

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

**CONFERENCE ROOM A
CITY HALL, MUNICIPAL COMPLEX, 1 JUNKINS AVENUE**

2:00 PM

February 1, 2022

MINUTES

MEMBERS PRESENT:

Peter Stith, Chairperson, Principle Planner; David Desfosses, Construction Technician Supervisor; Patrick Howe, Deputy Fire Chief; Nicholas Cracknell, Principal Planner; Zachary Cronin, Assistant City Engineer

MEMBERS ABSENT:

Peter Britz, Environmental Planner; Darrin Sargent, Police Captain; Shanti Wolph, Chief Building Inspector; Stefanie Casella, Planner 1

**ADDITIONAL
STAFF PRESENT:**

I. APPROVAL OF MINUTES

- A.** Approval of minutes from the January 4, 2021 Site Plan Review Technical Advisory Committee Meeting.

Mr. Stith commented that due to technical issues these minutes were delayed and would be voted on at the March Meeting.

II. OLD BUSINESS

- A. REQUEST TO POSTPONE** The application of **Banfield Realty, LLC, (Owner)**, for property located at **375 Banfield Road** requesting Site Plan review approval to demolish two existing commercial buildings and an existing shed and construct a 75,000 s.f. industrial warehouse building with 75 parking spaces as well as associated paving, stormwater management, lighting, utilities and landscaping. Said property is shown on Assessor Map 266 Lot 7 and lies within the Industrial (I) District. **REQUEST TO POSTPONE (LU-20-259)**

DISCUSSION AND DECISION OF THE BOARD

Mr. Stith noted that this would be postponed to the March 1, 2022, Technical Advisory Meeting.

- B.** The request of **The Sagamore Group, LLC, (Owner)**, for properties located at **1169 Sagamore Avenue** and 1171 Sagamore Avenue requesting Site Plan Review approval for the demolition of 3 existing principal structures (3 single family units) and 3 existing accessory structures to be replaced with 6 single family structures and 2 2 family structures to total 10 living units and 22 parking spaces where 15 is required. Said properties are shown on Assessor Map 224 Lot 14 and Assessor Map 224 Lot 15 and lie within the Mixed Residential Office (MRO) District. (LU-21-167)

SPEAKING TO THE APPLICATION

Joe Coranati, Mike Garrepy and Mick Khavari spoke to the application. Mr. Coranati commented that they received the comments and did not have any questions or concerns for most of them. They did want to discuss a couple comments. Since the last meeting they have been going back and forth with Altus Engineering on the drainage comments. They requested additional test pits and those were completed last week. They need to respond to Altus's comments and they have that information now. Mr. Coranati noted that they wanted to discuss the last two comments and the offsite sidewalk. There are 2 utility poles that fall in the sidewalk path. One of the poles is right in the middle of it and it could be problematic to relocate. An underground line comes off of it and feeds to a communications building. It may make sense to consider the sidewalk as a future City project and they can make an offsite donation toward it. If they plan to extend the sidewalk to the Rye line in the future, then the City can relocate the poles as part of a bigger project down the road. Mr. Garappey added that they were happy to do a contribution to the sidewalk network or work with the City to get the poles moved. One of them will be challenging and expensive to move. Getting assistance from the City to move the pole will make it easier. The other option would be to leave the poles and build around them. Mr. Coranati commented that they did investigative work to look at the soils on site. The request to remove the fill material is not feasible. One reason is because part of it is off site. There will not be any grading into that area for the backyards at all. It's a 200-sf area. Mr. Garappey commented that it would be good if they could work out an arrangement with the neighbors and they would be happy to do the restoration. Test pits for infiltration identified a larger area of urban fill. They will remove that material and replace it. They can do the wetland restoration then as well. A small area behind units 1 and 2 was identified as wetland fill. Mr. Coranati noted that it was called out on the demolition plan. They are willing to work with the abutters. The final comments were about the layout of the site. They have been working with the abutters on this layout. They put in a gap between units 5 and 6 to let in light and air. They would not want to switch to a townhouse layout at this time. Mr. Garappey added that it was fairly late in the process to make this request. This request would require revisions to the plan for drainage and they have been working with abutters on the current layout. This layout was the most fitting to the neighborhood.

Mr. Khavari commented they tried to strike a balance between the development to the south and the development to the west. There is heavy screening to the south and planned screening for the west. Many of the homes in Sea Star Cove have the garage forward or flush with the entries set back. They have 2 duplex sets. The intent is to try to provide the light and air between the units. The safety and circulation need to be maintained. They are working within the challenges and doing their best to balance them. This is the right balance.

