

MINUTES

SITE REVIEW TECHNICAL ADVISORY COMMITTEE MEETING

2:00 PM

DECEMBER 2, 2014

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

**MEMBERS PRESENT:** Rick Taintor, Chairman, Planning Director; Peter Britz, Environmental Planner; Juliet Walker, Transportation Planner; Nick Cracknell, Principal Planner; Peter Rice, Director, Public Works; David Desfosses, Engineering Technician; Carl Roediger, Deputy Fire Chief; and Michael Schwartz, Captain, Portsmouth Police Department



**I. OLD BUSINESS**

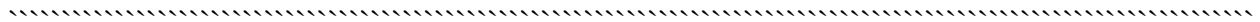
A. The application of **The Aphrodite Georgopolous Revocable Trust of 1999, Owner, and Seacoast Trust, LLP, Applicant**, for property located at **1900 Lafayette Road**, requesting Site Plan approval to construct two medical office buildings: (1) a 2-story building with a footprint of 12,150 s.f. and gross floor area of 21,000 s.f. plus a 10' x 60' MRI coach, and a proposed 2,050 s.f. future MRI addition to the building; and (2) a 2-story building with a footprint of 10,000 and gross floor area of 20,000 s.f., with related paving, lighting, utilities, landscaping, drainage and associated site improvements. Said property is shown on Assessor Map 267 as Lot 8 and lies within the Office Research (OR) District. (This application was postponed at the September 30, 2014 TAC meeting)

The Chair read the notice into the record.

Mr. Desfosses made a motion to postpone this matter to the next scheduled Planning Board meeting.

Mr. Rice seconded the motion.

The motion to postpone Site Plan approval to the next Planning Board meeting passed unanimously.



B. The application of **Harborcorp, LLC, Owner**, for property located on **Russell Street, Deer Street and Maplewood Avenue**, requesting Site Plan Approval for a proposed 5-story mixed use development with a footprint of 63,000 ± s.f. and gross floor area of 327,900 ± s.f., including a hotel/event center with 103,700 s.f. of event center space and 96 hotel rooms, 14 residential condominiums, a 40,000 s.f. retail supermarket, and 540 parking spaces (390 spaces in a garage structure and 150 below-grade spaces serving the retail use); with related paving, lighting, utilities, landscaping, drainage and associated site improvements. Said property is shown on Assessor Map 125 as Lot 21, Assessor Map 118 as Lot 28 and Assessor Map 124 as Lot 126 and lies within the Central Business B (CBB) District, the Downtown Overlay District

The Chair read the notice into the record.

Mr. Desfosses made a motion to postpone this matter to the next scheduled TAC meeting. Mr. Rice seconded the motion.

The motion to postpone Site Plan approval to the next scheduled TAC meeting passed unanimously.

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Deputy Fire Chief Roediger made a motion to take items B and C from **New Business** out of order for the purposes of postponement. Mr. Desfosses seconded the motion.

The motion to take items B and C from **New Business** out of order for the purposes of postponement passed unanimously.

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B. The application of Moray, LLC, Owner, for property located at 235 Commerce Way, and 215 Commerce Way, LLC, Owner, for property located at 215 Commerce Way, requesting Site Plan Approval for a proposed 4-story office building with a footprint of 28,125 + s.f. and gross floor area of 112,500 + s.f., and 640 parking spaces serving the proposed building and an adjacent existing office building (including a parking deck with 161 spaces below grade), with related paving, lighting, utilities, landscaping, drainage and associated site improvements. Said property is shown on Assessor Map 216 as Lot 1-8A and Lot 1-8B and lie within the Office Research (OR) District.

The Chair read the notice into the record

Mr. Rice made a motion to postpone this matter to the next scheduled TAC meeting. Mr. Desfosses seconded the motion.

The motion to postpone Site Plan approval to the next scheduled TAC meeting passed unanimously.

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C. The application of Merton Alan Investments, LLC, Owner and Robert Graham, Applicant, for property located on Bartlett Street and Cate Street, requesting Site Plan Approval for a proposed 3-story office building with a footprint of 10,000 + s.f. and gross floor area of 30,000 + s.f., with related paving, lighting, utilities, landscaping, drainage and associated site improvements. Said property is shown on Assessor Map 165 as Lot 1 and lies within the Industrial (I) District.

The Chair read the notice into the record.

Mr. Desfosses made a motion to postpone this matter to the next scheduled TAC meeting. Deputy Fire Chief Roediger seconded the motion.

The motion to postpone Site Plan approval to the next scheduled TAC passed unanimously.

