

**SITE PLAN REVIEW TECHNICAL ADVISORY COMMITTEE
PORTSMOUTH, NEW HAMPSHIRE**

**EILEEN DONDERO FOLEY COUNCIL CHAMBERS
CITY HALL, MUNICIPAL COMPLEX, 1 JUNKINS AVENUE**

2:00 PM

OCTOBER 1, 2019

MINUTES

Please note meeting location change.

I. APPROVAL OF MINUTES

- A. Approval of minutes from the September 3, 2019 Site Plan Review Technical Advisory Committee Meeting.

Mr. Eby commented that there was a comment response out of place on page 8.

Mr. Howe moved to approve minutes from the September 3, 2019 Site Plan Review Technical Advisory Committee Meeting, seconded by Mr. Cracknell. The motion passed unanimously.

II. NEW BUSINESS

- A. The application of the **Bethel Assembly of God, Owner**, for property located at **200 Chase Drive** requesting Preliminary and Final Subdivision approval to subdivide a lot with an area of 2.7 acres (116,591 s.f.) and 1,635 +/- ft. of street frontage into two (2) lots as follows: proposed Lot 1 with an area of 90,096 s.f. and 1,120 ft. +/- street frontage and proposed Lot 2 with an area of 26,495 s.f. and 515 ft. +/- of street frontage. Said property is shown on Assessor Map 210, Lot 02 and lies within the Gateway Neighborhood Mixed Use Center (G2) District. LU #19-211.

Mr. Desfosses moved to hear New Business Items A, B, and C together and vote on them separately, seconded by Mr. Marsilia. The motion passed unanimously.

SPEAKING TO THE APPLICATION

Corey Belden and Eric Weinrieb from Altus Engineering, Developer Steve Kelm, Pastor Chadd Lynn, and Jen Ramsey with Somma Studios were present to speak to the application. Mr. Belden commented that everyone here is familiar with the project. They did a TAC work session in June and a design review at the Planning Board in August. The site plan application was submitted with some modifications. The lot would be subdivided into two lots. One would be 90,000 square feet and the other 26,000 square feet. The proposed project will be developed as a development site. A large section of the existing parking area will be removed. There will be a 22-unit apartment building with a 30-stall parking lot on that end. The existing site will have 75 parking stalls for the church. The new building will be a 4-story apartment building. The zoning allows for up to 50 feet maximum height. The team has met with the Planning Board, City Staff

and the neighbors to work with them on the plans. They revised the building height to 43 feet 8 inches from finished floor to the top of the roof. Additionally, there will be a step back on the Chase St. side and that building height would be 34 feet 8 inches. There was some concern from the neighborhood about views. This building will be well below the tree height. This plan meets all of the City requirements. For parking there will be 1.3 stalls per unit for the apartment building. There is an existing Coast Bus transit stop in the area. A parking demand analysis was prepared for project. The church has monitored attendance and parking for the analysis. There are an average of 3 people per vehicle for services. The parking demand analysis used that for the estimate. The largest attendance recorded was for Easter with 186 attendees. The proposed 75 parking stalls would be adequate for that. There is an existing City water easement on site that crosses in front of the existing church. This plan proposes to connect to that water line. They are working with DPW on the water and sewer connections and Eversource for the electrical connection. There will be a number of pocket rain gardens throughout the site for storm water treatment. There will be permeable pavers in the proposed parking lot as well. The team has worked with Robbi Woodburn to make the rain gardens landscaped areas that will be used to enhance the community space and buffer. They are functional gardens and landscape areas. They will continue to work with DPW on the design. They met with City Staff to discuss the community space area and added a walkway from Chase Drive around the church and into the community garden. There will be an enhancement buffer along the Market St. gateway for buffer screening to parking area.

Ms. Walker questioned if they had reviewed the TAC comments and if they were agreeable to them. Mr. Belden responded that the commented about providing concrete sidewalks along the entire Michael Succie Dr. and Chase Dr. could be cost prohibitive. That was the only concerning comment everything else should be agreeable.

Mr. Cracknell questioned where the trash for the new building would be located. Mr. Belden pointed out the enclosed area on the plan. Roll out bins will be stored in that area. Mr. Cracknell commented that it should be labeled more clearly. Ms. Walker questioned if tenants would have to go all the way through the parking lot to access it. Mr. Belden responded that it was adjacent to the elevator and main entrance. Ms. Walker questioned how a trash truck would access the location. Mr. Belden responded that there was no parking in that area and tenants would roll out their bins. The trash truck would have to drive in and back out. Ms. Walker responded that was a long way for a truck to back out.

