

SITE REVIEW TECHNICAL ADVISORY COMMITTEE

2:00 P.M.

**CITY COUNCIL CHAMBERS
MUNICIPAL COMPLEX, 1 JUNKINS AVENUE
PORTSMOUTH, NEW HAMPSHIRE**

JANUARY 2, 2002

MEMBERS PRESENT:

David M. Holden, Planning Director, Chairman;
David Allen, Deputy Public Works Director;
Michael Magnant, Deputy Police Chief;
Chris Leclaire, Acting Fire Chief;
Alanson Sturgis, Chairman, Conservation Commission;
Thomas Cravens, Engineering Technician, Water Dept.;
David Desfosses, Engineering Technician, Public Works

ALSO PRESENT:

Lucy E. Tillman, Planner 1

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I. OLD BUSINESS

A. The application of **Raymond Ramsey** for property located **off Kearsarge Way** wherein site plan approval is requested for the construction of a 63' x 231' four-story, 100 room hotel with related paving, utilities, landscaping, drainage and associated site improvements. Said property is shown on Assessor Plan 218 as Lot 22 and lies within a General Business district. Said property was formerly shown on Assessor Plan 218 as Lots 22, 24, 25, 26, 27, 28, 29, 30, 32, 33, 34, 38 and 39. **(This application was tabled at the Committee's December 4, 2001, meeting to this meeting.)**

Mr. Allen moved to take the application off the table. Mr. Cravens seconded the motion which passed unanimously.

SPEAKING TO THE APPLICATION:

Attorney Charles Griffin addressed the Committee stating that he was representing the applicant, Mr. Ramsey. He referred to the items listed in the Letter of Decision from last month's meeting and stated that they are working on them. He reviewed those items briefly.

1. That the discrepancies in the traffic studies be resolved.

Attorney Griffin informed the Committee that additional traffic counts were taken in December; that a report had been submitted last Friday. It was his opinion that the reason Mr. Kelly's figures are lower than the previous report prepared by Steve Pernaw is that the actual scope of the project is less that what was proposed at the time Mr. Pernaw prepared his traffic study for GreenPages.

2. That the plan be reviewed by the Traffic/Safety Committee with a report back to the Committee.

Attorney Griffin informed the Committee that the plan would be before the Traffic/Safety Committee this month.

3. That a joint meeting (City and applicant) be held with the New Hampshire Department of Transportation (NHDOT);

Attorney Griffin stated that the Traffic Study has been submitted to the NHDOT; that the applicant is still waiting to hear back regarding the scheduling of a meeting.

4. That the water issue be resolved; that is, that flow tests be done;
5. That the site plan indicate internal sidewalks and an area for a transit pullover;
6. That the landscaping plan be shared with the neighborhood and be approved by the Planning Department;
7. That the water main being capped near a residential driveway be brought back to Kearsarge Way; and,
8. That a meeting shall be held with Charlie Jones, Fire Marshal regarding a master fire alarm box and fire hydrant locations.

Attorney Griffin felt that items four through eight were engineering issues and would be covered by John Chagnon of Ambit Engineering. However, he did mention that with regard to item #6, a meeting had been scheduled with the neighborhood to review the landscaping plan on January 8th at 6:30 p.m.

John Chagnon of Ambit Engineering addressed the Committee and stated that with regard to item #4, flow tests were conducted last summer; that there is a need to improve pressure to handle fire flow; that the intent is to replace a section of the main from the Kearsarge Way/Birch Street intersection back to the project entrance coming off that with a 6" service up to the building for the fire hydrant.

Mr. Chagnon commented that item #5 dealt with sidewalks and that he would be meeting with John Burke to work on those issues.

He reiterated that with regard to item #6, a meeting had been scheduled with the neighbors.

With regard to item #7, the water main would be going in a different direction now; so that stipulation is no longer pertinent.

With regard to item #8, Mr. Chagnon informed the committee that he did talk with Charlie Jones about a hydrant location somewhere closer to the building possibly in front of the landscaping area; however, they still need to discuss the matter of a master fire alarm box.

