

**MINUTES OF MEETING
SITE REVIEW TECHNICAL ADVISORY COMMITTEE MEETING**

2:00 PM

OCTOBER 1, 2013

**EILEEN DONDERO FOLEY COUNCIL CHAMBERS
MUNICIPAL COMPLEX, 1 JUNKINS AVENUE
PORTSMOUTH, NEW HAMPSHIRE**

MEMBERS PRESENT: Rick Taintor, Chairman, Planning Director; Peter Britz, Environmental Planner; Nick Cracknell, Principal Planner; Juliet Walker, Transportation Planner; Terry Desmarias, Water & Sewer Engineer, David Desfosses, Engineering Technician; Jared Sheehan, Engineering Technician; Carl Roediger, Deputy Fire Chief; Captain Frank Warchol, Police Department

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I. OLD BUSINESS

A. The application of **Maplewood & Vaughan Holding Company, LLC, Owner**, for property located at **111 Maplewood Avenue**, requesting Site Plan Approval to construct a 4-story 27,000 ± (footprint) mixed use building with commercial use on the 1st floor, 70 residential units on the 2nd – 4th floors and parking spaces on the ground floor level, with related paving, lighting, utilities, landscaping, drainage and associated site improvements. Said property is shown on Assessor Map 124 as Lot 8 and lies within the Central Business A (CBA) District, the Historic District and the Downtown Overlay District (DOD). (This application was postponed at the September 3, 2013 TAC meeting.)

The Chair read the notice into the record.

SPEAKING TO THE APPLICATION:

Jamie Pennington, of RJ Finley Company, was present with the project team. Mr. Pennington stated they were getting into the finer details of this project which they have been working on for over one year. They have had 4 TAC Work Sessions and this is their 29th meeting with City or State Officials in some manner. They created their concept design with the goal of meeting the desires and needs of the City from speaking to City Officials and reading the Master Plan and City ordinances, with a strong focus on providing much needed housing in downtown Portsmouth. All of that pointed to a relatively dense mixed use building on the northern tier, compatible with other buildings approved in the area. This includes improving the pedestrian experience thru and around their site with more active commercial space to activate the sidewalk. It contains historical aspects which will enhance the district.

The BOA determined last year that this is a well thought out project that balances the purposes and policies of the ordinances. They further noted that one of the purposes of CBA is to promote business, retail and residential uses and this proposal will incorporate all three. One purpose of this project which made it successful was keeping the building off the lot boundaries. This setback strategy is not only part of the site review regulations but also the historic aspects. They are terracing the building

back to reduce massing. They also created a substantial amount of buffer space on all sides of their building.

The sewer connection will require substantial sewer upgrades and they will be contributing more than their fair share to the City and they see the logistical benefit of proceeding this way.

The Traffic Study Peer Review report was received yesterday, appears largely to agree with their traffic engineer's conclusions and their traffic engineer was present to address that.

The primary outstanding item in the peer review is the need for improved pedestrian crossings and they agree with that. They are happy to discuss their fair share contribution towards that.

He understands the City would like an off-site parking study for the Northern Tier. They are supportive of this but cannot presume the final strategies for metering or street parking for the City, especially as they relate to other developments in the Northern Tier. He reiterated that their project meets the parking requirements and has the potential to exceed it by taking advantage of shared parking strategies as outlined in their Memo. They hope the City will look at other things that they are doing as well as the additional revenue they are producing as an asset to the City.

Patrick Crimmins, of Tighe & Bond, handed out revised plans. He stated they are required to obtain an Alteration of Terrain Permit from NHDES for the stormwater as the project is within the 250' shoreland setback. They have submitted for this and received some technical comments back. They are waiting to respond until they are through the TAC process. The Shoreland Protection Permit has been approved and they also need a NHDES sewer connection permit which will require sign off by the City Engineer.

