



Planning Board Meeting Minutes Tuesday, January 18, 2022, at 7:00 pm – Zoom Meeting

Members Present: Diab Jerius, Chair
I-Ching Scott
Kurt Spring
Sally Dale, Vice Chair/Clerk
Cheryl Wolfe

Also Present: Brian Szekely, Town Planner
WinCam
Bryan Manter, Asst. Town Engineer
Nancy Polcari, Recording Secretary

Others Attending: Ian Gillespie
Paul Soughley
Rob Clocker
Tara Doubman
Dylan Forester
Philip Chen
Ellen Spencer
Jan Steenbrugge
John Suhrbier
Diom O'Connell
Maura Sullivan
Fred Spencer
David Hacin
Jamie Devol
David Tabenken
Dave Jackson
Ruth Trimarchi
Lee Wooten
William Band

A quorum being in attendance, Chair Jerius calls the Winchester Planning Board (PB) meeting to order at 7:00 pm, noting that the meeting is being video recorded via WinCam and Zoom. Roll call of PB members: Dale, Scott, Spring, Wolfe, Jerius in attendance.

1. Updates:

- a. Ms. Dale: The tree working group is planning to convene a forum to be held in February focusing on finding ways to take care of trees in Winchester.
- b. Mr. Szekely: The Acting Town Manager (TM) and the Assistant TM are working with Civico on the Waterfield project, potentially adding more units by including the property where the Chamber of Commerce had been located. Also, the committee working on the Downtown Improvement Action Plan has been meeting. Consultant Toole Design is scheduled to share the recommendations in the next 2-4 weeks to expand physical public outdoor space and traffic calming improvements.

2. Meeting Minutes for Planning Board Meeting held Tuesday, November 23, 2021:

PB discussed Ms. Dale's recommended changes dated January 2, 2022 (presented on screen).

Ms. Scott moved to approve the minutes for the PB Meeting on November 23, 2021, as amended. Mr. Spring second the Motion. Vote: Dale, Scott, Spring, Wolfe, Jerius in favor. Motion passes 5-0-0.

3. North Main Street Consultants:

Chair Jerius: To identify a consultant for North Main Street, the PB needs to determine the scope and specific services, focusing on two areas: help in writing the design guidelines and the public outreach process.

PB Discussion:

- Need consultant with urban and landscape design experience.
- Need focus groups including the stakeholders, possibly using a workshop process to get input. Stakeholders need to include Town Meeting members, especially those in the North Main Street precincts.

- Recommend getting someone who is sensitive to those who have been marginalized.
- Will need to make decisions on zoning changes before finalizing the design guidelines.
- This is a “corridor revitalization” project.

Summary: Chair and Town Planner will develop a scope based on PB discussion and send out to 7 consultants for an estimate. Those 7 are: Utile, JM Goldson, Gamble Associates, Agency Landscape and Planning, CivicMoxie, RG Lathrop, and MAPC.

4. Public Hearing for 10 Converse Place Special Permit CBD Petition #14 Continued:

Chair Jerius: Opened the Public Hearing for 10 Converse Place Special Permit at 7:46 pm, noted the focus is to determine the schedule for a decision and a punch list of what the PB needs to make a decision.

PB Discussion:

- Goal is to make a decision prior to Town elections when there is the possibility of Board members changing.
- Have a PB decision by early March, such as the 1st or 8th which would allow a week or two as “cushion”.
- Will need to send out drawings to other committees (Design Review, etc.) to get their comments; sending out mid-February, such as the 8th or 15th, would provide a two-week review period.
- This means the developer needs to submit revised plans that reflect updates in the next 2 weeks.

Mr. Tabenken: Presented the design noting it includes the input from Mr. Chen, Mr. Szekely, PB comments, and public comments. He provided a landscape plan, ground floor plan, floor plans for the 2nd through 4th levels, and the 5th floor/penthouse plan. Using the digital massing model, he showed aerial and different site views. He also presented the façade designs for each side; there are 3 options for the Mt. Vernon residential entrance façade and also for the Mill Pond retail entrance façade. He noted the height at the 5th floor roof is 61’-8”.

Mr. Chen: The biggest advancement is the articulation of the building being a 3-story with the top being the 4th floor and a set-back penthouse to mitigate the scale and massing. There are two primary views of this building: one on Mt. Vernon Street from the Town Hall side and one looking at the Mill Pond retail entrance. These are the two places where the view can handle the full 4-story height. The elevation facing Town Hall successfully looks like a 3-story town house with an upper penthouse level. The entrance corners have three options; the question to ask is “are we reinforcing a 3-story height?” There is a need for some more discussion around the cohesion of the design.

PB Comments (answers are by Mr. Tabenken or Mr. Hacin):

- Current design addresses concerns.
- What materials being considered for upper façade? Answer: specialty paint on a metal panel, zinc and copper.
- Preference for Option 1 on Mt. Vernon Street residential entrance.
- Correction to presentation: the PB is willing to consider a 5th floor and FAR=3; this is not a “given”.
- All 3-bedroom units are on the corner.
- The banding seems broken-up.
- Preference for Option 3 on Mill Pond retail entrance.

- Top floor is very harsh/boxy/industrial looking; prefer to see a mansard-style façade/roof.
- What will the mechanical functions add to the quoted height? Estimating this will make the building at least 70 feet tall.
- Prefer to see the 5th floor/penthouse removed to make this a “three plus one” building.
- Like the “pull-in” for the cars using the parking garage along Converse Place, instead of using a ramp.
- Like the landscape design.
- Want to learn more about the live/workspaces on the ground level.
- Preference for Option 1 on the Mill Pond retail entrance.
- Suggestion to put Mt. Vernon commercial entrance on the corner of the building, instead of in the middle. Answer: considering doing both or either, depending on the size and number of retailers using the commercial space on Mt. Vernon Street.
- Suggestion to explore the floor-to-floor heights with the goal of lowering the overall height.

Mr. Gillespie: Does this mean we have a final decision to keep the 5th floor?

Chair Jerius: This is not a decision at this time. Continue to explore.

Mr. Hacin: Summarized the comments and direction of the PB

- Option 1 of the Mt. Vernon Street residential entrance.
- Option 1 of the Mill Pond commercial entrance.
- Resolve the connectivity of the banding.
- Soften/reshape the 5th floor elements.
- Explore recessing the mechanical elements to mitigate the building height.
- Explore the 3-bedroom units.

Chair Jerius: The items on the PB punch list (in addition to the list summarized by Mr. Hacin)

- The height of the first floor transformer.
- The staging of the project for construction.
- The layout of the units; meeting the affordable unit requirements.

Ms. Scott moved to continue the Public Hearing for 10 Converse Place Special Permit CBD Petition #14 to Tuesday, February 1, 2022, at 7:15 pm. Ms. Wolfe second the Motion. Vote: Dale, Scott, Spring, Wolfe, Jerius in favor. Motion passes 5-0-0.

5. Executive Session:

Mr. Spring moved to continue the PB meeting in Executive Session. Ms. Scott second the Motion. Vote: Dale, Scott, Spring, Wolfe, Jerius in favor. Motion passes 5-0-0. Public portion of the PB meeting ended at 9:15 pm.

Sally Dale, Clerk

Nancy Polcari, Recording Secretary