



Planning Board Meeting Minutes Thursday, March 4, 2021 at 7:30 pm – Zoom Meeting

Members Present:	Heather von Mering (chair) Maureen Meister Heather Hannon	Diab Jerius (Vice Chair, Clerk) Cheryl Wolfe	
Also Present:	Brian Szekely, Town Planner Beth Rudolph, Town Engineer Mina Makarious, Town Counsel	Nancy Polcari, Recording Secretary WinCam	
Others Attending:	Sally Dale John Stevens Ian Gillespie Ted Touloukian Steve Latzanakis Richard Mucci MJ English Peter Hopley	I-Ching Scott Rebecca Rahmlow Larry Beals Jamie Devol Jan Steenbrugge Bill Caci Paul Soughley Grisnette Colon	Dennis Carlone Andrew Ryan Kevin Ryan Nickle Chi-Lung Cheung Allen Dors Todd Morey Vera Ossen

A quorum being in attendance, Chair von Mering calls the Winchester Planning Board (PB) meeting to order at 7:36 pm, noting that the meeting is being video recorded via WinCam.

Continued Public Hearing for Petition CBD-11 for 654 Main Street:

Chair von Mering opened the public hearing to continue the PB discussion.

Mr. Szekely: Presented his memorandum dated March 4th summarizing the possible conditions to an approval by the PB. The highlighted references were additions based on the comments made at the last PB hearing, including recent communications from Mr. John Suhrbier, Chair for the Housing Partnership Board. Summary follows:

- Item #5 added that a final landscaping plan requires review and approval by the Town (which includes DPW, Boards, Committees).
- Item #6 reflects the correspondence received from Mr. Suhrbier, specifically adding the reference to the “20th market rate unit”.
- Item #7, regarding the historical house noted conditions need to be met to the satisfaction of the Town and that the windows will be the same style in the back as shown in the front of the home.
- Item #8, regarding the flood and stormwater issues, includes the condition to not begin construction until an Order of Conditions is received.
- Item #10 refers to Engineering Department’s list of concerns dated February 16th. A reference to the applicant’s reply on March 3rd is added, requiring the coordination of concerns to the satisfaction of Engineering.
- Item #13 requires a roof plan and PB approval of screening of utilities, mechanical equipment, etc.
- Item #15 noted vehicle exit warnings will not be audible within the units.
- Item #16 requires the parking spaces to stay bundled with the unit but may be rented out.
- Item #19 provided details for the sidewalk.
- Item #20 addressed the applicant’s requirement to work with the abutter at 51 Vine Street to screen/landscape her property.
- The four waivers reflected the updated values for height, FAR, Front Setback and Rear Setback.

Chair von Mering: Using the Special Permit criteria (Section 9.4.2), she noted the first 3 criteria were already discussed (community needs, traffic/safety, utilities). Requested input on the Affordable Housing component.

Mr. Jerius: Confirmed that the conditions listed met the criteria. The HPB suggested the 20th market rate unit.

Mr. Gillespie: concurred with the recommendation.

Chair von Mering: Item #4 addresses impact on the neighborhood character. This is a 4-story building; the one-story liquor store is on one side; the three-story historical building is next. That building can also go to four stories. The roof design mimics the flat roof of other buildings in the area. Town Meeting (TM) approved the height for this zoning. It steps down to 3.5 stories in the back. The design meets the zoning for height and massing. By-right all the houses on Vine Street can go up to a 40-foot height.

Ms. Meister: Referred to the CBD regulations in the Design Review Guidelines 7.3.17.1. The Hearing should include "hearing" from the neighbors. Is this development for the mutual benefit of the neighbors? The community? Can this project move forward in a way that satisfies the neighbors and the applicant? If it went to 3 1/2 stories, it would still be very large, but more respectful of the residents. This design is for an urban setting. It does not maintain the character of the Town.