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**II. NEW BUSINESS**

A. The application of **Thirty Maplewood, LLC, Owner**, for property located at **46 – 64 Maplewood Avenue** ( previously 30 Maplewood Avenue), requesting Site Plan Approval for a proposed 5-story mixed-use building with a footprint of 17,410 ± s.f. and gross floor area of 53,245 ± s.f., including 22 dwelling units and 13,745 ± s.f. of retail use, with related paving, lighting, utilities, landscaping, drainage and associated site improvements. Said property is shown on Assessor Map 125 as Lot 2 and lies within Character District 4 (CD4), the Downtown Overlay District (DOD) and the Historic District.

The chair read the notice into the record.

**SPEAKING TO THE APPLICATION:**

John Chagnon, of AMBIT Engineering, Inc. was present representing Thirty Maplewood, LLC. Also present, Steve Vittori Principal.

This phase in Character District 4 is almost at completion and is located in the blocks between Maplewood and Hanover, Bridge and Deer Streets. The site encompasses most of the block except for the VFW on Deer Street. The current proposal is to add another building to the site (Phase 2 on Sheet C3). The front of the building would be Maplewood Ave and Deer St. The back would be off the VFW towards Bridge Street. Parking would be off Bridge Street. There would also be parking (17,410 s.f. ) on the first level of the proposed building as part of Phase 2. They will provide pedestrian access along Maplewood and Deer Streets. A walkway is planned on the parking level. Also included in the plans today are plans for drainage, utilities, landscaping and lighting. Last week’s TAC Workshop identified some areas where changes are needed. These plans do show site improvements necessary to construct the facility. A lighting plan has been added but not much has changed on the remaining plan. The Demolition Plan (C2) shows a sign that will be removed. The current directory sign is to be removed from the project.

At the VFW, there is a pad in the entrance to the door in the southwest corner. This will remain and is not part of the demolition. There are some existing granite posts that run along the frontage from Bridge Street over to Deer Street. Those are to be maintained. In regards to the first floor plan, the dumpster area has been shortened so it is one continuous sidewalk from Maplewood to Deer Street. The jog over to the west wing entrance has been eliminated. The sidewalks have been expanded. The bike rack has been moved closer to the street. The building has also been moved so that an 8-foot sidewalk will be maintained. Bumper posts were not added. There is a suggestion to put parking bumpers along the 10 parking spaces located along Bridge Street. However, the bumper stops that were put there are now in various piles in various spots. They are not where they should be. The existing granite posts provide protection between parking and sidewalk. This should be sufficient so that the bumper stops would not have to be put back in place. There is a concrete apron at the entrance to the parking garage. The curbs would follow the grade and would be flush with the sidewalk crossing. The brick sidewalk at the VFW would be extended up to the rear exit stairway and a concrete pad will be installed to access the door on the west wing side to maintain the egress (to be maintained during construction).

In regards to the basement level plan (C4), there is not much change with the exception of some detail references, and Note 4 was removed. With regard to the landscape plan, there are some existing evergreen shrubs on the southeast side. Those will remain. The plans depict some plantings between the brick sidewalk and the parking area at the VFW. There will be some minor additions to fill that area out. On the Utility & Grading Plan, the gas entrance has been relocated (off Maplewood) to come up through the sidewalk that would be between the buildings. The meters will go on the inside of building on the right. The tactile warning strip, or pad, on the corner of Maplewood and Deer Street, will be relocated. The only concrete will be for the tactile strip. A couple of feet have been added to the last space before the dumpster so that this space is now wider than the others (to accommodate for the space the dumpster takes). The only real change to the detail sheet is the dumpster pad. The architectural plan is the same. A lighting plan has been added. Lighting will be added on the walkway between the VFW and the Phase 2 building on Deer Street, as well as pole mounted parking lot lights.

Mr. Taintor asked if any of the plans show zoning district boundaries. Mr. Chagnon stated that they do not. Deer, Maplewood and Bridge Streets would show zoning boundaries.

Mr. Cracknell commented that what has been done is great in terms of moving the dumpster, opening up the alleyway and widening sidewalks. Those are all positive changes to activate the alleyway. The existing building is looking better every day. He does feel that a walkway pedestrian connector to the VFW would be best. The manner in which the passageway is currently proposed will create a barrier for pedestrian circulation and will not be inviting, particularly with doors. Passageways/pedestrian connectors in places like Newburyport have been very successful.

Mr. Chagnon stated the “doors” are actually archways. There are no doors.

Mr. Cracknell felt that there should not be parking behind the archways. He believes the parking spaces along the alleyway are worth reconsidering and using that space for a 500 sf commercial

space instead to activate the alleyway and draw people into that area for business. Some of the landscaped areas on Maplewood and Deer Streets should be converted to brick and the street trees should be moved out to the edge (next to the curb). Sidewalks should be activated with chairs and tables and people in order to provide more pedestrian circulation and accommodation. He supports tandem parking and 18' stall depths instead of 19' support expanding tandem parking (5 spaces are shown on C4 – requires a variance) and add 1 or 2 additional spaces if needed.