Mr. Crimmins reviewed the site which is unique as it is bounded by streets on all four sides. There is an existing 15,000 s.q. footprint building in the center of the lot. To the east of the building there is a 39 space parking lot and to the west there is a 30 space parking lot which will be where the new building will be placed. The new development will consist of four stories with commercial on the first floor and a residential lobby and the upper floors will be 72 residential units. The project meets the dimensional requirements of the ZO. They also meet the parking requirements of the ZO. The 1st floor commercial does not require any parking and the 72 units at 1.5 spaces per residential unit, less 4 space credit for the DOD totals 104 spaces which they are providing on site. Most of their parking will be covered spaces. They received a variance from the BOA for putting parking on the street. They show 59 covered parking spaces plus 5 uncovered spaces with an entry from Vaughan Street. They are shifting the existing driveway down to improve site distance, they are providing pedestrian connections throughout the parking area, there is a connection to the trash area and an ADA parking spot with a ramp, and they are also providing a connection to Maplewood Avenue from the parking lot. The parking lot on the east side of the lot will have 45 spaces. They are closing off an existing driveway on the Maplewood Avenue side and adding four additional spaces and providing brick sidewalks along the entire perimeter of the site. They will provide City standard lighting around the site. They do not have lighting details included in their plan set but Note 20 states that the final site lighting design will be coordinated with the City. The new building is setback from the street between 6.5' to 8' and up to as much of 12' where they are providing shade trees and landscaping. There is a sidewalk connection at the Maplewood/Vaughan corner.

There has been a lot of discussion about realignment of this corner so they are willing to grant an easement to the City. There will be brick sidewalks along Raynes Avenue which step down to provide

more of a storefront feel along the back of the building. They are providing bicycle storage throughout the site.

Mr. Crimmins indicated they are planning an architectural screen wall along the rear which will tie into the trash management area. They have provided exhibits showing truck turning for this trash area. The door to this area will slide to prevent it from swinging into Vaughan Street. They are providing a clear opening for the truck to turn in and access all three dumpsters.

The Stormwater management system will provide infiltration on site and stormwater treatment. Most of the stormwater will be collected, detained and treated into the underground detention system to discharge through the treatment unit and then directed to a manhole which discharges to the Mill Pond. The five uncovered spaces will be porous asphalt and the water will be infiltrated and treated. They have included a rain garden to further increase on site infiltration as there were concerns about volume, which is difficult on this site with the groundwater elevations. A traditional underground system like this doesn't really allow for infiltration so they submitted a revised drainage memo which included a review of the off site impacts, flows and volumes. There was a concern with the infrastructure in Raynes and Vaughan Streets and the potential for flooding. They did an overall review of the entire watershed area that discharges through the pipe and they modified that. The existing parking lot ties further up stream into a catch basin. They plan to revise that to tie in further downstream and to the manhole that discharges to the North Mill Pond. They analyzed the 10 year storm event in the manhole for potential flooding and their proposed condition is an improvement to the existing condition. There is one manhole that has flooded and one was close to flooding and they have lowered those elevations. Lastly there was a concern with volume which they addressed in their memo. They are increasing volume by 12,000 cubic feet during a 50 year storm event. If the North Mill Pond was not tidal and just static during the 50 year storm event there would be .05% of impact but with the pond being tidal, which means it would be coming and going, it will have a negligible impact.

Mr. Crimmins discussed utilities. They will have fire and domestic water service tapping off of Maplewood Avenue at the request of the Fire Department and DPW. The gas tap is off of Raynes Avenue. Telecommunications will tie into an existing manhole in Vaughan Street. There is an existing transformer which will be impacted with construction so they are relocating it with a concrete pad. They are also providing a post transformer for the new building on the Rayne Avenue side. They will provide lighting around the perimeter of the site and they will be providing a lighting conduit that will all get incorporated when they get the final lighting design approved by DPW.

They are proving two sanitary sewer services. One is for the first floor commercial building and the second is for the 2nd through 4th floor residential at the request of DPW and they are also putting backflow valves on those as well. They are proposing a backflow valve on the drainage area where it discharges because if flooding is occurring in the streets it is likely a cause of the tidal effects on the North Mill Pond. They are also providing provisions for two grease traps and a floor drain with a trap in the trash area. They included a sewer flow calculation memorandum for the sewer engineer to review.

They are proposing significant off site sewer improvement upgrades at the request of the City. There will be over 750' of new sewer pipe from the manhole at Green Street just prior to the railroad track and all the way up Vaughan Street. It has been difficult to locate these in the road and they tried to stay away from the telephone and electric as much as possible. The State requires 10' of service be provided between a water service and a sewer service and they were not able to achieve that based on everything that is going on in the road. Therefore they upgraded the pipe to a SDR 26 and the State

will allow that. They are additionally providing nine new manholes. They looked at trying to match the crowns on the pipes but they could not get better than a .1 drop between the manholes.