Mr. Cracknell commented that he put the sketch together and would argue that the applicants haven't met the realm requirements. It is understood that that this is a late critique. But the current design is not well conceived. The garages should be pushed back so they aren't in front of the house. Every house will have a car or two parked in front of the garages. Having 20-25 feet is usually inadequate for functional space. They should create the buffer and screening between this development and the neighbors. They should avoid the illusion of a giant parking lot. These units do not have functional front yard space. Moving the units in 10 feet on all three sides creates more yard. The density and volume aren't diminished. The spaces between the structures cannot be very meaningful for anyone other than the unit owners. There is not a lot of air and light moving through the buildings. 10 units is a lot. It is allowed by zoning but if it was a CUP, then Mr. Cracknell would not support it. There is a lot going into the site and they need to do it well to meet all of the objectives. They can achieve those objectives with a better design, and it would not change the infrastructure. They should look turning the 4's into 2's. Mr. Cracknell commented that the entire interior should not be impervious. It only has a little island in the middle. Mr. Garappey responded that they respectfully disagree and would request to move forward with the current design as it's been amended through the process. The Planning Board can determine that they don't meet the requirements if necessary. Their preference would be to avoid townhouses. There are enough in the City. They are trying to create something that would fit better in this space, and this meets the zoning ordinance. Mr. Cracknell commented that if single family structures were proposed, then they would need less of them. This is imbalanced. This arrangement is not popular in Portsmouth for good reasons.

Mr. Desfosses commented that he still did not think the drainage worked on the site. There is too much going on and it is not modeled right. Mr. Garappey responded that they knew there was drainage work to do with Altus. They are not expecting an approval today. They should be able to make it work after getting a couple threshold items addressed. Mr. Coranati commented that they would rather do a payment for the sidewalk. Mr. Desfosses responded that the sidewalk was required. Mr. Garappey requested assistance from the City to help coordinate the off-site work. Mr. Desfosses responded that they could discuss it.

Mr. Howe commented that there should not be any parking in the fire lane. Mr. Garappey responded that they would put in signage. It will be part of condo docs as well.

TAC Comments:

- The test pits and percolation tests must be used to design the infiltration areas properly. The ground is generally undulating with shallow rock, fill and rock outcrops and is generally unsuited for significant infiltration. For this reason, without benefit of an off-site location to deposit additional volume for stormwater, it is cause for concern what the outcome may be if the infiltration as planned is not as effective as modeled. We also do not believe that the adjacent land north of the parcel has been modeled properly. We feel that in significant storms, this area may fill entirely and cause additional runoff to adjacent lands. This needs to be properly modeled to displace this concern or show that runoff waters can be safely routed away from all the surrounding properties. Off-site water from the roadway must be accounted for in these calculations. To this end, it may be required that the developer install a culvert under Sagamore Avenue at this location.
- The sewer laterals must be 6" pvc SDR35 per City of Portsmouth std. regulations as soon as the lateral leaves the building.
- Please show required sewer lateral sleeve through the foundation wall in sewer lateral detail including the use of rubber boots on the exterior of the sleeve to prevent infiltration of ground water through the sleeve.
- Planting details are not consistent with City standards, all burlap and cages to be removed.
- Hydrant detail is incorrect,
 - a. Kennedy Hydrant K81D, with 5 1/4" pumper connection
 - b. Therefore no 'Storch' connection on the hydrant,
 - c. hydrant and all water valves are to open right
 - d. anchor tees hold the valve directly, there is no pipe in between
 - e. hydrant piping is always 6"
 - f. drainage pit is not necessary as hydrants don't self-drain anymore
 - g. place a large stone or block under the hydrant for support
- Remove all notes and details regarding sewer force mains
- The existing pole being proposed for the power supply is in the direct path of the future sidewalk extension. This pole needs to be relocated to the satisfaction of public works before we can recommend it for the power supply. There are multiple other poles that also need to be relocated prior to sidewalk construction. Easements may be required for Eversource as poles remaining in the sidewalk will not be acceptable.
- Irrigation meters are not allowed to be in a pit. It must be above grade either in a dwelling unit or in an above ground meter and backflow enclosure
- The hydrant and hydrant lateral is shown directly next to the water main and under the electricity. This is poor practice and shall be avoided.
- All structures shown in the ROW will meet or exceed DOT standards.
- Both structures along the Sagamore curb line should be catch basins.
- The water main under Sagamore Ave is 12" Cast Iron
- The sidewalk to be constructed in Sagamore is to be no less than 5.5' not including the curb.
- Test pit the proposed sewer crossing in Sagamore Ave to confirm that there are proper clearances and that gravity flow is achievable. This must be completed prior to submitting for the sewer extension permit. If there is not sufficient clearance between the

main and the proposed sewer, SDR 21 pipe may be required between SMH's 2088 and SMH1

