

**FRANKLIN PLANNING BOARD
PUBLIC MEETING
February 23, 2022 6:00 p.m.
City Hall, Council chambers**

Minutes

Call to Order: 6:00 p.m.

☐ **Pledge of Allegiance**

Attendance: Planning Director Creighton, Chairman Dave Liberatore, Councilor Valerie Blake, Mayor Jo Brown, Christine Dzujna, Christine Sheedy (arrived at 6:20), Rob Sargent, Kathy Lauer-Rago, Alternate James DeBernardo, Alternate Ted Starkweather. (Absent: Tim Flaherty, Alternate Donna Tully. DeBernardo and Starkweather seated for Flaherty and vacant position).

☐ **Approval of Minutes from 1/26/2021.** Member Dzujna made a motion to approve the minutes, seconded by Mayor Brown. **Motion carried 7-0-1**, with Councilor Blake abstaining due to not being present at that meeting.

☐ **New Business:**

- **P22-04:** Kirkwood Weyant Land Holding, LLC, owner, is requesting a subdivision of Map/Lot 121-405 to create two lots. Also, to include a review and recommendation to build on a Class VI road, River St; NH RSA 674:41 requires the Planning Board to offer a recommendation to the City Council on this matter.

Member Lauer-Rago made a motion to accept the application as complete, seconded by Member Dzujna.

David Krause, surveyor, spoke to the application. He confirmed that this is a Class VI road and that the proposal is for the new house to have a septic system and not tie in to municipal water.

Member Rago asked which lot the new house will be built on. Mr. Krause confirmed it will be on Lot 2. Member Rago then asked why the utilities would be underground when most of the city does not have underground utilities. Chairman Liberatore said that has been withdrawn already. Mr. Krause confirmed they have withdrawn the waiver request; Mr. Weyant will install underground utilities.

Director Creighton explained there is some discrepancy as to whether the road is Class VI, or private and if it is city-owned or state-owned. He has asked the applicant for signage delineating the conservation area so if the property is ever sold, it is clear to the new owners where the conservation land is.

Mr. Krause also asked a precedent question about the request for a sign at the corner of Winnepesaukee Street and River Street and who should be responsible for it. Director Creighton said he believes the sign should already be there, but one needs to be put there regardless. Member Starkweather said there has never been a sign there and doesn't see a reason for it. Director Creighton explained that should be part of a motion to approve or deny.

Mayor Brown made a motion to approve the partial waiver for wetlands delineation for the reasons outlined in the Staff Report, seconded by Member Dzujna. **Motion carried 8-0-0.**

Mayor Brown made a motion to approve the waiver request from Subdivision Regulation 403-4.L for the following reason:
a) The applicant has already obtained a Zoning Variance to subdivide on an unaccepted street. Seconded by Member Dzujna. **Motion carried 8-0-0.**

Mayor Brown made a motion to approve the subdivision application with a suggestion that the Board suggest to City Council that they allow for construction of a residential structure with/without accessory structures on either/both of the subject parcels contingent upon the applicant agreeing to meet any related road/safety improvement requirements which may be suggested by Franklin's Fire/Municipal Services Departments and upheld by City Council per NH RSA 674:41. The

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approval is consistent with the draft decision provided by the Planning Director, with any amendments made by the Board and noted in the minutes. Motion seconded by Councilor Blake. **Motion carried 8-0-0.**

- **P22-05:** Stevens Mill, LLC, owner, is requesting a Site Plan Amendment to Map/Lot 117-261, 117-154, 117-153, 117-365:
 - 1) To increase the residential unit count from 140 to 153 residential units, some/all of these additional units are proposed to be in the 'basement' of Building B (a building currently approved to be fully commercial);
 - 2) Decrease the commercial/nonresidential area from 35,800 sq. ft to 34,500 sq. ft. (a difference of 1,300 sq. ft.); and,
 - 3) Special Use Permit request to allow for reduced and/or alternative parking.

Mayor Brown made a motion to accept the application, seconded by Member Rago. **Motion carried 9-0-0.**

Paul Goodwin, representative for the applicant, spoke to the application. Brian Jones, civil engineer, was also present to answer questions. Mr. Goodwin gave an update on the project sharing that this is an Historic Tax Credit project of 180,000 square feet. The Demolition permit is in place and demolition has already started on some of the non-historic parts of the buildings. Once the designs were finalized, they realized they would end up with a higher residential count and less commercial space. He explained that due to the inconsistencies of these buildings, they don't always know exactly where the walls will best fit so the number of units has changed. Through the retention of a loading dock between Buildings A and B that is historic, they realized the lower level of Building B would be challenging for businesses so they opted to make it residential and are looking for approval to do that.

Chairman Liberatore shared that a lot information has been coming in over the past couple of days and that Director Creighton has an overview of his findings. Director Creighton shared an updated Staff Report based on information that he was given from the applicant over the past two days. It included a breakdown of the units, a facsimile of the layout of the buildings, and an explanation of discussions held back in 2020. He gave a clarification of the rule regarding the size of the units and percentage allowed that are less than 720 sq. feet. He said he is comfortable supporting the number of smaller units. He explained his concerns about the traffic and parking but since this was already an approved project, it was not something that could be fully revisited. However, with the Amended site plan application, that discussion is opened up again. He explained that national traffic guidelines show it is a wash with the added residential units and decrease in commercial space. He cannot legally require a traffic study on an approved project but the numbers show that the City will need to consider infrastructure issues in the future.