Mr. Crimmins stated they are providing new plantings with 13 new trees, ground coverage shrubs and landscaping. The location and species of the trees was discussed at the last work session. They changed one species of tree to provide more of a canopy over the sidewalk. There was discussion about getting street trees along Maplewood Avenue and he doesn't think it is possible given the existing conditions and they have done what they can. There is an existing duct bank along the Maplewood sidewalk and there are markings on the sidewalk now showing the conduits.

Nick Sanders, Traffic Engineer with VHB, addressed the committee and stated that they prepared the Traffic Impact Study supporting the proposed development. He wanted to address their study of May 16th, along with their September 11th addendum and the peer review comments they received yesterday. They are in the process of preparing a formal response to those comments however it is his understanding that there is general agreement with their general conclusions and there are a few technical items where they have a difference of opinion. There does appear to be general agreement with the methodology and conclusions of the report which are that the development is not a high trip generator, it won't have significant impacts on the adjacent roadway system and one item that was pointed out in the RSG review was that they wanted to see them recalculate the fair share of contribution toward the intersection improvements at Russell/Market Streets. They are prepared to do that but he doesn't expect to see a significant change in the trips through that intersection. There was a question of the pass-by traffic for the retail component but not for the restaurant or apartments. Even if they were to use the lower pass by-rates, it would not have a very large effect on the overall trips passing through the intersection of Russell and Market Streets.

One larger concern was that RSG felt pedestrian activity should be improved. Several intersections lack sidewalks and ADA tipdowns and the applicant has mentioned that he is willing to make a fair share contribution towards those and would work with the City to determine an amount.

Mr. Saunders wanted to confirm that because the peer review of the traffic study was in general agreement, with just a few technical issues which are relatively small discrepancies, there are no major changes to the overall conclusions. The level of impact will remain very low. He does not believe that they have to rerun all of their analysis on those points and he would like to confirm that was the intent of RSG. Finally, they would like to confirm with the Committee whether there is a need to go to Parking, Traffic and Safety. They are not seeing anything substantial being raised that would require PTS review.

Ms. Walker noted that the RSG report indicated they did not do a queuing analysis and she would like his comment on that. Mr. Sanders responded that as part of the capacity analysis, there is a queuing analysis and it is provided in the technical appendix of the report. It is embedded in the capacity analysis worksheets. That information was not pulled out into a user table but they can do that.

Mr. Desfosses stated that the applicant has gone out of their way to address many issues but this area of the City has not been very busy for a long time and has had almost no traffic. It was almost used as a parking aisle for 30 years. One key thing they are looking at are all of the other projects going on in this area and it is his preliminary determination that Vaughan Street cannot handle parking on both sides of the street or two way traffic at the same time. He feels the heartache of this project is parking and together they need to come up with a plan that will work for everyone on how to deal with increased parking demands and increased traffic. He can appreciate all of the utility upgrades, etc., but

he has grave concerns about Vaughan Street and its current width. Maybe they need to address whether there is a way to create more width on Vaughan Street. With the current cross section of Vaughan Street they are looking at one way traffic or parking only on one side of the street. He would like to propose some sort of work session on how to deal with this before moving on with this project. He feels the cross section is about 4' to narrow to allow parking on both sides.

Mr. Pennington doesn't know who to talk to about the width of Vaughan Street but they tried to follow the City's lead on commercial space and it was increased on this project. They have a problem with more commercial as it is not as viable in today's economy and the Northern Tier and it's just that much more parking. There are conflicting goals by the City for the Northern Tier. They are hopeful that their project can be the catalyst of these problems but not the sole reason for them. He understands from Mr. Desfosses that Vaughan Street needs to be 4' wider and they can look at that to see how that affects their design.

Mr. Taintor believed they would have to appear before the Parking, Traffic & Safety Committee at some point as the project is just too complex and especially if they are talking about eliminating parking spaces or making the street one way. Looking at the alignment of Maplewood and Raynes Avenues will be important.

Mr. Desfosses wants to make sure there is nothing in the layout prohibiting the City from realigning Raynes Avenue, i.e., no light poles, conduits, fire hydrants, etc. He sees some things that conflict. Mr. Rice had asked about constructability and whether, based on the layout and the building design, will there be a need for occupying a right of way or City space for constructing this project. Mr. DeStefano stated they will have a CMMP that will address that. They have larger setbacks than what are required and will make good use of their site and they hope to contain their construction. There may be times when they need to get into a corner and will need to use some City space. Mr. Desfosses asked about a laydown yard. Ms. DeStefano indicated they are having internal conversations about that now and will work to mitigate the impact to the community.

