



Planning Board Meeting Minutes Tuesday, March 1, 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 Beth Rudolph, Acting Town Manager WinCam	Bryan Manter, Asst. Town Engineer Mina Makarious, Town Counsel Nancy Polcari, Recording Secretary	
Others Attending:	Ian Gillespie Paul Soughley Jan Steenbrugge Tara Doubman Ellen Spencer Philip Chen Jack LeMenager Nabil Ibrahim Karin Granbom Philip Vita Nina Parker Dylan Forester Kiyomi Yatsuhashi Deborah Johnson Maryann de Labarthe Anthea Brady NM	Jamie Devol John Suhrbier Sean Sanger (CWDG) Maura Sullivan Fred Spencer William Band Charlene Band Richard Leaf Pamela Cort Reed Pugh Sarah J. Girotti Donal Grelotti David Tuell Angel Richmond Philip Infurna Murphy Marzy's iPhone	Erica Guidoboni (Toole Design) David Tabenken David Feigenbaum Nick Shapiro William Foucher Dorothy Simboli Emil Hoogerendoorn Diom O'Connell Jeanette Kolodziej Steven Meltzer Tracy Burhans Philip Frattaroli Zeke Nims Cat Pedemonti (Mystic River Watershed) Daria Clark (Mystic River Watershed) Catherine's iPad Russ phone

A quorum being in attendance, Chair Jerius calls the Winchester Planning Board (PB) meeting to order at 7:04 pm, noting that the meeting is being video recorded via WinCam and Zoom. Roll call of PB members: Scott, Spring, Wolfe, Dale, Jerius in attendance.

1. PB Meeting Minutes:

a. Minutes from February 1, 2022:

PB Comments: spell-out SLV as Strategic Land Ventures; participant Karin's last name is Galil.

Mr. Spring moved to approve the minutes for the PB Meeting on February 1, 2022, as amended.

Ms. Scott second the Motion. Vote: Dale, Scott, Spring, Wolfe, Jerius in favor. Motion passes 5-0-0.

b. Minutes from February 8, 2022:

Ms. Scott moved to approve the minutes for the PB Meeting on February 8, 2022. Mr. Spring second the Motion. Vote: Dale, Scott, Spring, Jerius in favor. Wolfe abstains. Motion passes 4-0-1.

c. Minutes from February 15, 2022:

Ms. Wolfe moved to approve the minutes for the PB Meeting on February 15, 2022. Ms. Scott second the Motion. Vote: Dale, Scott, Spring, Wolfe, Jerius in favor. Motion passes 5-0-0.

2. 972 Main Street Approval Not Required (ANR):

Mr. Szekely: This is the old Meineke Car Repair site. The applicant wants to divide the lot into two 6,000 SF parcels. It is zoned commercial and there is no minimum size requirement. If this was going to be used as residential, the smallest lot size would have to be 6,500 SF.

PB questions centered around what the applicant plans are for the future. Mr. Szekely noted that is not the focus of this ANR.

Ms. Scott moved to endorse the ANR for 972 Main Street and give the Town Clerk permission to memorialize the PB's endorsement. Mr. Spring second the Motion. Vote: Dale, Scott, Spring, Wolfe, Jerius in favor. Motion passes 5-0-0.

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

Chair Jerius: Opened the Public Hearing for 10 Converse Place Special Permit, noting the focus is to review the comments received from the Housing Partnership Board (HPB), Historic Commission (HC), and Philip Chen (PB Consultant). Presentations will be made from the Design Review Committee (DRC) and Toole Design. Also, there is a list of questions from the PB to review with Ad Meliora.

Ms. Spencer (DRC): The draft minutes for their last meeting are being revised. She wanted to present the DRC's review and comments. She indicated their vote on this proposal was 4-3 (4 in favor with 3 opposed) with two conditions: to remove a floor and make the building narrower. She referenced documents used at the DRC's Feb 16th meeting (provided to PB) that the DRC used to aid in their discussion. They were not able to review final details such as selected materials, at this time. She reviewed the DRC's role, and discussed specific observations made by the members, including the building overwhelms the site and the downtown; this is a critical site.

PB questions with answers from Ms. Spencer and Ms. Devol (both DRC members):

- How did the DRC consider the open public space of the proposed as compared to the existing site? Answer: There was some discussion on the landscape design but in general terms. Liked that the willow tree was being saved. They would review it more closely in the future.
- With the two conditions, did they have a specific floor or side in mind to change? Answer: No. It was the overall bulk that was the issue.
- Was there any discussion on losing units, especially affordable housing units with these conditions? Answer: Not really the jurisdiction of the DRC. This is the first "test" of the application of the Design Guidelines. This one project is not meant to solve all the issues. There is a lack of sensitivity to the town's historical character and that this building will be here forever. There will be more opportunities for affordable housing.
- Was there discussion on how to solve the FAR with the height? Answer: If the building is smaller, the FAR is reduced.

Chair Jerius: Noted the PB has received two memorandum from the HPB on this project. The first one was last year that clarified the term "diversity of housing". This month the HPB reviewed the current layout.

PB questions with Mr. Suhrbier's answers (unless stated otherwise):

- What are the consequences if a floor is removed? Answer: The FAR is permissible if diversity of housing is provided under a Planned Unit of Development (PUD). There was a concern with the 60 unit proposal, that the units were too small. This proposal has 43 units which are more marketable. If the building becomes smaller, it will be less attractive to the real estate market. The number of affordable units is dictated by the zoning code.

