

DRAFT
Minutes
Hartford Planning Commission
October 7, 2019

Present: Bruce Riddle, John Reid, Toby Dayman, Robin Adair Logan, Kim Souza, Selectboard Liaison, Lori Hirshfield, Planning and Development Director and Jo-Ann Ells, Zoning Administrator

Absent: Dave Sherman

Public Hearing

Bruce Riddle reconvened the Public Hearing which was continued from September 23, 2019.

Bruce Riddle asked that attendees sign the sign-in sheet and administered the oath.

1. 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.

It was noted that Tim Sidore and Jim Wasser had submitted a memo dated September 30, 2019 in response to questions asked by the Planning Commission on September 23, 2019.

Doug Sonsalla' gave a quick recap of the application and reviewed the proposed site plan.

Jim Wasser noted that since the September hearing the applicants had reduced the number of dwelling units being requested from 69 to 66. He showed several photographs taken on September 26, 2019 of public and private parking areas in the downtown and noted that there were very few parked cars in them. He explained that the applicant's request to reduce the number of parking spaces required for the dwelling units from 1.5 to 1 was based on the applicant's experience, ability to include information on parking in leases and the small size of the dwelling units.

Tim Sidore addressed the issue of the evergreen lease on the railroad's property. It was noted that this layman's explanation of the lease should be provided for inclusion in the record.

Jim Wasser stated that the grades between the building and parking on the railroad lot could be reduced for improved pedestrian access.

2. 10-07-19

Noting that residents may work second or third shifts, Bruce Riddle commented that residents would need access to 24 hour parking.

John Reid asked how parking spaces would be assigned and policed. Tim Sidore stated that permits will be assigned and cars could be towed if problems with non-residents using spaces occurred.

The Commission reviewed the amount of open space in the project and the ability to waive open space as provided in the Master Plan for the Planned Development.

Robin Adair Logan stated that she loved every part of the project and noted that housing is needed. She commented that the project is an improvement over the empty lot that is there today, that the development team did a good job carving out open space, and suggested that the project not be held up due to the evergreen lease. She concluded by stating that the project is being held to a higher standard for parking compared to other recent projects in the downtown.

Toby Dayman noted he was concerned with the amount of management that was needed to make the parking work.

Bruce Riddle noted that given the size of the project and concerns he hears from business owners in the downtown the applicant should be required to address parking.

Jo-Ann Ells noted that the Commission could leave the three parking spaces assigned to Phenom Penh in the Village Square lot out of the parking count given that it is likely that three tenants will not have cars and if they do, they could park in the municipal lot/South Main Street lot.

Toby Dayman asked how many handicapped units will be provided. Jim Wasser stated that this is undecided at this time.

Robin Adair Logan excused herself to take a phone call. Upon return she advised the Commission that she needed to leave for a family emergency, but would stay for a very short period of time.

Jo-Ann Ells reviewed the changes to the draft Findings of Fact based on the discussion.

Bruce Riddle asked for public comment.

Kim Souza stated that she supported the project and is hopeful that the town can create more parking in the downtown. She noted that her only concern was if the people in the community would be able to afford to live there.

Denise Johnson expressed concern with adding additional parking demand to an area with an existing parking problem.

3. 10-07-19

Tim Fariel noted that the project will add vitality to the downtown. He suggested the Planning Commission rethink parking requirements to be more creative.

Paul Simon commented that he has been involved with similar projects that have been successful and noted South Burlington and Burlington are rethinking parking including removing parking requirements from their regulations.

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

John Reid moved to approve the application with the changes as reviewed by Jo-Ann Ells. Robin Adair Logan seconded and the motion passed unanimously.

Adjournment

At 7:35 p.m. Robin Adair Logan moved to close the Hearing and the Hearing was adjourned.

Respectively Submitted,

Toby Dayman, Clerk