Mr. Taintor noted; with respect to the archways versus the doors, that the current plans do not show the doors in the correct place and also do not show an archway. The architectural plans show windows on both sides of the building.

On the architectural drawing the VFW archway doesn't line up properly. On the pedestrian way between Phase 1 and 2, there is a door that goes into the parking lot. He would like to have the architectural plans line up with the site plans.

Mr. Rice posed the question of whether it is within the purview of the TAC to be making the recommendation that Mr. Cracknell suggested.

Mr. Taintor stated that the architectural plans should line up with the Site Plans.

Mr. Chagnon addressed Mr. Cracknell's concerns. They are willing to extend the brick walkway and feel that it is a good use of that space but he doesn't want a problem with ADA requirements (i.e. because landing strips must be painted).

Mr. Taintor suggested that the brick can be striped using white (brick).

Mr. Cracknell felt that there may not be a lot of support from TAC to convert the parking spaces along the alleyway and to have that ground floor serve as commercial space.

Mr. Rice felt that TAC may be stepping out of their role in making that determination.

Mr. Taintor stated that no final determination from the Planning Board would be made until the Board of Adjustment and HDC review this so the plans will be coming back to TAC.

Mr. Chagnon stated that the City website shows vehicular access from Bridge Street through to Maplewood with parking on either side, a small building at the corner and another building off the VFW. The current plan is a lot better for the pedestrian. Vehicular activity is limited on the backside, a nice pedestrian corridor is provided, and there is more commercial space now. Mr. Chagnon does not feel that a commercial space on the first level would be well supported.

Mr. Vittori stated that eight parking spaces have been eliminated. The garage limits what can be done along the alleyway. He is receptive to having more retail space in the alleyway but does not think it would be supported. He is willing to get more creative in back of building in terms of parking.

Ms. Walker asked if TAC was clear enough on the dimensional requirements that must be met.

Mr. Chagnon is amenable to looking at sidewalks. If it is more appropriate to have the brick extend further rather than having greenery, he is open to that. They are committed to having greenery up against the building, but will certainly work with TAC in expanding sidewalks.

Mr. Rice stated that storm water permits need to be considered and the Trees & Public Greenery Committee must be notified of changes discussed here.

Mr. Chagnon stated that Harborcorp should be happy as the same species they used were chosen for this project.

Mr. Rice supports Mr. Cracknell's request that trees move closer to the street. The trees along 30 Maplewood would eventually get too big. Sheet C6 shows a drain line being abandoned going into a City drain manhole. This needs to be rebuilt. The line coming in needs to be taken out, or flow filled if not taken out.

Mr. Taintor stated that a letter of authorization (site and demolition) must be obtained from the VFW. On the Utility Plan, the old gas meters have been moved to other side of building (dashed line on the plans represent the new gas line)

Mr. Desfosses stated that this cannot be done. A new gas line should be off Deer Street.

Mr. Rice stated that the Deer Street gas line is going to be replaced by the gas company.

Mr. Desfosses asked Mr. Chagnon that the new gas line coming off Deer Street be shown on the plans.

Mr. Desfosses asked what materials the garage doors will be made of.

Mr. Chagnon stated that the garage doors will be solid. The expectation is that those controllers will be tied to the fire alarm system. The fire alarm will go off and the doors will open (leading into the basement parking area and off Bridge Street). The Fire Department also needs to be able to operate the doors by key.

Mr. Desfosses mentioned that the parking meters did not get delivered. C3 Site Plan and what is the vision as a front to this building would be something similar to the Connie Bean Center -- granite curbing, planters, etc. The sidewalk is back a bit so pedestrians don't feel as if they are right on the street. He needs the model numbers for the LEDs on the mast arms. Please be more specific on the plans so it is clear. The lights for the parking lot may clash with the period lighting on the sidewalk. Please give that some thought.

Mr. Rice suggested having a flush grate with a tree guard in which a bit more sidewalk space could be enjoyed. He is concerned about groundwater issues. He doesn't want to assume that they will be just dumping into the stormwater drain system.

Ms. Walker asked if anyone was present from the public wishing to speak to, for or against the petition. Seeing no one rise, Ms. Walker closed the public hearing.

**DISCUSSION AND DECISION OF THE COMMITTEE**

Ms. Walker stated that there seems to be a lot of outstanding issues. She asked if the applicant should come back with revisions.

Mr. Cracknell asked for assurance that the plans are consistent with elevations. It seems that there is missing information and TAC has not had the chance to fully review the plans.

The plans are close to completion now, but revisions still need to be made.

Mr. Desfosses made a motion to postpone for further discussion to the next scheduled TAC meeting. Mr. Cracknell seconded. The motion passed unanimously.

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**III. ADJOURNMENT**

A motion to adjourn at 3:03pm was made and seconded and passed unanimously.  
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Respectfully Submitted,

Toni McLellan  
Acting Secretary for the Planning Board