- What happens if the number of units goes from 43 to 33? Answer: The intent is to add about 250 units in the Center Business District (CBD). If less with this building, will need to get units someplace else.
- In 2015, the Town had a 10 to 15 year goal to build 250 units in the CBD. We are 7 years into this plan. How many units do we have now? Answer: Mr. Szekely noted that 11 units have been built to date; the permitted number will be closer to 50 with the units planned for 654 Main Street and the Waterfield lot. Ms. Dale noted that in the CBD, the PUD3 included the aggregation of several properties for a total of about 50,000 SF. The proposal for 10 Converse Place is contributing about two thirds (goal is 65 units for this PUD) of the housing goal on half the property for this PUD.

Mr. LeMenager (HC): Their focus is only on whether the proposal has negative impacts on the neighborhood. They voted unanimously in October and again in February that there are no negative impacts on the historic resource. HC has submitted their comments.

PB questions with Mr. LeMenager's answers:

- How does this project relate to the pond? Answer: Personally, likes the design materials; this is a subjective observation.
- Is the streetscape or footprint a concern from a historic perspective? Answer: Prefer to see the façade sit close to the street on the Mt. Vernon side, to be similar to the adjacent buildings and allowing more space near the pond.
- What about the scale? Answer: Does not feel it will dwarf the existing town buildings.

Mr. Chen: Noted his memorandum provides a detailed summary of his comments regarding the Design Guidelines as they relate to 10 Converse Place, with the premise that the FAR =3 is allowed. The design meets the intent of the guidelines.

PB questions with Mr. Chen's answers:

- How do we address the adjacent block that is a collection of historical buildings with a village feel, compared to this new large single structure? Answer: What happens at street level is more important to create the village character than the height. Creating a diverse community in the upper floors is a way to move forward.
- One of the comments noted the structure as "monolithic". What does that mean? Answer: Monolithic refers to a sameness all around. This building does not have a flatness or sameness.
- How does this impact and enhance the neighborhood character? Answer: It adds to the downtown.
- The PB can grant up to an FAR=3.0 and that it is not "a given". If the FAR was not 3.0, would your comments change? Answer: The question is: do the benefits outweigh the adverse effects?

Additional PB Comment: Some of the facades help mitigate the feel of the height and some do not. Because of the height and mass, this building will be visible from everywhere. It is a solid, one piece structure, which is what monolithic means.

Ms. Guidoboni (Toole Design): Provided a presentation that summarized her peer review of the project starting in December 2021. She focused on pedestrian safety. Some comments have been tentatively addressed by the developer. Concerns not yet addressed are the car queuing and parking on Converse Place, continuing the sidewalk on the west side, and parking of large vehicles opposite the safety building.

PB questions and Ms. Guidoboni's answers:

- Questioned the road width with the existing parking and the potential for stacking of cars. Answer: Her graphic showed the maximum capacity for stacking cars (6 spaces). There is no room for a pick-up/drop-off area here. There is a potential for problems with the road being blocked. Could remove the parking on the west side. Mr. Szekely noted that street parking is a Select Board (SB) issue.
- What about the trash area for China Sky restaurant? Looks like it is in the road. Answer: Mr. Szekely noted this would also be a SB issue.
- Ms. Guidoboni noted that the bike path width should be a minimum of 8 feet. This is the width of the Minuteman Bikeway. But 10 feet is preferred.

Ms. Scott moved to continue the Public Hearing for 10 Converse Place Special Permit CBD Petition #14 to Tuesday, March 8, 2022, at 7:00 pm. Mr. Spring second the Motion. Vote: Dale, Scott, Spring, Wolfe, Jerius in favor. Motion passes 5-0-0.

5. Mystic River Watershed Association (MyRWA) – Davidson Park:

Ms. Rudolph: Provided a summary of this project. In 2014 a feasibility study was done to improve the existing park. Three alternatives were presented. Without additional funds, the work ended. The park contains the Aberjona River that had been impacted by the Industri-plex Superfund Site (contamination originating from the 250 acre industrial site in Woburn). The damages settlement provides funds to restore the areas natural resources. Winchester submitted several grant proposals, and in 2020, the Natural Resources Council awarded \$500-600,000 for the "riverine" option at Davidson Park. Currently working on the community outreach part of this option.

Ms. Clark: Provided a presentation of the 3 options: to return the land to a wetland, return the land to a pond, or a hybrid approach. The feasibility study advanced the last two resulting in the Riverine option.

Ms. Pedemonti: Provided the schedule for Community Engagement and Outreach.

PB questions and answers:

- What is the Town's role? Answer: the Town gets funding and has hired MyRWA for the community outreach. The Riverine option is moving forward.
- What are the goals of this work? Answer: to mitigate erosion, provide a more sustainable and natural solution.

Ms. Wolfe left the PB meeting.

6. 21 Laurel Hill Lane:

Mr. Szekely: The applicant has revised their plans based on previous comments.

Mr. Tuell: Noted that they: moved the back wall 3 feet to reduce the 8-foot wall height, tiered the wall with the highest point now at 6 feet, 8 inches, and will be adding dense bushes (junipers) as suggested by the DRC, instead of a fence along the top of the wall.

PB Comments:

- Liked the changes.
- Suggestion to drop 2 feet instead of 1-foot to further reduce the 6 feet, 8 inches wall height.

PB concluded to forward comments from today's discussion to the ZBA.

7. Executive Session:

Mr. Spring moved to continue the PB meeting in Executive Session. Ms. Scott second the Motion. Vote: Dale, Scott, Spring, Jerius in favor. Motion passes 4-0-0, with Wolfe absent. Open Session of PB Meeting ended at 9:37 pm.

Sally Dale, Clerk

Nancy Polcari, Recording Secretary