Mr. Chagnon further informed the committee that a Conditional Use Permit Application had been filed for work in the drainage swale including the replacement of a "V" notch weir to handle storm water runoff at peak times. He added that Site Specific and Wetlands Applications are ongoing.

Dermot Kelly, traffic engineer, spoke to the committee about additional counts that were done in December on Market Street westerly of Kearsarge Way. The counts were taken from December 11th through the 14th. The daily count was in the vicinity of 22,866. The peak hour came in at 1,907 vehicles. The figures are an 8.1% increase from those taken in March. On December 14th, the count was 24,175 vehicles which is 22% higher than the March volume. It was Mr. Kelly's opinion that there would be no change to the Levels of Service.

Discussion ensued between Mr. Burke and Mr. Kelly regarding the traffic studies prepared by Mr. Kelly and Mr. Pernaw. Mr. Kelly pointed out that Mr. Pernaw's analysis took into account an office park which would be built in two phases. The first phase involved a 200,000 s.f. building including a certain number of employees. The second phase involved a 200,000 s.f. building. That project has now been changed to a 230,000 s.f. office park.

Mr. Burke was concerned with left-turn movements pointing out that it has been known to have traffic back up all the way to K-Mart Plaza. He stated that he would like to have that problem identified and an explanation as to how it is going to be mitigated.

The comment was made that the signals are not coordinated for the intersections that are three or four hundred feet apart; that there is a queuing problem. The comment was also made that the left-turn ramp should be a double left turn.

At this point in the proceedings, the Chair commented that the Public Hearing was still open and invited the public to speak.

The only taker was Ken Weston, a resident of the Atlantic Heights, spoke to his concern about creeping commercialism. He spoke to the various traffic studies and felt that additional service improvements would provide a potential for future development on this site and adjacent sites. It was his understanding that one of the abutters is interested in using his property in a commercial manner. It was his opinion that the area in question was not the best spot for future commercial development and wondered if there were ways to limit such development.

The Chair made three calls for speakers. There being none, the Chair declared the Public Hearing closed for the purposes of this meeting. However, the Chair stated that the Public Hearing could be re-opened at a later time if the committee so desired.

DISCUSSION AND DECISION OF THE COMMITTEE:

The Chair asked Attorney Griffin to respond to Mr. Weston's concern. Attorney Griffin stated that the contemplated commercialism of adjacent properties is not before the committee and such a use would be subject to approvals. The issue before the committee is the construction of a 100 unit motel with site improvements as shown on the plan.

Mr. Holden asked if it would be safe to say that the traffic study included development on Woodbury Avenue and Market Street with Attorney Griffin responding in the affirmative.

The Chair informed those present that the Application for a Conditional Use Permit is before the Conservation Commission; that other issues have been identified and the parties are continuing to work on a resolution. The comment was made that with regard to a scoping meeting with NHDOT, that the applicant has submitted plans and has asked NHDOT to review jurisdiction over signalization.

Mr. Sturgis moved to table the application to the February 5, 2002, meeting of the committee. Mr. Allen seconded the motion. The grounds for the tabling motion were:

1. A scoping meeting with the New Hampshire Department of Transportation;
2. Traffic/Safety Committee review and report back;
3. Water flow tests;
4. Internal sidewalks and mass transit pullover;
5. A meeting with the Atlantic Heights neighborhood concerning the landscaping plan;

- 6. A meeting with Charlie Jones, Fire Marshal regarding a master fire alarm box and hydrant locations; and,
- 7. That water-saving fixtures be used in the hotel.

With regard to the water flow tests, Mr. Allen commented that they are conceptually pretty close. He asked that the applicant work with Tom Cravens to run a model of adequate size.

The Chair asked that all information pertaining to this application be submitted prior to the meeting (February 5) or the application would be tabled.

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B. The application of **Wren’s Nest Motel Corp.** for property located at **3548 Lafayette Road** wherein site plan approval is requested for the construction of a 180’ x 50’ parking area to accommodate twenty-eight spaces in conjunction with a proposed 60 seat restaurant with a bar area and dance floor within an existing building with associated site improvements. Said property is shown on Assessor Plan 297 as Lot 6 and lies within a Single Residence A district. **(This application was tabled at the Committee’s December 4, 2001, meeting to this meeting.)**

At the request of the applicant, Mr. Cravens moved to take the application off the table and to re-table the application to the Committee’s February 5, 2002, meeting. Mr. Desfosses seconded the motion. The motion passed unanimously.