Mr. Cracknell questioned what the surface of the divider between the church and the new building was. Mr. Belden responded that it was an elevated curb with stone. It is not a walkway. Mr. Cracknell questioned if there was a crosswalk that led to the divider. Mr. Belden confirmed that there was, but they can reconsider that location. Mr. Eby confirmed there was no need for that crosswalk if the divider was not a walkway. It would be better if there were a walkway there.

Mr. Howe questioned if there was a second access on the first floor. Mr. Belden responded that the first floor would have access out through Market St. and all the units have a secondary egress from within the units. Mr. Howe responded that the first floor needed a common second access. Ms. Ramsey confirmed that they would revise the plans to include two exits on the first floor.

Mr. Howe questioned if the sprinkler would be next to the elevator. Mr. Belden responded that it was not designed yet, but that was the anticipated location.

Mr. Marsilia questioned what side the water would be coming from. Mr. Belden responded the church parking lot side. Mr. Howe questioned what side of the building the lobby would be on. Mr. Belden responded that it would be on the Market St. side. Mr. Howe commented that was not ideal for fire access. Ms. Walker agreed that was the same issue as the trash truck. Mr. Belden commented that the primary lobby would be on the Market St. side but there would be stair access on the other side as well. Mr. Belden confirmed that they would look at the issue more.

Mr. Eby commented that the attendance figures in the hand out did not match the ones used in the parking demand analysis. It appears that the number of spaces will be adequate, but it is still missing data. Ms. Walker questioned how TAC members would feel about potentially connecting the two lots to help with vehicle flow. Mr. Howe confirmed that if they had a way to connect that would be better for fire. Mr. Eby noted that they would lose some parking. Mr. Belden confirmed that they would look into some options. They could add more parking stalls along the path, but that would eat into the green space. Mr. Eby questioned if the apartment parking spaces would be assigned. Mr. Belden confirmed they would be assigned. Ms. Walker commented that she was struggling with the lack of ability to turn around in the parking lot. Mr. Belden questioned if the connection would have to be 20 feet wide. Mr. Howe responded that it could be narrower as long as the turning templates worked.

Mr. Britz commented that they should have a note about maintaining the rain gardens on the plan that is recorded. Mr. Belden confirmed that would be added.

TAC Comments:

- All parking lot lighting should be converted to one LED matching type for both lots.
- The drainage pipe for OS1 should be routed to the lawn area along Michael Succi instead of across Chase Drive
- The sidewalk along Michael Succi and up Chase Drive along the development should be upgraded to 6' wide concrete with vertical granite curb.
- The utilities crossing Chase Drive will require a license.
- The proposed water line should be relocated to the south a bit under the parking so that the lot can still be utilized during construction.
- Property owner to provide a blanket easement to access water valves on site and do leak detection. The applicant is showing 1-6" water line heading to the building. This pipe may be too large to provide proper water quality. For this reason, the applicant may need to run two separate services to the building from the main.
- The parking demand analysis did not include a count of the number of cars in the parking lot. Only the number of people in attendance at each service was counted, and it was assumed that they came 3 to a car. There must be more to document the vehicle occupancy rate than a guess. The number of cars in the lot, not the number of people in the building, is critical to a parking

demand analysis. The number of vehicles in the parking lot must be counted to provide a valid analysis.

- There is a maintenance guidance at the end of the stormwater report. These could be improved by using the maintenance guidance provided by UNH as per attached.
- A note should be added to the site plan referencing maintenance requirements for both raingarden and porous pavers.
- Apartment building: Where is the 2nd exit on the first floor?
- Community space calculations need to be broken down into the respective types (and then be itemized and listed on the overall site plan).
- The proposed landscape plan should also include the full site given the location of the community space (the church side of the site is missing in my plan sheets).
- Staff is questioning the function and form of some of the community space areas as some areas look more like drainage or stormwater treatment areas than bonafide pocket parks. More detail is needed on this aspect given the proposed areas are right at the minimum requirement (20%).

