



**Planning Board Meeting Minutes**  
**Tuesday, February 9, 2021 at 7:00 pm – Zoom Meeting**

<b>Members Present:</b>	Heather von Mering (chair) Maureen Meister Heather Hannon	Diab Jerius (Vice Chair, Clerk) Cheryl Wolfe	
<b>Also Present:</b>	Brian Szekely, Town Planner Beth Rudolph, Town Engineer WinCam	Nancy Polcari, Recording Secretary Bryan Manter, Asst. Town Engineer	
<b>Others Attending:</b>	John Stevens John Suhrbier Craig Rabe Arthur Lee Ian Gillespie Tom Howley Ben Yang I Ching Scott Steve Latzanakis Mark Sawyer Sam Gordon Lily Gordon Clara Peschel Peter Pirani Cole Jones Lance Grenzeback Ann Marie Brako	Sally Dale Larry Beals Kevin Ryan Andrew Ryan Peter Hopley Ted Touloukian Rich MacNeille Lucy Zhang Bryan Lin Richard Leaf Neal Splaine John Giusto Tony Conte Dot Butler Allan Eyden Cathy Alexander Betsey	Dennis Carlone Mann Shoffner Otto Knudsen Jamie Devo! Nickle Chi-Lung Cheung Jan Steenbrugge Joanna Cutting Bryan Sutherlin Scott Henderson Dave & Amy Swayer Ethan & Renee Lubomirski Ula Jurkunas Victoria Arrigoni Noah Jackson, Scout Troop 507 Julie Wile Fish Marcia Kuhn

A quorum being in attendance, Chair von Mering calls the Winchester Planning Board (PB) meeting to order at 7:02 pm, noting that the meeting is being video recorded via WinCam.

**1. Updates from Mr. Szekely:**

- a. The Waterfield Lot: legal counsel is finalizing the land development agreement.
- b. The Local Historic District (LHD) Study Committee is before the Select Board to start a new LHD study focusing on the LHD area around Symmes Corner/Upper Grove/Fenwick. Currently putting the Town Center on a brief hiatus since the business/property owners have not shown great support.  
Ms. Meister raised concern about tabling the Town Center study noting the companies who own many of the buildings will not show support for the LHD.  
Chair von Mering requested an analysis for the Town Center focusing on the half mile radius surrounding the Train Station.

**2. ZBA Petition No. 3927 – 201 Ridge Street:**

Mr. Szekely noted this is the oldest house in Winchester, built in 1711. The applicant seeks a Site Plan Review to build a detached barn/garage. He recommends favorable action. Ms. Rudolph noted she is waiting for an answer to a drainage question.

PB Discussion:

- Is something being demolished? Mr. Szekely confirmed that nothing is being demolished.
- Concern about removing several mature trees.
- Concern about the view shed from the road; looks like the garage will block the view of the house.

Mr. Jerius moved to recommend favorable action for Petition No. 3927 for 201 Ridge Street with the condition to try and relocate the structure to reduce the impact to the trees and so it does not impede the view shed of the historical structure. Ms. Hannon second the Motion. Discussion: Chair von Mering noted that the applicant is adding 8 new trees and suggested pushing back the garage. Vote: Hannon, Jerius, Meister, Wolfe, von Mering in favor. Motion passes 5-0-0.

### **3. ZBA Petition No. 3928 – 11 Lorena Road:**

Mr. Szekely noted that the applicant seeks a Site Plan Review to change the slope by more than 6% of the existing grade to build an inground pool and terrace. Ms. Rudolph indicated she has received concerns from the abutters regarding the impact on them from storm water. She also has comments to the applicant regarding drainage.

PB Discussion:

- The slope is huge, creating an enormous wall; suggested making smaller.
- Nothing shown to shield this view from the rear abutters.

Mr. Jerius moved to recommend unfavorable action for Petition No. 3928 for 11 Lorena Road noting it does not minimize the cut/fill and height of the wall; it does not retain the natural character; it does not minimize the impact to abutters; there is no landscaping. Ms. Meister second the Motion. Vote: Hannon, Jerius, Meister, Wolfe, von Mering in favor. Motion passes 5-0-0.

