with the abutting property, 1290 Union Ave. The sign has been finalized. Chris Barton has indicated that the sign was something he and his father put together and when he leaves, the sign will go with him.

J. Rokeh went over the plan. They added five more parking spaces for visitors along the cemetery abutter. Each unit has a two car garage and an outdoor space. He showed the landscape plan. More trees were filled in along Union Ave and along the 1290 Union Ave abutter. The applicant added berms, and fences along with the vegetation. The applicant did a little more on the garages. Added a hip roof with some windows across the front. The applicant has the Alteration of Terrain permit from the state already. All the shoreland applications are filled out and getting submitted. M. DellaVecchia asked how many bedrooms each unit will have and was told three. Each floor will be similar to each other. C. St. Clair appreciates what is happening with the sign. He is not very happy with the outcome, but realizes it's out of his hands. He was curious about the landscaping trees by the garage closest to the 1290 Union Ave side and whether or not they will be saved. J. Rokeh said any trees located where the buildings are proposed will be taken down. They are trying to save the trees along Union. C. St. Clair asked what is being planted along the 1290 Union property line and was told spruces and furs, which will be a minimum of 6 ft tall when planted. C. St. Clair asked if the trees near the back of the bookstore will be saved and was told they will try to be kept but not if they get damaged. J. Fox asked if the unit owners will be storing things like jet skis or motorcycles or snowmobiles in the extra bay of the garage. J. Rokeh noted that if the unit owners are going to use the garage area for storage, they can't impede at least on the spaces, has to be indoors with the garage door closed. The entire garage can't be filled with storage.

The public hearing opened at 6:54 PM

There was no one from the public to speak for or against the application.

The public hearing closed at 6:56 PM

K. Beattie asked J. Rokeh about the demolition and construction schedule. The applicant still needs the final shoreland permit from the State and will depend on the outcome with the COVID virus. Possible demo in the fall or spring.

C. St. Clair asked if the property will be maintained since the schedule is far out and if a billboard showing the renderings of the future site. J. Rokeh said they will probably have a billboard as like when Christmas Island was being built, if demolition is delayed to fall. J. Fox had concern with the density of the project and that the site is very tight. This lot started out zoned as Commercial which allowed 6 units per acre and the 60 foot height. And then zoning got changed from Commercial to Urban Commercial with 20 units per acre which is pretty much impossible with a 3 bedroom/2 bath unit and a 2-car garage but the greenspace and setbacks were set as the average of the two abutters on each side. Then the zoning was changed again so only 10% greenspace is required and the setbacks are very small. The zoning of 20 units per acre is almost meaningless. The lot is going from 37 bedrooms to 96 bedrooms and from 48 parking spaces to 111. She noted it is hard to visualize how it will all fit. She asked for a site walk with stakes to know where the buildings will be and a traffic study. J. Rokeh showed the site plan and explained the process and stated that there would be no way to stake out the proposed without demolition first. Planning Director D. Trefethen stated the roadway widths are private driveways, so the roadway rules don't necessarily apply all the time because it's basically a large driveway. They are wide enough for vehicles to pass and the 30 ft between the garages is more than adequate to make a turn. He noted that there is more parking on the subject parcel than the average condo project. He understands that during certain times of the year parking is at a premium. He noted that the applicant is providing more than required for parking.

M. DellaVecchia went over the reason he joined the board. He noted that new buildings coming in should be architecturally aesthetic to match the rest of the city and that there are few opportunities to improve the city. He feels that folks across the lake should've been notified. His concern is the height of the buildings being over 70 feet from the water. He would like to see a balloon to show the actual height of the buildings. He feels you can't shoehorn units just because it's allowed.

C. St. Clair agreed with M. DellaVecchia but would like the folks that have concerns to voice their opinion when rules are changing and put in effect. This is problem, people don't react until something happens. It has also been before the board for a few months and in the news papers as well. If a project

is going by the rules, it's hard to deny.

C. St. Clair asked J. Rokeh about the fence between 1290 Union and the subject property and there will be a 4 ft white vinyl fence (not chain link) from Union to the Lake and where there will be a break in fencing, it will be heavily vegetated and bermed.