PUBLIC HEARING

Jason Karlin of 29 Brigham Lane commented that some of his concerns were not addressed. The 22-unit building was presented to the Zoning Board and the Chairman said it was not keeping with spirit of the Ordinance. They changed it to a site development instead of changing the building. The 22 units would not be permitted on the parcel without the site development. The storm water treatment and community space is needed for the entire site. The rain garden should not double as community space. The trash was questioned at Planning Board and here. 44 bins will not fit in the storage area. Mr. Karlin questioned if the electrical would be overhead or underground. If the building were downsized, then most of these concerns would go away.

Marilee Clark of 461 Cutts Ave. commented that they have poor water pressure already and 22 more units will make it worse. Traffic will be an issue. It is hard for emergency responders to make it up the road if cars are parked on both sides of the street. If the church doesn't have enough parking, then they would be parking on both sides of the street. There should be signs to limit parking on one side of the street. Adding 22 more units to the sewer is also concerning.

Ed Richards of 435 Cutts Ave. commented that he had a number of problems with the project. It is understood that the church wants to resolve their financial problems from the project. The neighborhood has no objections to that. The only objections are for project that is proposed. The original plan required a variance and it was denied at the ZBA. One of the issues was whether or not the property should face Market St. or Chase Dr. The plans have it facing Michael Succie Dr. and the downtown. A development site requires common ownership, but the very first application is for a subdivision. The common ownership will not continue after the project. A lot of the problems can be resolved if the building is turned and if it fronts on Market St. with the parking in the back. The plan is to have 22 units with 2 and 3 bedroom apartments. There will likely be more than 1.3 cars per unit. If there are more than 30 cars they will park on the street. The ZBA wanted the building rotated and spread out at a lower elevation. This building will still block views. They are trying to take advantage of the best angle for views.

The Pastor invited the public to the church for meetings. The church has an occupancy for 400 something people. This congregation is smaller now, but it may grow or be sold to another church. Mr. Richards wanted an end product that was consistent with the neighborhood and would help the church achieve its ends. A lower building that is longer could be supported by the neighborhood even if variances were required. Mr. Richard thanked the developer and Pastor's willingness to talk to the neighborhood, but this plan still does not work.

Dianne Chalifour of 411 Cutts Ave. is a direct neighbor to the Pastor and Assistant Pastor's house. Cars park around her driveway on the street on Sundays. The church will lose 65 spots with this plan. If the church grows or has large events there will be parking issue. Increased traffic is a safety concern for the neighborhood with young families who are active in the street. It's a T roadway not a throughway. This will impact property values.

Pastor Chad Lynn of 200 Chase Drive commented that they have added more services to reduce the amount of parking needed for each service. Today the parking lot doubles as a place for people to park and head downtown. This is because of an understanding with the City. Once that goes away they will have a basically empty parking lot most of the week. Less space in the future may prevent the church from hosting certain events, or they will need to provide a shuttle. The long-term answer is to have smaller services while the church is getting bigger. 75 spots will be more than adequate.

Maryanne Gauthier of 36 Brigham Lane showed pictures of the church parking lot from a typical Sunday. The parking lot is very full. Sometimes the earlier service doesn't get as many cars. They can't control what service people go to. The parking is a big concern because cars parked on both sides can block first responders' access to the street. The new park will be great, but there is no parking provided. People will park on the street for that. The apartment building is not there now. It's just the church filling the lot. This lot is next to a truck route it does not make sense to have a community garden. This will decrease the property values.

Kyle Crossen-Langelier of 304 Leslie Drive expressed concern for building lighting and noise from the exterior mechanical systems.

Second time speakers

Pastor Chad Lynn of 200 Chase Drive noted that it is hard to judge the number of cars parked as a church guest or a city guest right now. The goal was to get a more solid number of what is actually used on a Sunday by church attendees. The church took attendance of the regular attendees and made an average for how many people came in one car. They can fit in 75 spaces for sure based on those numbers.

Ed Richards of 431 Cutts Ave. offered copy of the ZBA transcript and handed it out. The church was originally designed with 150 spaces. It should not be cut in half now.

Dianne Chalifour of 411 Cutts Ave. noted that currently they don't know who is parking in that lot for services, or visiting the City etc. Returning visitors will still park there even if there is a new apartment building.

Corey Belden from Altus Engineering commented that parking is the primary concern with residents. There have been discussions about the previous plan presented to the ZBA and that variance was denied. This application complies with current development site regulations and no variances are required. If they reposition the building, then they would have to go back to the ZBA for a minimum of two variances. The goal with this plan is to meet the zoning. The church has worked to assess their needs for the foreseeable future. They have provided attendance records and will monitor bigger events.