Mr. Henderson requested to comment: he is the architect for this design. Chair von Mering retained the motion and recommended Mr. Henderson provide documents to counter the PB's concerns.

### **4. ZBA Petition No. 3929 – 6 Winslow Road:**

Mr. Szekely noted the applicant seeks a Special Permit to construct an addition that will be located closer to the side property line than permitted as of right. He recommended favorable action. Ms. Meister moved to recommend favorable action to Petition No. 3929 for 6 Winslow Road. Ms. Wolfe second the Motion. Vote: Hannon, Jerius, Meister, Wolfe, von Mering in favor. Motion passes 5-0-0.

### **5. Washington/Swanton Streets RFP Discussion**

The PB provided comments to the draft Request for Proposals (RFP) dated January 21 as follows:

- Add a sentence to the 2<sup>nd</sup> to the last paragraph on Page 4 under Town's Redevelopment Objectives, after "...a community meeting in 2019.": "the design was not reviewed by the PB and should not be construed as promoted in this RFP."
- In that same paragraph and sentence "A previous proposal for redevelopment...": first, it was not just the neighbors who opposed the proposal and, second, it was also for good reason; should state it was rejected due to the parking and that the zoning line for the district was in the middle of the street. Neighbors should be taken out.
- On Page 5, Design Considerations, after "...and boards...": add in parentheses "including the PB, Design Review Committee, Housing Partnership Board, and Disability Access

Commission”; many boards are legally required but these boards are advisory and may not be included without spelling them out specifically.

- Also, on Page 5 in that same section, the first sentence: this should specifically state it is a historical neighborhood.
  - On Page 7, Selection Process, paragraph that begins with “One public...”, last sentence states “The Select Board will also collect feedback...”: after local boards add “including the PB, Design Review Committee, Housing Partnership Board, and Disability Access Commission”.
- Discussion suspended to continue the PB agenda, Public Hearing for 654 Main Street.

## **6. Public Hearing for 654 Main Street Special Permit Continued**

Chair von Mering opened the Public Hearing at 8:01 pm. She noted the PB has received an updated set of plans from the applicant. Mr. Szekely provided updates on several issues that have been raised as outlined in his memo dated February 9, 2021. He summarized points as follows:

- **Street Trees:** In coordination with the Design Review Committee (DRC) the trees should be large shade selections, permeable pavers in a narrow strip next to the curb; coordinate design with the DPW; Elmwood is too narrow and should not have trees or planters.
- **Mr. Suhrbier,** chair of the Housing Partnership Board will address the affordable units.
- **63 Vine Street:** the memo outlines the conditions agreed upon with the applicant, Historical Commission, and the consultant (SSV) doing the review; they will not start until just before the demolition phase.
- **Scale, Massing, Height:** Have heard from abutters concerns regarding these three areas; current zoning for this site allows for larger structures than what is proposed; noted both 35 Vine Street and 2 Elmwood Avenue structures are taller than the proposed building; in addition, 666 Main Street design would not be allowed under current zoning – it is over 200’ long, is 4 to 4.5 stories and the parking is on the first level; lastly, the DRC and the HC have not raised concerns regarding these three areas (although they will also be reviewing the latest updated plans).
- **Sidewalks, Streets, Crossings, Parking, Loading Zones:** The Select Board approved the sidewalks and did not oppose a crosswalk; the consultant for the project (Howard Stein Hudson) has responded to the peer review by Toole Design, who is satisfied with the responses.
- **Flooding/Stormwater:** the Conservation Commission has minimal concerns and our peer review by VHB continues to work with the applicant.

Mr. Carlone provided updates on the design: latest submission includes design refinements and improvements based on input from PB; project consists of 3 sections – mercantile on Main Street, residential on Elmwood Avenue and lower Vine Street and the historical house on Vine Street. When interface mixed-use building with existing wood structures (single- and two-family homes), it is challenging, and this design is an excellent solution.