Mr. Desfosses mentioned there was conflicting information on some of the plan details. He stated that the City standard for truncated dome panels is Armor-Tile. They are constructing brick sidewalks so the color will be light grey. There is another detail where the panel is yellow and it is not a 3' x 2'. He asked Mr. Crimmins to go through and clean the details up. Depending on where they go with the sidewalk issue and the street width, to construct a sidewalk and have the City light poles, they will need a 7' wide minimum. They need to work on constructing a power supply for the City lights and how they are going to provide electricity in a largely underground area. He needs to make sure there is adequate capacity on their transformers to provide the City with a small 100 amp panel size for the City to use. They will also need to designate an area for the control cabinet, probably somewhere on private land facing the City sidewalk. He did not see an electrical layout plan for the conduit so that needs to be added and reviewed. The street sign detail shows painted green posts and City standard is galvanized. The setting bed on the brick sidewalk is shown as stone dust but City standard is 3 part sand and 1 part cement so that needs to be updated. They also need to review the curbing layout to determine whether the curbing needs to be reset before they rebuild the sidewalks. Some details still show the grass strip which needs to be remedied. The Demo Plan does not show sidewalks being constructed all around the site. Lastly, the raingarden seems to be in the middle of the buildings and they are concerned about whether there is enough sunlight for all of the plantings. Robie Woodburn, Landscape Architect, confirmed that the plants are all shade loving plants.

Mr. Taintor asked them to describe the landscaping along Maplewood Avenue. He felt they erred on the Portwalk project and he wants to avoid doing that again. He wants a high level of comfort that this is going to be a canopy that clearly screens the building from the street and he doesn't want to end up with the same type of oppressive façade that they will get on the other side. He wants this to be softened, that it is viable and that the trees will have a good canopy and be healthy.

Ms. Woodburn stated they have an 11' deep planter from the building to the curb. They had the trees planted in the middle of the planter but due to the duct bank proximity they have determined it would be best to keep the tree in the planter and bring it as far forward as possible. The tree they have picked is a golden rain tree and under ideal circumstances it grows to 30'-40' wide and 40' tall however in urban conditions that may not be the case. They have drawn a 20' diameter canopy circle which will bring them out to the curb. If the tree is happy, which it should be, the tree will need to be pruned away from the back of the building, and she anticipates it will go over the curb. It has summer bloom and yellow fall color. It is a very tough tree and should do well in that location. Mr. Taintor asked why the 4th tree is shaded back. Ms. Woodburn believes that is a mistake but it is called out.

Regarding RSG's response to the Traffic Study, Ms. Walker indicated she would like to see the recommended calculations on trip generations as they will be looking for their fair share contribution. She wanted to reiterate that it is important, given that this is going to be dependent on strong and safe pedestrian connections, they need to think strategically about this. Mr. Taintor asked if the placement of the bike racks was what Ms. Walker had intended. She responded that she actually intended that they leave the four where they are and add two more. If it works with the landscaping, she is fine with the placement, but she had wanted to see more scattered along the storefronts. Mr. Crimmins indicated they will look at that.

The Chair asked if there was anyone else wishing to speak to, for or against the application. Seeing no one rise, the Chair closed the public hearing.

DISCUSSION AND DECISION OF THE COMMITTEE

Mr. Desfosses felt there were still a number of issues. They have made great progress but he could not vote for this project today. He made a motion to postpone to next month's meeting. Mr. Taintor acknowledged that Mr. Desfosses had listed out a number of details that need attention but a list of things would be good for the applicant. Mr. Cracknell seconded the motion.

Mr. Desfosses felt that they certainly need to look at the parking issue and come up with a resolution on what direction they need to take. He is not sure what the mechanism would be to do that. Mr. Taintor felt they needed to have more analysis to support the project when they go to Parking, Traffic and Safety. They also need to respond to Mr. Desfosses' issues about the width of Vaughan Street and how to respond to that.

Ms. Juliet thought those were two separate issues: a planning study regarding Vaughan Street and it's overall capacity and the overall impact or demand for on street parking.

Ms. Walker would like the trip generations recalculated for their fair share. Mr. Taintor felt it was up to the applicant on whether they want to have a more comprehensive response to the RSG review. One discrepancy was that RSC recommended a list of pedestrian improvements and Mr. Sanders said they would be willing to entertain a fair share portion of those improvements so they need more clarity on that.

The motion to postpone to the next TAC meeting passed unanimously.

