

**DRAFT
Minutes
Hartford Planning Commission
September 23, 2019**

Present: Bruce Riddle, John Reid, Toby Dayman, Dave Sherman, Robin Adair Logan, Kim Souza, Selectboard Liaison, and Jo-Ann Ells, Zoning Administrator

Absent: None

Administrative Matters

1. Minutes

Toby Dayman moved to approve the minutes of July 15, 2019, John Reid seconded and the motion passed unanimously.

2. Projects receiving Administrative Approval

Bruce Riddle reviewed administrative permits issued for additional parking spaces at 118 Prospect Street and changes to landscaping for the Brookemeade Circle Condos.

3. Availability for the next Public Hearing

Everyone anticipated being available for the October 28th Hearing.

4. Public comment

None

Public Hearing

Bruce Riddle opened the Public Hearing, introduced the Commission and Staff, explained the Interested Party Rule and administered the oath.

1. Application #19-15 by New England Central Railroad, Inc. (owner) and Execusuite, LLC (applicant) for Site Development Plan Approval under section 260-45 of the Hartford Zoning Regulations for amendments to a Parking Facility, lot 46-0047-000, Gates Street, White River Junction, in the CB zoning district.

Tim Sidore, Jim Wasser, Doug Sonsalla', Paul Simon and Adam Morse were present.

Jo-Ann Ells noted that the Commission had approved the parking lot in 2018 and the applicant was seeking approval of additional parking spaces.

Jim Wasser gave an overview of the changes to the approved parking lot.

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Bruce Riddle asked if the existing access would remain if redevelopment of 132 South Main Street did not occur. Tim Sidore confirmed that the existing access would remain either way.

The location of the handicapped parking spaces was questioned. Tim Sidore stated that the handicapped parking spaces are closest to the sidewalk and are in the location as approved in 2018.

Bruce Riddle asked about the purpose of the proposed retaining wall. Adam Morse explained that it is needed due to the change in grade and noted the wall was only about 18" high.

There was a brief discussion about adding railings to the top of the wall of an extension for safety.

John Reid asked about the "evergreen" lease of the property from the railroad. Tim Sidore stated that it meant it was essentially in perpetuity, the lease renews every 10 years and if the railroad sells or stops leasing it they would need to vacate.

John Reid commented that he was concerned with the sustainability of the parking spaces and width of the right-of-way to accommodate 48 parking spaces.

Jo-Ann Ells noted that while the parking spaces may be used to accommodate a future application, the application should be viewed on its own as a private parking facility.

Toby Dayman suggested some signage for and near the parallel parking spaces on the eastern side of the lot.

Dave Sherman expressed concerned with the lack of snow storage on site.

Bruce Riddle questioned why there were two sheets labeled C2.1. Jo-Ann Ells noted one was existing conditions and one was proposed conditions. She added that there was a condition in the draft Findings of Fact to correctly label the sheets.

Bruce Riddle asked for public comment.

Bill Neukomm of COVER Home Repair asked how many parking spaces were currently located at 132 South Main Street that would be lost with the proposed redevelopment. Tim Sidore estimated that 12-15 cars currently park at 132 South Main Street.

Bill Neukomm expressed concern with the potential for added traffic to COVER's lot and their ability to use their door on the back of the building.

Mike McCrory introduced himself as a resident of Wilder and Board member at COVER. He stated that he had just found out about the meeting and did not feel prepared. He noted

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that the parking will not occur without the redevelopment of 132 South Main Street, and expressed concern with increased traffic and circulation.

Heidi Underbakke introduced herself as a COVER Board member and asked who would park in the parking lot. Tim Sidore stated that the spaces would be assigned to 132 South Main Street if it is redeveloped otherwise it would be used by tenants and COVER volunteers as it is currently used.

It was noted that today the parking area is not used very much.

John Reid moved to close the Public Hearing. The Commission voted 5-0 to close the Public Hearing.

Jo-Ann Ells reviewed changes to the draft Findings of Fact as discussed.

John Reid moved to approve the application with the noted changes. Toby Dayman seconded the motion and the motion passed 4-1 with Dave Sherman opposed. Dave Sherman explained that he was not in favor of the application because it is unwise to eliminate snow storage.

2. Application #19-16 by Execusuite, LLC and Jesse LaBombard (owners/applicants) for approval of a Planned Development under section 260-47 of the Hartford Zoning Regulations and Hartford's Subdivision Regulations, lots 46-0030-000 and 46-0034-000, 132 South Main Street and 4 Gates Street, White River Junction, in the CB and Design Review Zoning Districts.

Tim Sidore, Jim Wasser, Doug Sonsalla, Paul Simon and Adam Morse were present.

Jo-Ann Ells reviewed the draft Findings of Fact.

It was noted that any approval of the Planned Development did not authorize any construction.

A motion to continue the application until after application #19-17 was decided failed as there was no second.

Jo-Ann Ells reviewed the proposed waivers.

Mike McCrory questioned if the Commission understood the process.

Jo-Ann Ells noted that the Commission could vote on the application if they determined that it was complete.

Robin Adair Logan stated that she was ready to vote and understood that there were outstanding items to discuss in application #19-17.