- Maintain 18" of clearance between water mains and sewer mains, insulate water as necessary
- Applicant needs to illuminate the driveway island for vehicles entering the site and use of the mail area.
- The City will require a 10'x10' drainage easement on the southeast corner for a future drainage structure
- Provide at least 18" of flat ground between the back of the City sidewalk and bioretention area #1
- There are foundation perimeter drains shown in the details. Where do they outfall and is this flow accounted for in the drainage study?
- Stop signs are generally 30" wide unless on a high speed roadway.
- Provide 1:12 tipped sections (not to exceed 8% grade) for all sidewalks. Sidewalks shall have no more than 2% cross slope. This includes driveway areas. The driveway of 1167 Sagamore exceeds this currently.
- Provide catch basin liners (NHDOT 604.0007) for the two basins in Sagamore Ave
- The mailbox for #1167 Sagamore as shown will not be accessible to the mail deliverer without driving on the sidewalk. As there seems to be sufficient ROW in this area, the driveway should be reconfigured to avoid two cuts, ensure the cross slopes are correct and address the concern with the mail truck.
- Provide information on snow storage.
- Catch basins in DOT bike lane need to be "bike friendly".
- Correct sewer manhole detail. Existing sewer man is PVC, not AC.
- Include plan view of sewer manhole detail and invert.
- Include valves on the water main at the 8" tee to allow for direction flushing, chlorination, filling, and maintenance. A 4" valve right after the reducer would be appropriate.
- DPW requests 2" flushing hydrant be installed to allow for directional flushing, chlorination, etc. on the 4" pipe after the reducer, after the 4" valve.
- Lay the water main with fire hydrant at the high spot to allow for air to be released during filling of the water main.
- Show area of former wetland fill on the plans
- Remove wetland fill or describe why not feasible
- Contact NHDOT and determine if there is a culvert under the road the wetland on the opposite side.
- Proposed Design and Layout: The proposed house design and layout proposes 2/3rds of the façade to be a two-car garage with parking for two additional cars in the front yard. This configuration is not only inconsistent with the surrounding neighborhood context but results in excessively small rear yards.
- Alternative Design - Multi-Family Structures: In order to be more consistent with the surrounding neighborhood character, increase the size of the rear yards and to reduce the impervious surface associated with the proposed development, the applicant should consider redesign of the ten (10) housing units into three multi-family structures. As shown in the following figures, this would allow for the garage to be located further back

from the front façade of the building and remove parking from the front yard setback area.

PUBLIC HEARING

Bill Bowen, President of the Sea Star Cove Condo Association, commented that they have hired John Chagnon to peer review the drainage. Mr. Chagnon designed the drainage for Sea Star Cove. They have provided a letter to the City, the applicants, and Altus Engineering. This property is 10-15 feet above Sea Star in elevation. A lot of it is ledge, so the ability for infiltration is low. This plan put together a network of ponds around the edge and there has been a lot of discussion about the accuracy of the engineered water drainage system. There is skepticism about whether or not it will work. Sea Star owns the property to the north as well. They have not had a discussion about this, and the design is putting more water on our property. A secondary concern is about the water in the southwest corner. There are 2 houses across from the development. It is unclear about whether or not the water collection system will push water down into the two houses across from the development. The original submission did not take into account the fact that water is already coming in from the southern abutter. They want to be confident that the two houses closest to the property are not receiving extra water. The northern wetlands are partly on Sea Star's property and theirs. There is a raised element north of that border. The water that goes in there will be trapped between Sea Star's property and the road. Further north there is a property at a lower elevation. Overflow out of the wetland area will flow to the abutters. Overflow effects multiple abutters. There has not been any discussion about any rights to use Sea Star's property for water. There were a couple soft conversations about buying that property. They have had discussion about the trees along the border. There has not been a conclusion on that. There has not been any discussion about the water.

