

City of Rochester Planning Board
Monday February 6, 2023
City Hall Council Chambers
31 Wakefield Street, Rochester, NH 03867
(These minutes were approved on February 27, 2023)

Members Present

Mark Collopy, *Chair*
Robert May, *Vice Chair*
Peter Bruckner
Keith Fitts
Matthew Richardson
Dave Walker

Members Absent

Don Hamann, *excused*
James Hayden, *excused*
Mark Sullivan, *excused*
Alexander de Geofroy, *excused*
Michael McQuade

Alternate Members Present

Rick Healey

Staff: Shanna B. Saunders, *Director of Planning & Development*
Ryan O'Connor, *Senior Planner*

(These are the legal minutes of the meeting and are in the format of an overview of the meeting. A recording of the meeting will be on file in the City Clerk's office for reference purposes. It may be copied for a fee.)

I. Call to Order

Chair, Mark Collopy called the meeting to order at 6:30 p.m.

II. Roll Call

Senior Planner, Ryan O'Connor conducted roll call.

III. Seating of Alternates

Mr. Collopy asked Mr. Healey to vote in place of Mr. Hayden.

IV. Communications from the Chair

Mr. Collopy thanked Ms. Saunders and Mr. O'Connor for putting together the retreat meeting. He said the training from New Hampshire Municipal Association was very helpful.

V. Opening Discussion/Comments (up to 30 minutes)**A. Public comment**

There was no from the public present to speak.

B. Discussion of general planning issues

There were no general planning issues to discuss.

VI. New Applications**A. [68 Hemingway, LLC; 68 Hemingway Drive](#) (By Holden Engineering & Surveying INC) Condominium Conversion (Major Subdivision). Case # 258-63-R2-22**

David Jordan of Greenman-Pedersen, Inc. gave an overview of the condo conversion of Country Brook Apartments. He said they are creating a condominium ownership of the buildings on the property and there is no further construction proposed at this time. Mr. Jordan explained the conversion is being done for financing purposes and to create convertible land for future development.

Mr. Jordan further explained with the condo conversion, each building will be considered a unit which means there will be four units total.

Mr. Collopy opened the public hearing. There was no one from the public present to speak; Mr. Collopy brought the discussion back to the Board.

Ms. Saunders explained this is a simple four-unit condo conversion. She said the applicant has submitted condo documents which staff has reviewed with the City's Legal Counsel. Ms. Saunders explained outside of the standard conditions of approval, staff is asking the locations of underground utilities be added to the plans. She said the land is in Current Use so the applicant will need to work with the Assessing Department, and they will need to work with staff on addressing and unit numbers.

Ms. Saunders said staff recommends the application be considered complete and recommends approval.

A motion was made by Mr. Walker and seconded by Mr. Healey to accept the application as complete. The motion carried unanimously by a voice vote.

A motion was made by Mr. Walker and seconded by Mr. Bruckner to approve the application as presented with the conditions as stated.

Mr. May asked for clarification regarding convertible ownership. Applicant Matt Manning of Elm Grove Properties explained the purpose is to separate the existing structures into separate legal entities. He said they are using low-income housing tax credit financing and working with New Hampshire Housing. Mr. Manning further explained if they were to do further development in the future they would have to be a new owner entity.

Mr. May asked if changing ownership of the condo needs to come back to the Board. Mr. Manning said they would have to come back with a site plan but it does not give them right to construct or alter the land.

The motion for approval carried unanimously by a voice vote.

B. Bright Spot Solar, LLC; 17 Sterling Drive (By Norway Plains & Associates) Amendment to an Approved Site Plan. Case # 208-18-GRD-21

Scott Lawler of Norway Plains Associates explained the project was originally approved in January 2021 to allow construction of four self-storage buildings and eleven solar trackers. Mr. Lawler said there is an existing cemetery on the parcel as well as a municipal pump station. Mr. Lawler said the amendment is to install an additional thirteen solar trackers. He explained four will be placed on the westerly edge of the parking lot, between the self-storage units and Sterling Drive. Three additional trackers will be constructed along the northerly edge of the developed area within the stormwater management system. The other six trackers will be installed outside of the uplands, inside the jurisdictional wetlands located to the north of the site. Mr. Lawler explained as part of the amendment they are also seeking approval to construct a swing gate that will be installed at the entrance to the development. He said at the recommendation of the Planning Staff there will be additional lilacs bushes installed along the perimeter of the paved area and around the cemetery.

Mr. Lawler said due to the construction activity within the Conservation Overlay District they have met with the Conservation Commission and were granted recommendations for approval. He said they are also required to receive NHDES approval for the construction of the six trackers located in the wetlands.

Mr. Lawler said the applicant received a Special Exception for the Zoning Board of Adjustment to allow a Power Generation Utility within the Granite Ridge Development District.

Mr. Collopy opened the public hearing. There was no one from the public present to speak; Mr. Collopy brought the discussion back to the Board.

Ms. Saunders went through the staff recommendations. She explained as part of the original approval the eleven solar trackers were considered accessory to the self-storage. She said when the applicant came back to add thirteen more trackers, staff determined it was a change to add a secondary primary-use for the property. Ms. Saunders said the property is now considered two primary uses of Power Generation Utility and Mini Storage. She explained that part of the Zoning Board's approval is additional landscaping be installed on the frontage of Sterling Drive to soften the viewscape. The landscaping needs to be at least three feet tall because the Zoning Board was aware of the previous Planning Board condition requiring the landscaping be at least three feet tall but instead was installed at about eight inches tall.

Ms. Saunders said the recommendations from the Conservation Commission have been included in Staff's recommendations for approval. She explained the Commission asked that a vegetation management plan be required as a condition of approval to see what type of cutting will be required in the wetland to support the solar install. Ms. Saunders said there were discussions about minimizing wetland buffer impacts and focus on maintenance.

Ms. Saunders went through the conditions of approval which include a Knox Box, Knox gate key switch, click to enter radio-controlled gate opener that utilizes emergency services radio frequencies, or Opticom operated gate opener be installed. Fire Department clearance shall have an unobstructed vertical clearance of not less than thirteen feet, six inches. The total previously disturbed area, to include temporary disturbance is to be included on the plan. A plan detail showing reconstruction and restoration of the proposed disturbance to the infiltration basin is to be included on the plan.

Ms. Saunders said Staff is recommending the application be accepted as complete and approved with the conditions stated.

A motion was made by Mr. Walker and seconded by Mr. Bruckner to accept the application as complete. The motion carried unanimously by a voice vote.

A motion was made by Mr. Walker and seconded by Mr. Bruckner to approve the Conditional Use Permit and the Site Plan Amendment as presented with the conditions stated. The motion carried unanimously by a voice vote.

VII. Other Business

A. Planning Update

Ms. Saunders gave an overview of the retreat meeting. She said at the upcoming workshop Staff will have some recommended changes to the Site Plan and Subdivision Regulations as well as Rules of Procedure in order to be a little more efficient and in line with some of the new State Statutes.

B. Other

There was no other business to discuss.

VIII. Adjournment

A motion was made by Mr. Walker and seconded by Mr. Bruckner to adjourn the meeting at 6:56pm. The motion carried unanimously.

Respectfully submitted,

Crystal Galloway,
Planner I

and

Shanna B. Saunders,
Director of Planning & Development