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Toby Dayman agreed he was ready to vote.

John Reid asked for confirmation that application #19-17 could be continued if additional information was needed. Jo-Ann Ells confirmed that it could.

Dave Sherman agreed he was ready to vote.

John Reid moved to close the Public Hearing. Robin Adair Logan seconded and the Public Hearing was closed.

Bruce Riddle moved to approve the application with one change. Robin Adair Logan seconded and the vote passed 4-1 with Dave Sherman opposed. Dave Sherman explained that he was not in favor of the application because of the waiver requested for open space.

3. Application #19-17 by Execusuite, LLC and Jesse LaBombard (owners/applicants) for Site Development Plan Approval under section 260-45 of the Hartford Zoning Regulations for a Mixed Use Building, lots 46-0030-000 and 46-0034-000, 132 South Main Street and 4 Gates Street, White River Junction, in the CB and Design Review Zoning District.

Tim Sidore, Jim Wasser, Doug Sonsalla', Paul Simon and Adam Morse were present.

Bruce Riddle stated that he wanted to start by reviewing the design of the building as the Chair of the Design Review Committee, Denise Welch-May, was present.

Doug Sonsalla' reviewed the proposed design of the building as depicted on the architectural drawings.

Robin Adair Logan asked if the scale of the proposed building was accurate in the elevations. Doug Sonsalla' stated that it was to scale.

Doug Sonsalla' reviewed the interior layout of the building which includes 2,800 sq. ft. of commercial space and 69 dwelling units ranging from 400 to 600 sq. ft.

Jim Wasser reviewed sample exterior materials.

Denise Welch-May explained that the Design Review Committee had reviewed the design of the building over the course of four meetings and noted that the applicant had addressed the Committee's questions.

Denise Welch-May stated that the committee was happy with the alignment as depicted on sheet SD18, how the building fits in with existing development, and the design details. She added that the applicant worked hard with the Committee to establish colors.

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John Reid asked if the Design Review Committee looks at the interior layout. Jo-Ann Ells explained that they only review the exterior of the building.

Mike McCrory asked about how the building fits into the south end of the village. Doug Sonsalla' reviewed sheet SD17.

Bill Neukomm questioned how the proposed building fits in next to COVER's two-story building.

Denise Welch-May stated that she felt the façade creates a vibrant feel to the area and will create activity on an empty lot.

Bill Neukomm commented that he felt a three-story building would make more sense.

Bruce Riddle suggested the Commission talk about parking.

Jo-Ann Ells reviewed her memo dated September 17, 2019 including required parking, a request for a modification to parking requirements and the number and location of proposed parking spaces.

Lori Hirshfield reviewed the winter 2019 parking survey. She commented that there has been a major change in the parking pattern in the last five years. She noted that the impact of the recently opened Assisted Living Facility on parking is an unknown because the facility is not full.

Lori Hirshfield requested that the Commission look at all of the numbers in the survey report and not just averages.

Lori Hirshfield told the Commission that the Town is currently looking at the possibility of constructing deck parking in the South Main Street parking lot. Currently, it is unknown if it will be approved or constructed. She added that installation of parking meters is also being considered.

Lori Hirshfield noted that the applicant's request to use their three dedicated parking spaces for the former Polka Dot restaurant would transfer the impact of three vehicles the municipal parking.

Robin Adair Logan asked if additional surface parking could be created in the South Main Street parking lot. Lori Hirshfield stated that parking has been extended in that lot as far as it can.

Bruce Riddle asked if the applicant had any new information to add on the subject of parking. Jim Wasser reviewed a parking schedule plan and noted that the applicant has available parking on adjacent lands they own/control. Jo-Ann Ells noted that applications would need to be filed to approve parking on these lots.

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Toby Dayman moved to close the Public Hearing and enter Deliberative Session. Robin Adair Logan seconded and the motion passed unanimously.

John Reid moved to re-open the Public Hearing. Robin Adair Logan seconded and the motion passed unanimously.

Bruce Riddle explained that the applicant did not have enough votes to approve the application. He stated that the following information was needed:

- Additional justification to reduce the parking requirement for the dwelling units.
- Additional information on the “green lease” including a contingency plan.
- A plan to dedicate 69 parking spaces (not including re-assigning the 3 restaurant parking spaces).

Bruce Riddle noted that the Commission was willing to continue the meeting to a date before the regularly scheduled meeting.

Tim Sidore asked if there were other concerns.

Toby Dayman questioned the adequacy of the lighting at the main entrances, steepness of the slope near the loading dock, and handicapped access to the front door.

It was agreed that the application would be continued to October 7th and that the applicant would get information to Jo-Ann Ells by noon on September 30th.

Bruce Riddle asked if there was any additional public comment.

Bill Neukomm stated that his concerns were mainly traffic, parking and scale.

John Reid moved to continue the hearing to 6:00 PM, Monday, October 7, 2019. Robin Adair Logan seconded and the motion passed unanimously.

Adjournment

At 9:35 p.m. John Reid moved to close the Hearing. Robin Adair Logan seconded and the Hearing was adjourned.

Respectively Submitted,

Toby Dayman, Clerk