Michael Simone co-owner of 1167 Sagamore Ave. commented that they have not been contacted by the developers other than being asked if they were interested in selling. The wetland area of Sea Star Condos is overflowing. That's without any blasting or building on this property. When the water overflows it goes into someone else's property. They need to shut it down and go back. Mr. Simone questioned where the accountability would be when it failed. They are not a direct abutter, but they are close. The applicants need to go back to the drawing board and talk to abutters.

Joe Gross president of Westwind Townhomes Association commented that they were located to the south of the proposed development. There is not a lot of room between them and this development. There are multiple engineering groups involved and a lot of problems with the drainage to the north. Mr. Gross questioned if they could guarantee there would not be an increase to the runoff the Westwind units or onto Sagamore Ave. That point of the road is extremely dark and has a curve. An overflow may create icy conditions. If Altus says there will not be an overflow, then it would eliminate their concerns. This project requires significant yearly maintenance to keep the system going. This is only going to be 10 units. Mr. Gross questioned if they would have the funds to maintain this. Mr. Gross questioned what the enforcement mechanism would be if they did not maintain it. Westwind townhomes is only 7 units, and they don't have any maintenance issues. These questions should be addressed before

it is approved. The sidewalk should be done; it is a well-traveled stretch of Sagamore Ave. They would like to have a sidewalk there. Mr. Gross hoped that they could save as many mature trees as possible. There has been a lot of talk about working with the abutters, but they have only had one discussion. There should be a solid barrier of a fence or landscaping between this development and the Westwind.

John Chagnon from Ambit Engineering commented that he was retained by the Sea Star Condo Association to look at the plans and drainage. The entire drain system has been designed to outlet to a small wetland area next to Sea Star. The drainage system was designed as a series of retention areas to hold water back, but the volume of water leaving the property is increasing. They should look at peak flow and the amount of water. An easement for the outfall needs to be attained. The current design is predicated on infiltration. Test pits were done, but the results are not on the plan. The analysis is not revised. This will have the biggest impact on the Sea Star Condos, and they are concerned about the drainage.

Rocco Simone of 1167 Sagamore Ave. commented that they should reconfigure the whole layout to townhouses and move them to the southeast. Then water would not be a concern for the abutters. That wetland has filled up before and now there are 10 units proposed. The applicants should go with less and reconfigure the layout. It will look better and function better.

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

Mr. Garappey commented that they were happy to continue discussions with abutters. It is understood that the drainage was a big concern for all the neighbors. They do outreach as a practice for all of projects and will continue to meet with abutters until they get it right.

Mr. Desfosses moved to continue the application to the March 1, 2022, Technical Advisory Committee Meeting, seconded by Mr. Cracknell. The motion passed unanimously.

- C. REQUEST TO POSTPONE** The request of **Elizabeth B. Larsen Trust of 2012 (Owner)**, for property located at **668 Middle Street** requesting Site Plan Review approval for the construction of two two-unit structures and improvement to the existing structures to create a total of eight units on three lots with associated utilities, connections and site improvements. Said property is shown on Assessor Map 147 Lot 18 and lies within the Historic and General Residence A (GRA) Districts. **REQUEST TO POSTPONE** (LU-21-23)

DISCUSSION AND DECISION OF THE BOARD

Mr. Stith noted that this would be postponed to the March 1, 2022, Technical Advisory Meeting.

- D.** The request of **Cate Street Development (Owner)**, for property located at **428 US Route 1 Bypass** requesting amended Site Plan Review approval to provide 56 additional parking spaces, revised stormwater collection and treatment system, and the reconfiguration of an existing structure for a proposed commercial use. Said property is shown on Assessor Map 172 Lot 1 and lies within the Gateway Corridor (G1) District. (LU-22-7)

SPEAKING TO THE APPLICATION

Rick Lundborn from Fuss and O'Neil and Attorney John Bosen spoke to the application. Mr. Lundborn commented that they have been to TAC a couple times. There was discussion about creating a better connection to the rest of the development. In addition to the drive off the Bypass, they have added a driveway up to the east. They also added a sidewalk connection and crosswalks to provide better pedestrian connectivity. The lot line revision is for the plan. One of the other discussion points was parking and whether or not it was allowed, or they needed a CUP. It does not require a CUP because it does not exceed required minimum parking plus 20%. That parking breakdown is shown in the plan by color. A lot of the easements were added as well. The comments will be addressed. At the prior TAC Meeting there was concern about the lower left area around the edge of the site. They have added a swale and put in a retention system. That will pick up a lot of the parking lot drainage. There will also have catch basins and jelly fish filters with a swale out to the southwest corner of the property. The other major comments from the prior meeting had to do with creating covered parking along the railroad right of way parking stalls. Mr. Bosen commented that they were early in the discussions with the owner, but they are agreeable to adding covered parking along that corridor. They will work hard to come up with a design and hope to have administrative approval on that. The roof of the covered spots will be designed with solar capability. Mr. Lundborn confirmed that all of the new TAC comments can be addressed.