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C. The request of **David Hancock, Trustee of Pheasant Lane Realty Trust,** for property located off **Hoover Drive** wherein an amendment to an approved site plan for a planned unit development is requested to incorporate an amended drainage plan. Said property is shown on Assessor Plan 268 as Lot 97 and lies within a Single Residence B district. **(This application was tabled at the Committee’s December 4, 2001, meeting to this meeting.)**

As the applicant and the City are still negotiating a resolution of this matter, Mr. Cravens moved to take the request off the table and to re-table the request to the Committee’s February 5, 2002, meeting. Mr. Desfosses seconded the motion. The motion passed unanimously.

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D. The application of **Lafayette Partners of Michigan, LP, owner, and Margaritas Management Group, applicant,** for property located at 775 Lafayette Road wherein site plan approval is requested for the construction of three additions to the existing Margaritas Restaurant. The proposal calls for a 456 s.f. addition on the easterly side, a 1,188 s.f. addition to the northerly side and a 420 s.f. addition on the westerly side with associated site improvements. Said property is shown on Assessor Plan 245 as Lot 1 and lies within a General Business district. **(This application was tabled at the Committee’s December 4, 2001, meeting to this meeting.)**

As the applicant had nothing new to present at this time, Mr. Cravens moved to take the application off the table and to re-table the application to the Committee’s February 5, 2002, meeting. Mr. Desfosses seconded the motion. The motion passed unanimously.

II. PUBLIC HEARINGS

A. The application of the **City of Portsmouth School Department** for property located at **50 Andrew Jarvis Drive (Portsmouth High School)** wherein site plan approval is requested for the construction of a three-story 200,000 s.f. ± addition to the existing high school together with any accessory structures with related paving, utilities, landscaping, drainage and associated site improvements. Said property is shown on Assessor Plan 229 as Lot 3 and lies within a Municipal district.

SPEAKING TO THE APPLICATION:

W. Peter Torrey, Business Administrator with the School Department, addressed the Committee explaining that he was representing the City of Portsmouth School Department. He stated that the proposal calls for 200,000 s.f. of new construction with the demolition of some 120,000 s.f. and the renovation of the remaining structure.

Gregg Mikolaities of Appledore Engineering addressed the Committee and submitted reduced versions of the site plan. The high school will have a new entrance. The bus drop off area will remain in the same location. Two curb cuts in the parking lot in front of the school will be shut off, and the parking lot will be striped so that the parking spaces will be in one direction. A one-way road around the back of the school will be provided for emergency vehicles. A handicapped accessible ramp will be provided from the school to the track facility. The proposal calls for a new loading facility. An existing wing will be demolished.

The number of hydrants will be increased. At the present time the entire building exits through one sewer location. The sewer line will be pulled away some 30' to 40' from the new construction. The drainage will utilize the existing storm drains in the area. The gas line will remain the same. Electrical service will be provided underground. The existing generator will be replaced and will be located in approximately the same location.

Mr. Cravens inquired as to the fire service with the response being that it would be at least an 8" line and very possibly a 10" line. The domestic line will be a 4" line.

Deputy Police Chief Magnant inquired as to the traffic pattern. The response was that the intent is to keep cars away from buses and from students. The Deputy Police Chief was concerned about vehicles driving through a parking lot to get to a drop off area. The response to that concern was that enforcement would be key. There will be three main entry points – bus dropoff; student dropoff; and student parking. The hockey pad, adjacent to the student parking area, could be used for a future parking area.

Mr. Burke inquired as to how many vehicles exit to Route 1 from Andrew Jarvis Drive with Mr. Mikolaities responding that they haven't gotten that far yet. Mr. Allen inquired if the gate on Summit Avenue was open in the afternoons. The response was in the affirmative; that the gate is open during school hours and certain events; closed at night and closed during summer vacations. Dismissal time is usually within a ten to fifteen minute period. Arrivals usually occur over a half hour period. It was felt that it would be useful to have a letter from the high school indicating how the gate is used. Questions were asked about the sign on South Street which indicates whether the Summit Avenue gate was open or closed. It was the feeling of those present that the sign always indicated that the gate was closed.

