

# City of Rochester Planning Board

Monday May 17, 2021

City Hall Council Chambers

31 Wakefield Street, Rochester, NH

(These minutes were approved on June 7, 2021)

## Members Present

Nel Sylvain, *Chair*

Mark Collopy, *Vice Chair* –arrived at 7:20pm

Peter Bruckner

Tim Fontneau

Robert May

Daniel Rines

Mark Sullivan

David Walker

## Members Absent

Terry Dwyer, excused

Lance Whitehill, absent

## Alternate Members Present

Paul Giuliano

Donald Hamann

Staff: Shanna B. Saunders, *Director of Planning & Development*

Crystal Galloway, *Planning Administrative Assistant II*

(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.)

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Mr. Sylvain called the meeting to order at 7:00 p.m.

The Secretary conducted roll call.

### **III. Seating of Alternates**

Mr. Giuliano voted in place of Ms. Dwyer.

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### **IV. Communications from the Chair**

There were no communications from the Chair.

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### **V. Opening Discussion/Comments**

#### **A. Public Comment**

There was no one present on the line from the public to speak nor did anyone submit any written correspondence ahead of the meeting.

## **B. Discussion of general planning issues**

There were no issues to be discussed.

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## **VI. Approval of minutes**

*A motion was made by Mr. Walker and seconded by Mr. May to approve the May 3, 2021 meeting minutes. The motion carried unanimously by a roll call vote.*

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## **VII. Discussion regarding Construction Inspection Rate Increase**

Ms. Saunders explained the two memos from the Department of Public Works. She said they have confirmed the need to increase the rate from \$75 per hour to \$90 per hour.

*A motion was made by Mr. Walker and seconded by Mr. Rines to increase the Construction Inspection Rate from \$75 per hour to \$90 per hour. The motion carried unanimously.*

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## **VIII. Discussion on surety for Chesley Farm Estates**

Mr. Sylvain told the Board this item would be tabled to the June 7, 2021 meeting.

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## **IX. Discussion on building height requirements in the Downtown Commercial zone**

Ms. Saunders displayed a panorama view of North Main Street showing the highest building having four stories. She held up pictures of buildings with five to ten stories to show the Board what it would like if a developer were to construct such a structure.

Mr. Walker suggested taking height requirement off. He said building a six or seven story building would increase the volume of residency within downtown where right now the City is limited.

Mr. Fontneau asked where this would be allowed. Ms. Saunders explained this would be allowed in the downtown commercial zone which is from Strafford Square to the old Care Pharmacy building with a portion of properties along Signal Street and Winter Street.

Mr. May asked if there is a threshold for building and safety codes would be looked at. Ms. Saunders said she would have to check with the Director of the Building and Licensing Department.

Mr. Bruckner recommended not exceeding seven stories as it would look out of place. Ms. Saunders said the Board could allow seven stories by right, anything more would need a Conditional Use Permit.

Mr. Sylvain said he wants downtown to improve but it needs to be presentable.

Mr. Bruckner said he would like to hear from the Fire Department to see what ramifications taller buildings would have on the City.

Mr. Sullivan asked to get an opinion regarding code issues from the Building and Licensing Department.

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## **X. Granite Ridge Development District – Residential Zoning change discussion**

Economic Development Director Mike Scala said he looked into a few concerns the Board brought up during the last discussion. He said the goal is to put together a list of must haves to incorporate in the Zoning Ordinance amendment.

Mr. Scala said he looked into the concern regarding the loop road to direct the traffic from Nashoba Drive into phase II of the Waterstone development.

There was discussion regarding the loop road. Mr. Sullivan requested a plan be shown for the road.

Mr. May asked if there was any discussion about connecting to Two Rod Road. Mr. Scala said it would be a requirement for development of the lot behind Tractor Supply.

The Board went on to discuss density. Mr. Sylvain asked how many units Waterstone is requesting. Mr. Scala said they are asking for 150 to 200 units in the rear of the phase II parcel.

Ms. Saunders said part of the purpose of providing residential is to provide a synergy with the commercial so there is a back and forth with the residential units. She said the Board needs to think about bike lanes and pedestrians.