Mr. Cracknell questioned if they used mulch or a walkway for the pedestrian circulation. Mr. Lundborn responded that they used mulch. They extended the sidewalks to the islands and put in the crosswalks to get people across. Mr. Cracknell commented that they could eliminate the last crosswalk because it doesn't go anywhere. The covered parking roof should be pitched toward the railroad. Mr. Bosen agreed. Mr. Cracknell commented that the wall may need a fence. Mr. Lundborn confirmed that it was proposed. Mr. Cracknell commented that he did not like the tandem parking spaces near the dog park because the park was already encroached enough.

Mr. Cracknell questioned if the retaining wall would have a rough finish. Mr. Lundborn confirmed it would.

TAC Comments:

- The 10' temporary easement should be in favor of the developer.

- It looks like the easement in favor of Millport does not actually touch the boundary where the water enters the property. Please revise. Also, on the planting plan the easement is still listed as to benefit the City of Portsmouth.
- Ensure that the two handicapped spots for Building D are the closest to the entrance and that there is an accessible route into the structure.
- The grease trap reserve area should be closer to the structure.
- Ensure the existing granite culvert is tied into the drainage swale with proper headwall.
- Show on plans location of retaining wall 4" underdrain shown on CD-552.
- Proposed Parking Layout: The proposed parking expansion and layout appears to significantly increase the required off-street parking required under the Zoning Ordinance. Moreover, it also conflicts with the assumptions of the previous projected parking demands of this development. Consisting of a wide variety of land uses and services, the West End is assumed to be a walkable neighborhood. Thus, the proposed parking expansion appears to conflict with the stated objectives of the community vision for this property. Additionally, the area proposed for expansion is currently considered open space (including a dog park) and also acts as an important vegetated buffer to the active railroad corridor.
- Alternative Parking Layout: If the evidence does not support the proposed parking expansion the open space areas should not be reduced or impacted. However, if the evidence does support the proposed parking expansion in order to complete the final phase of the overall redevelopment the applicant should consider the visual buffer and screening aspects of the existing wooded area along the railroad land (which is being proposed to be converted to surface parking). In order to mitigate the visual and environmental impacts on the project, the 76 spaces proposed for this area should be covered with an open shed-like structure and solar arrays should be considered for the roof given the likely solar gain at this location. The image below is an example of such a system. Additional consideration should be given to reduce encroachment on the dog park.

PUBLIC HEARING

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

Mr. Cracknell moved to recommend approval to the Planning Board, seconded by Mr. Desfosses. The motion passed unanimously.

- E. The request of **Cate Street Development LLC (Owner)**, and Boston and Maine Corp (Owner), for properties located at **428 US Route 1 Bypass, 406 US Route 1 Bypass**, and **55 Cate Street** requesting Preliminary and Final Subdivision approval (Lot Line Revision) to convey 31,187 square feet from Map 165 Lot 14 to Map 172 Lot 2, Map 172 Lot 1 and Map 165 Lot 2 which will result in a total of 52,820 square feet lot area for Map 172 Lot 2, 126,500 square feet lot area for Map 172 Lot 1, and 260,789 square feet lot area for Map 165 Lot 2. Said properties are shown on Assessor Map 172 Lot 1, Map 172 Lot 2, Map 165 Lot 2, and Map 165 Lot 14 and lie within the Transportation Corridor (TC) and the Gateway Corridor (G1) District. (LU-22-7)

DISCUSSION AND DECISION OF THE BOARD

Mr. Cracknell moved to recommend approval to the Planning Board, seconded by Mr. Desfosses. The motion passed unanimously.

III. NEW BUSINESS

There was no new business.

IV. ADJOURNMENT

Mr. Desfosses moved to adjourn the meeting at 3:20 p.m., seconded by Mr. Howe. The motion passed unanimously.

Respectfully submitted,

Becky Frey
Secretary for the Technical Advisory Committee