Mr. Suhrbier: As chair of the HPB, an important element is to provide housing for income limited families. There are 6 affordable units, 4 serving the 80% median income level and 2 serving the 120% median income level. For the bedroom mix, there are equal number of one- and two-bedroom units (17 of each) and there is also 2 three-bedroom units. The four affordable units are two bedroom and the other two will be one bedroom. The developer has agreed to increase the floor area size to be comparable to the market rate units. For the location, there are two units each on levels 2, 3, and 4. The units are distributed; some face Main, some Elmwood and some to the

courtyard. There was a concern that the affordable units may be too close to each other instead of being distributed over the floor. Applicant is addressing. One of the affordable units on level 2 is located over the public garage. With the recommendation to add an audible alarm for the garage doors, we asked to have that alarm not be heard from inside any of the nearby units. The Department of Housing and Community Development is satisfied and will check the final documents. This developer has been responsive. The HPB recommends approval of the application.

Mr. Jerius: Asked if there have been any discussions on the HOA (Homeowners Association) and how the affordable units will be represented. Do they get full votes, partial votes?

Mr. Suhrbier: If parking is unbundled, the applicant will reserve one space per unit for the affordable units. The condo fee is prorated based on the sale price of the unit as well as the parking space. HPB recommends the affordable housing units have equal voting rights.

#### Public Comments:

Ms. Katie Scott: This is very exciting. Concerned that the affordable units do not have a deck. Also, the balconies at Main and Vine Streets are not very good since grills, and other items will be visible. The other corner does not have the right feel with the wide, large ramp. Looking for more of a café feel.

Mr. Suhrbier: He currently does not have the exact distribution of the affordable units yet.

Marcia: This is a small lot that is covered at what percentage? Feels like a 100%. How many live under these guidelines? How many cars? We are a small neighborhood. Flooding is an issue. It is people that you are impacting. You are not listening to the neighbors.

Ted Touloukian: Clarified that 75% of the land is building and 25% is open to air. The number of cars will be between 36 and 41 (available spaces). The minimum allowed is .75 spaces per unit. Currently at one or just over per unit. Gross square feet is 13,331.

Lucy at 51 Vine Street: I am opposed to the whole design. It will block my view. This is a small neighborhood. Town should protect people. What happens to my comments?

Chair von Mering: Noted that the tree on the 51 Vine Street property had to be removed and requested the project to look at working with the owner to add green screening.

Lance Grenzeback: This project is positive. The design style has evolved and looks similar to 620 Main Street. Looks more residential. The size, scale and massing are now appropriate. Requested the designer to look at the flood storage capacity and maintenance. The focus of development is the Town's Center. This does that (housing, retail, affordable housing). This project responds to the Town's needs of the 21<sup>st</sup> Century.

Ted Touloukian: They are looking at using micro biotic organisms to address the concerns with cleaning the surfaces for the flood storage area and hatches to provide access for maintenance.

Tom Howley, a resident of Winchester, in the Town Center: He is aware of the environment and the revising of the zoning focus to strengthen the economy and protect the architectural character of our Town. This project represents what was envisioned in the revisions to the zoning. It provides retail; addresses off-street parking; it includes housing especially for low-income families. He noted that a smaller scale project may not be economically feasible. Concerned that if this project does not move ahead, then what will? If not, then future development less likely to happen.

John Stevens: In regard to Mr. Szekely's comments about 35 Vine Street and 2 Elmwood, the heights of those buildings exceed 654 Main street; the difference is the setbacks. What is the problem with three stories instead of four? The higher structures belong to the East side of Main Street (where the properties back up to the train tracks). On the West side you back up to the residential neighborhood. The height and mass are the problems. The value of 63 Vine Street will be diminished with this development. Bylaw says to keep the small-town character (Section 7.3.17.4)

to address the effects on adjacent neighborhoods. Has there been a shadow study? New development is expected to avoid a monolithic appearance. Please limit this structure to three stories. Has heard the developer cannot make enough money with three stories. But at what expense to abutters.

Mr. Carlone: Any new building will cast shadows.

Mr. Stevens: Requested someone take the sections of the bylaws (4 sections cited) and give response regarding this design and how they comply.

Jamie Devol: She stands with the neighborhood and concurs that the mass, height, and scale come up each time and comments have been ignored. It does not belong in this existing small-town neighborhood. It is too big and massive. Are people fearing the 40B if you shrink the project? Winchester is not an urban community. This fills in the topography. Listening to the neighbors is the right thing to do.