The Acting Fire Chief inquired as to the number of entrances at the high school with the response being some 16 major entrance points. The Acting Fire Chief asked that the 24' wide

emergency way not be blocked with vehicles and that the fire hydrants be protected with bollards. The question was asked if the whole building would be sprinklered with the response being in the affirmative.

Discussion ensued regarding security measures; improvement in two-way communications; and closed circuit cameras.

The Chair reported that the Conservation Commission would be reviewing an Application for a Conditional Use Permit on the 9th of this month and he assumed a report would be available for the Planning Board on the 17th. He commented that the area requiring a Conditional Use Permit had been disturbed previously. Brad Mesquita of Appledore Engineering explained that the installation of the water line and removal and reconstruction of an existing bituminous sidewalk would be within the 100' wetland buffer. He assured the Committee that the existing 50' buffer would remain. Gregg Mikolaities of Appledore Engineering emphasized that the project would have no impact on any wetlands.

Discussion ensued on the construction/blasting schedule with the response being that construction would probably begin after the Spring thaw and would last some 2 1/2 years. The first phase will involve the construction of the new three-story building. The last phase will involve the construction of a kitchen and the demolition of the "Y" shaped three-story wing.

A practice field will become the site of the primary staging area. The rink area will become the secondary staging area for trailers.

Mr. Torrey advised the Committee that an informational meeting will be held at the High School on Tuesday, January 15th, from 6:30 p.m. to 8:00 p.m.

Three tennis courts, an athletic storage building and a practice softball field will be lost during construction. Coordination will be had with Rusty Wilson, the Director of the Recreation Department, regarding the use of City courts during this time period.

Discussion was had concerning the possible incorporation of a building for additional bathroom facilities and an athletic storage area. Mr. Torrey explained that the fundraising was never done for such a project. The suggestion was made that the concept be identified as well as how best it could be funded.

The Chair suggested that a note be added to the plan indicating that when the existing generator is no longer used that it be given to the Public Works Department for use by the City.

Mr. Desfosses asked that when the final plans are done, that two sets be submitted to the Public Works Department for storage in their archives.

The Chair made three calls for speakers. There being none, the Public Hearing was closed.

DISCUSSION AND DECISION OF THE COMMITTEE:

Mr. Desfosses moved to recommend approval of the site plan subject to stipulations. Mr. Allen seconded the motion.

Stipulations:

1. That the site plan indicate the size of the water line(s);

2. That the visitors' parking area be signed;
3. That Andrew Jarvis Drive be signed as "No Parking" except for special events;
4. That a warrant review be conducted for the intersection of Route 1 and Andrew Jarvis Drive;
5. That the site plan be reviewed by the Traffic/Safety Committee with a report back to the Planning Board;
6. That a letter be submitted to the Planning Board explaining the use of the gate on Summit Avenue (existing and proposed);
7. That the fire lanes be posted as such;
8. That the fire hydrants be protected with bollards;
9. That the Police Department be notified of the transmittal of emergency services from the building;
10. That one-way routes be identified with arrows;
11. That communications be had with the Recreation Department regarding the joint use of the recreational fields. This can be done in the form of a letter;
12. That any surplus lights be given to the Public Works Department;
13. That the School Department will notify the City Manager's Office prior to any severing of the use of the emergency generator;
14. That supplemental erosion control plans be submitted to David Desfosses, Engineering Technician with the Public Works Department;
15. That blasting operations shall be done in accordance with State ordinance; and,
16. That the existing generator, when not in use, be given to the Public Works Department.

The motion passed unanimously.

Ms. Tillman reminded the representatives from Appledore Engineering that when the time comes to demolish the "Y" shaped building, that contact should be made with the Building Inspector's office as the building would have to be posted as proposed for demolition.

III. ADJOURNMENT

Adjournment was had at approximately 3:30 p.m.

These minutes were taken and transcribed by Barbara Driscoll, Administrative Assistant in the Planning Department.