Mr. Jerius: We have maintained a consistent message. The current zoning is 45-foot height By-right; 65 feet with Special Permit; and 66 feet with parking. By-right this could be 45 feet instead of the current 53 feet. What would a By-right building do to the neighborhood? It will change things. This design conceals the parking inside the building; they are within the CBD Zoning. The transition from Main Street to Elmwood works well. This is not out of scale. The liquor store can also be developed in the future. This is in the flood plain and thus needs to provide mitigation, which adds four feet to the overall height. Vine Street is the most impacted, but the applicant has retained the historical home which helps provide a smaller-scale residence for the immediate abutter. Overall, this design integrates into the neighborhood well especially when compared to the size of a building that could move forward By-right.

Ms. Hannon: Not sure if the neighbors would be happy with a By-right design. Keeping the historical home helps with the scale.

Ms. Wolfe: The Town needs a commercial corridor as compared to gas stations and banks. Landscaping will help screen the abutter's home along Vine Street. This design meets the goals of the Town to have a more vibrant downtown area.

Mr. Carlone: The guidelines are to be combined with the other elements; zoning included.

Mr. Makarios: Design Guidelines are considered in addition to zoning. They are there to guide but not be the only criteria. The project has had a design consultant taking direction from the PB.

Ms. Meister: Under Zoning Section 7.3.17.4 (Elements of Form), the regulations stipulate for height to minimize the visual dominance; for scale to create a sense of intimacy; for massing to avoid a monolithic appearance; for silhouette to have it slender on top and not a big, boxy building.

Chair von Mering: This design follows the direction of TM. The proportions are well done. A shorter structure would look longer and squatter. Visualize it in the context of future developments.

Mr. Jerius: The CBD zoning supported this when presented at TM. It contained a cohesive view of downtown. This is in the spirit of what TM saw and voted for.

Ms. Wolfe: If you change the top, it will lose the gateway feel. This is an elegant solution that reads as "Main Street".

Chair von Mering: What is the PB's perspective of the windows?

Ms. Hannon: Windows look good.

Ms. Wolfe: They are in character with the building façade and provide a lot of daylight to the units. For the historical house, the status of the windows is unclear.

Chair von Mering: The design is open-ended to give the historical consultant flexibility to make decisions as the project proceeds.

Ms. Meister: What about the massing and the corner with the balconies? It has an aesthetically destabilizing effect to the front façade and the potential exists for occupants to put grills and other things on the balcony.

Ms. Hannon: The balconies are a huge amenity to offer outside space and we should not let what the occupants may do impact the design.

Mr. Jerius: The intent of the balconies was to break up the corner and reduce the massing.

Ms. Wolfe: Recommend putting the balconies between the Main Street building and the next building, along Vine Street, at the corner of the two structures. And to use a smaller Juliet balcony. The view would be the residential community. The floating cornice is “off” for the front.

Mr. Carlone: Recommends leaving them as shown. They will receive more sunlight and give the occupants a view of the Town.

Ms. Hannon, Mr. Jerius, Chair von Mering: concurred to leave them as shown.

Ms. Meister: What about the dormers? They could look nice if some of the detailing is changed.

Mr. Carlone: Confirmed that the design detailing will continue. This is one of the items on his list, specifically conditional on-going design review.

Mr. Makarious: Noted that Mr. Szekely’s list of conditions includes on-going design review.

Chair von Mering: What is the PB’s perspective on the fiscal impacts of the project to the Town?

Mr. Jerius: This project will have minimal impact on the Town’s services.

Ms. Wolfe: Children will get to walk to school.

Ms. Rudolph: Requested Engineering’s list of unresolved items be included in the conditions for the applicant, highlighting the storm drainage.

Chair von Mering: Under the Site Plan Review, have already addressed the first three items.

Mr. Jerius: Raised a concern about soil found to be contaminated.

Mr. Makarious: The site owner would be responsible to address it with the Department of Environmental Projection.