J. Fox made the point was made that they are following the rules but when this project was started the rule was that there was a max of 6 units per acre because it was zoned commercial. If that were the case that could remove the 8 bottom garages on the main drive and would bring the units down a whole story. Going back to the original rules that were in effect when this was started would go a long way. She brought up the fact that the Margate just down the street is only allowed 35 ft in height and asked what would stop someone from building a bunch of tall buildings down Union Ave on the lake, it will open the door to what we are accepting. E. Bones noted that when the zoning change was brought to the board, it was discussed and accepted. It would be unfortunate for the board, because we finally had an application come forward, and second guessing the changes. He feels its unfortunate. He has no issue with the project. He noted that an applicant is here with a proposal that meets the criteria as well as done what the board has asked. He doesn't see how that makes sense. If the board would like to change the zoning, it would be at a different time. He feels the applicant deserves the board's time to vote on the proposal presented, regardless of the personal opinions.

Staff Review: Planning Director D. Trefethen read the staff review. He has spoken with the two property owners (1290 & 1330 Union) as well as the owner of Annie's Bookstore, a number of times. The motel is ready to move on. He understands that this project will be a very big change for the area. He clarified the zone change and the history of the application. He understands the concerns but doesn't believe it will cause any major issues.

Motion to approve the site plan application with the dates and conditions as stated in the staff review made by S. Jenna, K. Beattie seconded. M. DellaVecchia said the Planning Board are guardians of the City and he just can't believe that there's not enough people aware of the project. He emphasized that the board has opportunity to do better than shoehorn 32 units on this property. He is all for development, but feels the proposed units are too much for the area. S. Jenna's opinion is that it is allowed and even before the zoning change. This has been before the board since fall and people have had time to weigh in. C. St. Clair agreed with the last statement. He brought up the camp proposal on Big Island that was stopped at the Zoning Board and is surprised there is such little comment from the public. S. Soucy added that she was against the project in the beginning but has been studying and feels this would be a big improvement. The motion passed with Vice Chair E. Bones, C. St. Clair, R. MacNeill, K. Beattie, S. Soucy, S. Jenna in favor and M. DellaVecchia, J. Fox opposed.

- 8.II. 05-015SU amd; Hilliard Road, Marsha Ann Way, Hillard Heights; proposal to amend the subdivision to expand the existing 40 ft right of way to 50 ft

Applicant: C. Duprey addressed the board via Zoom on behalf of NH Lake Holdings LLC. Marsha Ann Way is a paved access into a three lot subdivision. There is one existing home. The old guidelines required a 40 ft right of way. The proposal is to widen the existing right of way to 50 ft to comply with current regs and extend the length northerly from the single-family lot to the boundary of the Akwa Verdant lot.

The public hearing opened at 7:37 PM

There was no one from the public to speak for or against the application.

The public hearing closed at 7:38 PM

Staff Review: Planning Director D. Trefethen read the staff review. Straight forward proposal. The purposes of the increase is to facilitate possible future development. There are no plans before the department.

Motion to approve the extension of the right of way with the dates and conditions as stated in the staff review made by M. DellaVecchia, S. Jenna seconded. All voted in favor.

9. PUBLIC HEARINGS, POSSIBLE CONSIDERATION AND VOTE Note: The purpose of this agenda section is for the Board to have a presentation from the applicant and open a Public Hearing for the public to provide input. The Board may also deliberate the application, decide and conduct a final vote at this time.

9.I. PL2019-0069SPamd; Endicott North, Pine Hollow Campground; proposal to add 36 more lots

Applicant: Bob Heavey addressed the board in person. He explained that Pine Hollow had purchased the lot in front of the existing campground and has already merged the lot. The proposal is to add 36 more campsites on the front field as an addition to the existing campground. Most of the amenities that need like bathhouse, house, laundry mat and cleanout station already existing. The proposal will include a new pool and bathhouse as well as office.

The public hearing opened at 7:43 PM

There was no one from the public to speak for or against the application.

The public hearing closed at 7:44 PM

C. St. Clair asked how long it would take to operation and was told hoping to be in operation by motorcycle week in August.