Director Creighton also shared that he thought Mr. Goodwin had provided a good explanation of the parking and asked if he could discuss that. The amenities had also been addressed by the applicant and that most of them are good but he also made some recommendations. Director Creighton explained that the rest of the conditions in his memo are "boilerplate" and should be easily addressed. He did still have some concerns about parking and that should be addressed.

Chairman Liberatore addressed that six more units would mean eight more parking spaces, and asked where they would put those. Mr. Goodwin clarified that the calculation is actually 1.2 vehicles per residential unit and they limit the number of vehicles through the lease agreements. The studios, for example, are only permitted one vehicle. Chairman Liberatore said he has visited other Chinburg properties and has not seen an issue with parking.

Member Rago expressed concerns about there being only one way out of the property (Smith Street) and the impact of 153 cars at that intersection. Mr. Goodwin said that he is not a traffic engineer but that those numbers are similar to a Walmart that only has one curb cut and handles that amount of traffic.

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Member Starkweather reiterated concerns about traffic but asked about the number of units that would be less than 720 sq. ft. Mr. Goodwin said it is approximately 75% of them that they refer to as micro-units. He said they tend to be more affordable and are quite popular. Member Starkweather asked if he could point out one of those units on the plan and give him the dimensions. Mr. Goodwin pointed out one that was 27' x 26'. He said the old mill buildings have defined spaces and are not typical. Chairman Liberatore said that as a realtor, smaller homes are what people want now. The Chinburg properties in other cities have no vacancies so they must be doing something right. Mr. Goodwin added that the state of the housing market is such that smaller is highly desirable.

Member Sargent expressed concerns over parking and traffic as well. As a City employee that will be using that same intersection every day, another 153 cars is a concern. He also said that he has usually lived in apartments throughout his life and his experience is that most people have 2 vehicles. Mr. Goodwin explained that they manage the number of vehicles a tenant can have through the lease agreement. The micro unit apartments are only allowed one vehicle for example. Member Sargent followed up by asking if public transportation is available at their other properties. Mr. Goodwin was unsure but did not believe their clientele to be typical users of public transportation. Member Sargent also expressed concerns about the lack of employment options in Franklin and asked where they envision their tenants will be working/commuting to and from. Mr. Goodwin could not answer that. Chairman Liberatore said more people are working remotely now and will not all be leaving/returning at the same time, he felt they were envisioning a worst-case scenario.

Member Sheedy asked how they handle waste from tenant turnover. In her experience people leave furniture, etc. on the street and that is a concern for such a large property. Mr. Goodwin said they typically have very low turnover in their properties and waste is handled by property management. He said they manage it closely and have not had a problem.

Member DeBernardo asked what is the typical rent on the micro units (300sq ft). Mr. Goodwin said it is upper \$700s-lower \$800s. Director Creighton added that the unit Mr. Goodwin had pointed out earlier was not a micro unit. He directed them to one on page A-1.0a, unit C.8 that is 420 sq. ft. Mr. Goodwin agreed that is more typical. Director Creighton followed up with a question about their other properties. 1-bedroom units did not used to rent well but those are more popular now; he asked Mr. Goodwin if he could point to any of their other projects that have a similar design. Mr. Goodwin said their project in Rochester is similar and is 80% leased and still 30 days from opening. Member DeBernardo said he liked the idea of the smaller units as they will not be using the school system as it is not likely they will have children.

Chairman Liberatore opened the discussion to public comment. With no comments from the public, he closed the public comment and brought it back to the Board.

Mayor Brown made a motion to approve the Special Use Permit for a multi-family development, seconded by Councilor Blake. **Motion carried 9-0-0.**

Mayor Brown made a motion to approve the Special Use Permit for reduced parking for the development, seconded by Member Dzujna. **Motion carried 9-0-0.**

Mayor Brown made a motion to approve the Site-Plan Amendment, seconded by Member Sheedy. **Motion carried 9-0-0.**

- ☐ **Old Business:** Chairman Liberatore said he had expected to see the applicant from 221 S. Main Street gas station back this month. Director Creighton explained that he thought they were still getting the information and designs together and expects to see them at the March 23 meeting.

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- ☐ **Public Comment:** None
- ☐ **Other Business:** None
- ☐ **Planner's Update:** Director Creighton shared that they are in the final stages of a grant submission to complete the water park. Mayor Brown asked about the Cumberland Farms project and if there has been any decision about what they will do with the old location. Director Creighton said he understood their plan is to pull the tanks, remove all the signage, board up the windows and sell the property. Chairman Liberatore asked if there were any updates on Peabody Place. Member Dzujna confirmed they are in the final stages of Phase I, they will be moving residents into the new building soon. Then they will demolish the old building and begin Phase II.
- ☐ **Adjournment:** Mayor Brown made a motion to adjourn, seconded by Member Dzujna. **Motion carried 9-0-0, meeting adjourned at 7:12 p.m.**

- The next Planning Board regular meeting is scheduled for March 23, 2022 at 6:00 p.m. and the application dead line date is March 2, 2022.

Respectfully submitted,

Judy Bibbins
Planning & Zoning Administrative Assistant