Mr. Fontneau mentioned he drove through the development in Dover that combines residential and commercial units. He said it is a top scale design.

Mr. Scala said where it is a commercial TIF there needs to remain a commercial aspect. He said he reached out to the City of Dover to see how they figured the ratio for density in the mixed development.

Mr. Fontneau said there is tremendous opportunity with some fairly large parcels. He said the Board needs to think about the PUD's in the City, one of the things the developers talked about was the commercial part of it and now they are only constructing the residential portion.

Mr. Walker asked that there be maps for the Board to look at for the next meeting this item is discussed.

Ms. Saunders said she wanted to get some input in order to draft an ordinance and maps for the Board to review.

Ms. Saunders said in the downtown commercial zone parking is no more than two per unit which is based on square footage. She the Board will need to come up with a parking ratio for the residential units.

Ms. Saunders said the City requires water and sewer hook-ups for all multi-family development. She said right now not all areas of Route 11 has access to water and sewer. The Board agreed the developers would need to tie into the water and sewer systems.

Ms. Saunders asked if the Board wants to require amenities such as open space, parks, and playgrounds at the developer's expense. The Board agreed to have amenities.

Mr. Sullivan asked about putting in a safeguard for managed complexes. Mr. Sylvain suggested having the Planning Department and Economic Development make requirements for developers.

Mr. Scala said when they talk to a developer his department researches them to see what the past projects look like and how they are managed.

Ms. Saunders showed the Board the Granite Ridge zone abuts the Agricultural zone which is the most restrictive zone. She asked if the Board wants to require a buffer between the two zones. The Board suggested a 25 to 50 foot setback.

Ms. Saunders suggested requiring landscaping to accommodate for all the pavement for the parking lots.

Lastly, Ms. Saunders recommended having an architectural requirement. Mr. Sylvain said the project still needs to be workable for the developer

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## **XI. Discussion of the report to the Fidelity Committee of the Tri-City Mayors' Joint Task Force on Homelessness**

Ms. Saunders told the Board they received a copy of the letter that was sent out from the Tri-City Mayors' Joint Task Force on Homelessness which outlined a strategy for their strategic plan. She said they are asking each of the three communities, Somersworth, Dover, and Rochester provide a report that speaks to potential Planning and Zoning barriers to achieve these strategies as well as opportunities.

Ms. Saunders said Rochester is doing a good job at providing affordable housing. She said Rochester allows ADU's in every zone; home occupations are allowed in every zone as well. There is zero density in the downtown commercial zone as long as parking can be provided. The Homeless Shelter was just approved as well as 124 units for the Village at Clark Brook, 102 units at Apple Ridge, Phase III of Ledgeview, 20 units for Addison Estates, and 60 units for Trinity Circle and Matildas Way.

Ms. Saunders said there were 200 to 300 units of affordable housing that has been approved within the last few years.

Mr. Sullivan said he doesn't see any barriers within Rochester. He said developers should be able to come in and build what they want to build and make as much money as they want to make in this environment.

Mr. Rines reminded the Board they voted out Impact Fees.

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## **XII. Review of April 2021 surety and inspections**

Ms. Saunders said surety hasn't changed much since March. She said both The Village at Clark Brook and Waste Management are continuing to work on draw down requests.

Ms. Saunders told the Board Waste Management has promised a draw down request or a bond continuation but have not provided either yet. She suggested pulling the site plan approval. Mr. Walker suggested have the City Manager call before pulling the approval.

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## **XIII. Other Business**

### **A. Update from Planning Staff**

Ms. Saunders told the Board Public Works has obtained Fuss & O'Neil to conduct third party inspections for Highfield Commons.

### **B. Other**

There was no other business to discuss.

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## **XIV. Adjournment**

*A motion was made by Mr. Walker and seconded by Mr. Collopy to adjourn at 8:40 p.m. The motion carried unanimously.*

Respectfully submitted,

Crystal Galloway,  
*Planning Administrative Assistant II*

and

Shanna B. Saunders,  
*Director of Planning & Development*