Staff Review: Planning Director D. Trefethen read the staff review. The lot has been merged with the existing campground and the water, sewer and utility plans have been rigorously reviewed. He noted condition #2, c to have no permanent structures allowed on the site. B. Heavey addressed that fact. He opposes the condition. He went around to all the campgrounds in Laconia and all of them have structures. Most of the sites are seasonal and people like to have a place to store small items. He will be planting Rose of Sharon along Endicott. He has been a camper himself for over 50 years. Planning Director D. Trefethen stated the reason for the condition is that some campground, not this one, over the years get cluttered and trying to avoid that. C. St. Clair asked K. Beattie if there are any issues with travel around the decks or sheds and was told they do drive throughs and he has not any issues with the subject property. Planning Director D. Trefethen added that it is aesthetics and other campgrounds aren't as nice.

Motion to approve the addition of 36 sites with the dates and conditions as stated in staff review, and removing condition 2, c made by C. St. Clair, J. Fox seconded. All voted in favor.

9.II. PL2019-0253amd1; 781 Union Ave; Proposal to amend the existing approval to add 396 sq ft to existing footprint for access

Motion to accept the application as complete made by S. Jenna, C. St. Clair seconded. All voted in favor.

S. Smith addressed the board in person, representing Antaeus Holdings LLC. He went over the history of the applications so far. The 396 sf addition is proposed in the rear of the building for access due to the fact that the front stairway does not meet code. S. Smith noted the parking lot is paved but landscaping still needs to be done.

The public hearing opened at 8:06 PM

There was no one from the public to speak for or against the application.

The public hearing closed at 8:07 PM

Staff Review: Planning Director D. Trefethen read the staff review. The proposal is straight forward and a minor a minor adjustment to the previously approved site plan.

Motion to approve the amendment with the dates and conditions as stated int eh staff review made by S. Jenna, C. St. Clair seconded. All voted in favor.

10. APPLICATION ACCEPTANCE Note: The purpose of this agenda section is to publicize that a Planning Board application has been submitted AND for the Planning Board to determine if the application is complete enough to begin the review process. PUBLIC INPUT IS NOT TAKEN AT THIS TIME. If the application is accepted the Planning Board will schedule a Public Hearing at which time the application will be heard and public comments will be accepted. Information about applications can be obtained on the city's web site or by calling the Planning office.

11. NEW BUSINESS

12. OLD BUSINESS

C. St. Clair brought up Barton's and the fact that he is not thrilled with the height of the building on the water's edge. He is not thrilled to drive down Weirs Blvd and see the wall of houses across Paugus Bay either but it is happening all around us. Unless there's an outcry from public to make the concerns known. This won't be the last project on Union Ave. He agrees with M. DellaVecchia and J. Fox. J. Fox wondered if the lack of attendance had to do with the virtual meetings. Planning Director D. Trefethen appreciated the comment and it could be true but also pointed out that people don't have to be present, emails and regular mail are also accepted.

13. PLANNING DEPT REPORT

14. LIAISON REPORTS

Conservation Commission report: S. Soucy gave a summary of what he commission has been up to and future happenings.

15. OTHER BUSINESS

C. St. Clair received a phone call who asked what the story was with 12 Veteran's Square, the old Holy Grail site, in regards to the stained-glass windows. Planning Director D. Trefethen responded. The building is listed on the National Registry of historic buildings however, that doesn't mean the owner can't do anything. Staff is aware that the present owner has been in there working and have been in contact with them multiple times regarding permits and asking about future intensions of the building. Answers have been elusive. The work was put under a cease and desist and have since received an after the fact building permit. We don't know the status of the windows as of yet. S. Soucy noted the newspaper said the windows were returned to the church in Lakeport. The interesting part of this is that gathering information on the property last week, the reporter told him that someone called the paper to complain about the windows. He stated that if there is something going on concerning a building in the city, the place to complain is the building dept.

16. ADJOURNMENT

With no other business, Vice Chair E. Bones adjourned the meeting at 8:21 PM

Respectfully,
K. Graham