Chair von Mering: Items #4 (stormwater) and #5 (pedestrian safety) have been addressed through peer review and already identified as conditions to the permit. Item #6 (access for fire/emergency) is part of the fire code and will also be reviewed by the building commissioner.

Mr. Jerius: For Item #7 (minimize obstruction of views), by-right the builder can go up to 45 feet and this structure is 53 feet. The additional 8 feet will be unnoticeable.

Chair von Mering: For Item #8 (outdoor service areas), many are internal; there is screening, so nothing is visible from roof line; like to add a specific condition for Vine and Elmwood Street views of the HVAC. For Item #9, there is a condition on the lighting.

Mr. Jerius: Concerned about the visual impact to the abutters regarding the lighting.

Chair von Mering: Recommend adding that the Design Review Committee with the design consultant will review the outdoor lighting; make this a condition to minimize intrusions on adjacent properties and the neighbors. Item #10 (groundwater) has been discussed. Item #11 (landscaping) is included in the conditions.

Ms. Meister: For the landscaping plan, requested to remove the option of columnar trees; need broad, more shade and arching trees for this project.

Mr. Szekely: Reviewed the 4 requested waivers.

Ms. Rudolph: How are easements for construction addressed?

Mr. Makarios: Suggested including a condition to work with DPW for temporary sidewalk closures and traffic management; for sitework, the SB grants permits if less than a year; if more, then need a license but would still work through the SB.

Mr. Jerius moved to approve the Site Plan Review under Section 7.3.15.5, General Standards for 654 Main Street. Ms. Wolfe second the Motion. Vote: Hannon, Jerius, Wolfe, von Mering in favor; Meister opposed. Motion passes 4-1-0.

Mr. Jerius moved to grant the Maximum Height waiver of the requested 52.83 feet for 654 Main Street. Ms. Hannon second the Motion. Vote: Hannon, Jerius, Wolfe, von Mering in favor; Meister opposed. Motion passes 4-1-0.

Mr. Jerius moved to grant the Maximum Floor Area Ratio waiver of the requested 2.49 for 654 Main Street. Ms. Hannon second the Motion. Vote: Hannon, Jerius, Wolfe, von Mering in favor; Meister opposed. Motion passes 4-1-0.

Mr. Jerius moved to grant the Front Setback waiver of the requested 2-feet on Main Street and 3-feet on Vine Street for 654 Main Street. Ms. Hannon second the Motion. Vote: Hannon, Jerius, Meister, Wolfe, von Mering in favor. Motion passes 5-0-0.

Mr. Jerius moved to grant the Rear Setback waiver of the requested 15-feet for 654 Main Street. Ms. Hannon second the Motion. Vote: Hannon, Jerius, Wolfe, von Mering in favor; Meister opposed. Motion passes 4-1-0.

Mr. Jerius moved to grant the Special Permit for 654 Main Street using criteria in Section 9.4.2 with the conditions set forth on March 4, 2021. Ms. Hannon second the Motion. Discussion: Chair von Mering suggesting delegating the Town Planner and Town Counsel to finalize the conditions. Mr. Jerius amended his Motion.

Mr. Jerius moved to grant Special Permit for 654 Main Street using criteria in Section 9.4.2 with the conditions as set forth on March 4, 2021 and finalized by the Town Planner and Town Counsel. Ms. Hannon second the Motion. Vote: Hannon, Jerius, Wolfe, von Mering in favor; Meister opposed. Motion passes 4-1-0.

Mr. Jerius moved to close the Public Hearing for 654 Main Street. Ms. Hannon second the Motion. Vote: Hannon, Jerius, Meister, Wolfe, von Mering in favor. Motion passes 5-0-0.

Mr. Jerius moved to adjourn the PB meeting. Ms. Hannon second the Motion. Vote: Hannon, Jerius, Meister, Wolfe, von Mering in favor. Motion passes 5-0-0. Meeting adjourned at 10:05 pm.

Diab Jerius, Clerk

Nancy Polcari, Recording Secretary