Eric Weinrieb with Altus Engineering commented that the project would reduce overall traffic because they will be getting rid of the municipal parking in this lot. Abutters have suggested going back and getting variances. If a viable solution without variances exists, then there is no a hardship. This layout doesn't require zoning relief. The transcript from the ZBA is not relevant because that is for an old plan. One abutter suggested no parking signs on one side of the road. That would be good solution. The site could remain an oversized eyesore. This plan could increase housing stock and provide landscaping.

Jason Karlin of 29 Brigham Lane commented that rotating the building would resolve access concerns. The proposed solution about connecting two parking lots controlled by more than one owner will create a future variance.

Ed Richards 431 Cutts Ave. noted that the earlier plan and the new plan are the same configuration. It is the same plan.

Marilee Clark of 461 Cutts Ave. commented that they are asking for reduced parking. The ZBA said a building this size would impact the property values.

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

DISCUSSION AND DECISION OF THE BOARD

Ms. Walker commented that she preferred to see the updated plans before this application went to the Planning Board.

Mr. Howe moved to postpone this application to the November 5, 2019 Technical Advisory Committee Meeting, seconded by Mr. Cracknell.

Ms. Walker noted that the Committee should offer additional points that still need to be addressed.

Mr. Howe questioned if the new lot would have a Chase Dr. address. Ms. Walker commented that would be good to confirm before it comes back. Mr. Howe noted that they would want to know the address and the building should be configured to the address.

Mr. Howe questioned if the parking for Lot 1 was determined by assembly use. Ms. Walker responded that it was based on capacity. Mr. Howe was concerned about cutting the parking in half because it is a church now, but could be a different assembly use in the future. It is also concerning that cars are parking in the neighborhood.

Mr. Cracknell commented that the solid waste storage location was not advantageous for trucks to come in and remove trash. The access would also be an encumbrance on emergency vehicles. It would be interesting to see a new orientation of the building for conceptual purposes. Ms. Walker commented that they have been over it already with the applicant. They cannot change the orientation without a variance. This will be something the Planning Board raises as well. Showing a conceptual reorientation with the variances that would be required could be helpful. The team needs to be prepared to respond to that. Mr. Cracknell commented that if there was a better plan then they could potentially argue hardship for the trash storage and access.

Ms. Walker commented that they should identify the snow storage locations if there are any on site. Hardship is a ZBA decision that is not part of this Board. There should be a detail of the trash screening. A restriction for on street parking doesn't relate to the site plan approval. There should be an updated parking analysis per Mr. Eby's comments.

Mr. Desfosses agreed with Mr. Howe about his parking concerns. Mr. Eby was also concerned about the future use of the building.

The motion passed unanimously.

B. The application of the **Bethel Assembly of God, Owner**, for property located at **200 Chase Drive** requesting Site Plan Review approval for the construction of a new 22-unit residential apartment building with a footprint of 7,440 s.f. and 28,727 s.f. GFA with associated site improvements, grading, utilities, stormwater management and landscape improvements. Said property is shown on Assessor Map 210, Lot 02 and lies within the Gateway Neighborhood Mixed Use Center (G2) District. LU #19-211.

DISCUSSION AND DECISION OF THE BOARD

Mr. Howe moved to postpone this application to the November 5, 2019 Technical Advisory Committee Meeting, seconded by Mr. Cracknell. The motion passed unanimously.

C. The application of the **Bethel Assembly of God, Owner**, for property located at **200 Chase Drive** requesting a Conditional Use Permit in accordance with Section 10.1112.14 of the Zoning Ordinance for provision of 105 on-site parking spaces where a minimum of 175 are required. Said property is shown on Assessor Map 210, Lot 02 and lies within the Gateway Neighborhood Mixed Use Center (G2) District. LU #19-211.

DISCUSSION AND DECISION OF THE BOARD

Mr. Howe moved to postpone this application to the November 5, 2019 Technical Advisory Committee Meeting, seconded by Mr. Cracknell. The motion passed unanimously.

III. ADJOURNMENT

Mr. Britz moved to adjourn the meeting at 3:41 p.m., seconded by Mr. Desfosses. The motion passed unanimously.