Craig Rabe: Understands the neighbors' concerns. This addresses the affordable housing issue. Likes the design. The larger footprint is a sign-of-the-times. This is what the Town is looking for. A nice improvement to what is there now.

MJ English: What are the price points for the units (1, 2, 3, 4 bedroom?)? Will there be a requirement that the units be owner occupied?

Ian Gillespie: Currently do not know rates or if they will be owner occupied. It will take at least two years to build and occupy. They will be offered at market rates. Will use "Boston AMI" to define affordable.

Anne Marie Brako at 23 Elmwood, Suite A: This is small scale where I live now. This scale is too big. It does not feel like the rest of the area. Traffic is also huge. When deliveries made to the liquor store, all traffic stops. The side street garage opening is going to be a problem. The historical building is so dwarfed.

Chair von Mering: Currently talking with the Select Board asking them to review a program for deliveries.

Sally Dale: Excited about bringing housing to the center of Winchester. The developer has worked to respond to the design issues. Concerned about the height and mass. It would be better as a 3 and a half story building. Also, the open balconies look like "gaping jaws" and the cornice looks suspended. The crowding of the sidewalk is not good design.

Mr. Carlone: There has not been a discussion to reduce the scale. As for the balconies, the open corner reduces the density of the façade.

Ian Gillespie: Does not know if they can afford to reduce the height.

Ms. Meister moved to end public comment period. Mr. Jerius second the Motion. Vote: Hannon, Jerius, Meister, Wolfe, von Mering in favor. Motion passes 5-0-0.

Ms. Meister moved to continue the Public Hearing for 654 Main Street to February 23, 2021 at 8:00 pm. Mr. Jerius second the Motion. Vote: Hannon, Jerius, Meister, Wolfe, von Mering in favor. Motion passes 5-0-0.

## **7. Washington/Swanton Streets RFP Discussion Continued**

- Chair von Mering noted that when this went to Town Meeting (TM) it included only language regarding affordable housing; there was no mention of commercial use for this property. It is unclear whether this RFP can proceed without TM approval. Mr. Carlone noted that the neighbors had asked for some ground activity, commercial is one option. Chair von Mering

concluded that some commercial use is a good idea. It's a process question that will be asked of Town Counsel to provide a response.

- Page 10, 2.b: Second to the last bullet point which says "How does your proposal consider the previous design concepts...": recommendation to remove from this page and the Appendix; past designs will add confusion and be misleading.
- Page 16: remove concept drawings from the Appendix for Melanson and CVS Proposals.
- Appendix Page 1, B (Environmental Analysis), second paragraph: "Each project may need to submit for review, must be accompanied by..." It does not make sense. Needs clarification.
- Appendix Page 3, A (Open Space): confusion as to where the open space will be; cannot give a range to be a minimum; will it be resident courtyard? Open just for residents or public use as well? After discussion, decision to have 20% open space as one of the resident amenities.
- Appendix Page 4, A (Retail): contiguous on both sides of the same street does not make sense. Needs clarification.
- Appendix Page 5, Elements of Form: strike the second sentence "An exception to the standards...".
- Appendix Page 5, A (Height): the current neighborhood consists of 2 to 2.5 stories (not 2-3 stories).
- Appendix Page 5, A (Height): the second paragraph states "beyond the maximum height allowed..."; this height needs to be specified.
- Appendix Page 6, D (Street-Walls & Setbacks): Widening public sidewalks, street walls and setbacks; there is a tension that needs to be identified more clearly.
- Overall comment about the design standards in the Appendix: language needs cleaning up.

Any additional comments will be written and sent to Brian.

Mr. Jerius moved to authorize Chair von Mering to sign the comments by the end of the week to submit to the Select Board. Ms. Meister second the Motion. Vote: Hannon, Jerius, Meister, Wolfe, von Mering in favor. Motion passes 5-0-0.

Ms. Meister moved to adjourn the PB meeting. Mr. Jerius second the Motion. Vote: Hannon, Jerius, Meister, Wolfe, von Mering in favor. Motion passes 5-0-0. Meeting adjourned at 10:34 pm.

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Diab Jerius, Clerk

Nancy Polcari, Recording Secretary