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II. NEW BUSINESS

A. The application of **Stonegate Construction H.H., LLC, Applicant** for property located at **249 Corporate Drive**, requesting Site Plan Review for a proposed 37,013 s.f. office building, with related paving, lighting, utilities, landscaping, drainage and associated site improvements. Said property is subject to subdivision from Map 303, Lot 6 (Pease Development Authority Map 314, Lot 0) and lies within the Airport Business Commercial District.

The Chair read the notice into the record.

SPEAKING TO THE APPLICATION:

Jeffrey Clifford, of Altus Engineering, presented. Also present was Maria Stowell, of the PDA, Attorney Malcolm McNeill and Robbie Woodburn, Landscape Architect. This project is a two story 37,000 s.f. office building. This site was previously developed for housing. There is pavement from the former housing where there was a series of structures around it. The project has wetlands on the 5 acre site and the entrance is from Corporate Drive. They have 1,951 s.f. of impervious area that will be in the wetland setback and a Condition Use Permit has been filed. As part of the Conditional Use Permit they have proposed mitigation of removal and management of invasive species around the site.

They have been before the TAC three times. At the last meeting they added a bike rack out front to compliment the bike rack in the rear, handicapped spaces have been moved and they were still able to preserve all parking spaces. TAC requested that some spaces be removed on the left side so they took 6 spaces and designated them as potential future spaces and they will landscape them for now. They are proposing a raingarden. They have added stop bars in two locations and R47 signs which direct people around the island. They have rerouted a portion of the sidewalk on Corporate Drive and they have left the 5' grass strip which is consistent with the other side. The generator is in the rear and they did some grading consistent with a low retaining wall in that area (Shown on Sheet C-3).

Mr. Clifford indicated that the Lighting Plan is the same.

He did not change the regular mulch to stone mulch, as requested, and he will revise that on the plan.

Mr. Taintor asked if they have a bike rack detail. Mr. Clifford stated it was called out on the drawings. Ms. Woodburn stated it is specified on Sheet L-1 or 2. It is a Dumor fixture, a simple staple on a concrete pad. Mr. Taintor noted it was not schematic and requested that they be centered more in the pad and they brought forward from the edge of the pad.

Deputy Fire Chief Roediger requested the standard paragraph on radio strength testing in the building. If they don't have it, the Planning Department can provide it to them.

Mr. Desfosses did not have any questions or concerns.

Mr. Britz asked why the temporary impact on the drainage outlet was in the rear. Mr. Clifford responded that they are replacing the whole line in the back and that portion is less than 50' from the

wetlands so it falls under a Permit by Notification level permitting. Mr. Britz asked why it was only temporary. Mr. Clifford explained they will dig the pipe up, put the new one in and then the grass will grow back in. Mr. Britz thought they were putting rip rap in and the check dam. Mr. Clifford stated that the check dam goes away and the riprap is what AOT wants to see.

Ms. Walker looked up the bike rack and noted it was a U rack.

Captain Warchol asked about the handicapped spots. The one to the right of the entrance has the vehicle backing out into the crosswalk and he felt they may want to move it over or eliminate the spot. Mr. Clifford indicated they will take a look at that and will put a template on it to

The Chair opened the public hearing and asked if there was anyone else wishing to speak to, for or against the application

Philip Katz, of Northeast Rehab Hospital, 5 Corporate Drive, asked if the applicant was going to address the uses in the building.

Mr. Clifford stated this project is designated as general office space (not medical).

The Chair asked if there was anyone else wishing to speak to, for or against the application. Seeing no one rise, the Chair closed the public hearing.

DISCUSSION AND DECISION OF THE COMMITTEE

Mr. Britz made a motion to recommend approval. Deputy Fire Chief Roediger seconded the motion.

Deputy Fire Chief Roediger requested a stipulation for the radio strength testing.

The motion to recommend Site Plan approval, with the following stipulation, passed unanimously:


1. The following note shall be added to the Site Plan: The applicant shall be responsible to perform a radio-strength test with a Motorola Service Shop to ensure sufficient signal strength within any structure included in the project to support adequate radio coverage for emergency personnel. The expense for the test shall be the responsibility of the applicant, whether or not the test indicates that amplifiers are necessary to ensure this communication. If the test indicates that amplifiers are required, that cost, too, shall be the responsibility of the applicant. All testing and installations shall be coordinated between the applicant and the police/fire communications supervisor.

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II. ADJOURNMENT was had at approximately 3:30 pm.

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Respectfully submitted,


 Jane M. Shouse
 Acting Secretary