PLANNING BOARD
PORTSMOUTH, NEW HAMPSHIRE

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

7:00 PM Public Hearings begin **August 20, 2026**

MEMBERS PRESENT: Rick Chellman, Chairman; Karen Conard, City Manager; Joseph Almeida, Facilities Manager; Beth Moreau, City Councilor; Members Andrew Samonas, William Bowen, Ryann Wolf; and Alternates Frank Perier and Logan Roy

ALSO PRESENT: Peter Stith, Planning Department Manager

MEMBERS EXCUSED: Paul Giuliano, Vice-Chair Anthony Coviello

Chair Chellman called the meeting to order at 7:00 p.m. Alternates Frank Perier and Logan Roy took voting seats in place of Mr. Giuliano and Vice-Chair Coviello.

I. PRESENTATIONS [Video timestamp 6:25]

A. Presentation on Capital Improvement Plan Process

City Manager Karen Conard reviewed the Capital Improvement Plan (CIP) process and touched upon the following topics: what qualifies as a CIP project, how projects are evaluated and prioritized, the Funding Options Capital Outlay being currently at 0.96 percent, and the City's Net Debt Service being at 7.64 percent and remaining below 10 percent of the prior year's budget. She reviewed the 10-Year Outlook and said no new projects had been added as of now. She reviewed the Global CIP thoughts and explained the 3-step process of the City Council's capital funding approval. She reviewed the proposed FY28-FY33 CIP timeline and how to submit a Citizen Request Project.

[Timestamp 13:08] Mr. Bowen asked what the relationship is between the Master Plan and the Capital Budget. Ms. Conard said the Master Plan starts out aspirational and works through an implementation set of items and that the final version was expected by the end of the calendar year. It was further discussed. The topic of whether housing was visualized into the southwest quadrant of the City that would cause sewer, water, and road developments to be needed before the end of the fiscal year was discussed. Chair Chellman noted that the Master Plan gets adopted on a periodic basis, and what gets adopted this year may change the next year. He said the big picture that the Board should be keeping in mind as development happens is where things are happening in the City and the big infrastructure issues like sewer, water, and electricity, and if a part of the City did not have adequate water supply for fire protection, that issue would rise to the top and get into a CIP. He asked Ms. Conard if the two percent and ten percent limits were City Council goals. Ms. Conard said they were City financial policies. It was further discussed. The need for a new parking garage in the context of the CIP was discussed.

II. APPROVAL OF MINUTES

A. Approval of the July 16, 2026 Meeting Minutes

Mr. Samonas moved to approve the July 16 meeting minutes as submitted. Mr. Almeida seconded. The motion passed with all in favor, with Ms. Conard abstaining.

III. CITY COUNCIL REFERRALS

A. **Parking Regulations** [Timestamp 25:21]

Mr. Stith reviewed the changes and said one was related to a zoning text amendment to remove the bulk of the parking from the zoning ordinance. He said he had to make some corrections to the work the City Staff did with the Site Plan Regulations before sending it to the City Council. Councilor Moreau said in Section 10.1124.10, the sentence "Loading areas shall not be located between the front property line and any building or structure" was left unfinished. Mr. Stith said it would be fixed. He said the recommendation was to forward it to the City Council knowing that the Site Plan Regulation amendments will parallel. He said a public hearing was needed for the changes, but if the zoning amendment was forwarded to the Council, three readings would still be needed. He said the Board could consider the Site Plan changes at the September 17th meeting but that the Board should vote on the Site Plan Regulations and have them be in effect the night the City Council votes to amend the zoning ordinance. It was further discussed. Mr. Stith said there would no longer be a Conditional Use Permit (CUP) for parking in the Site Plan Regulations and that the Planning Board will be allowed to make modifications at its discretion.

DECISION OF THE BOARD

Councilor Moreau moved to recommend that the City Council hold first reading on the proposed Zoning Ordinance amendment s as amended. Mr. Roy seconded. The motion passed with all in favor.

B. **Housing Action Plan** [Timestamp 34:15]

Mr. Stith said the Housing Action Plan was developed by City Staff and the Housing Committee and then forwarded to the City Council, who referred it to the Planning Board for comments and scheduled two public meetings on September 23rd and 28th. He suggested that the Board wait until after the public meetings to see what additional information would be provided by the public. Councilor Moreau said the City Council would want feedback from the public and the Planning Board before they made a final decision. Mr. Bowen said about 30 State laws relative to housing had changed in the last six months and he was not sure if the document digested all that, so he felt there had to be some parsing of pieces to indicate what the economic benefit would be, the impact on housing that people now lived in, and another level of reality to the document before people acted on it. Chair Chellman asked the members to bring forward at the next meeting any items that they thought were missing. The Key Implementation and Timeframe columns were discussed. Chair Chellman noted that the Housing Committee came up with a policy and recommendations and the Board's job was to make sure the public understood it.

DECISION OF THE BOARD

Councilor Moreau moved to continue review of the Housing Action Plan at the September 17th 2026 Planning Board meeting. Mr. Almeida seconded. The motion passed with all in favor.

C. Heritage Commission [Timestamp 52:38]

Mr. Stith said the City Council voted in July to recommend that the Planning Board review the potential status of the Heritage Commission' deadline of September 28th. He said he and Chair Chellman did some research into what was currently allowed for demolition and historic preservation. He said there is the Historic District Commission (HDC) that has distinct boundaries to their Historic District and there is the Demolition Review Ordinance, and he explained how someone could be exempt from the Demolition Review Ordinance. He said a Heritage Commission would be more advisory and advise land use boards on applications, grants, how to seek funding, and how to conduct surveys and education to the public. He said he and Chair Chellman had talked to the Legal Department about creating a Heritage Commission through the Innovative Land Use Control Statute and that it was a potential path forward. Chair Chellman said there was a way to prevent demolition of some buildings outside the Historic District without involving the Innovative Land Use Control Statute. He said it could be a more limited Historic District that could deal just with demolitions of certain structures. He said criteria would have to be established to prevent demolitions, but there were buildings that were not in the Historic District that would probably conform. He said if the context of the new building did not fit into the neighborhood, the issue would go to the Planning Board and not the HDC. He said the Heritage Commission could do a lot of the research and make a recommendation to the Planning Board, or the Board could do it itself. He said the Heritage Commission could only make a recommendation for something like a massing limitation but it would have to be adopted by the City Council and brought to the Planning Board to make it a requirement. The current time constraints of demolition permits (90 days) was discussed as well as whether demolished buildings could be turned into affordable housing. The potential workload on City Staff and land use boards was discussed. Chair Chellman said the Board needed more information and had until September 28th to continue the discussion.

DECISION OF THE BOARD

Mr. Almeida moved to continue review of the potential establishment of a Heritage Commission to the September 17th, 2026 Planning Board meeting. Ms. Conard seconded. The motion passed with all in favor.

IV. OTHER BUSINESS [Timestamp 1:12:22]

A. 409 and 411 Lafayette Road – Post Approval Waiver Request

Mr. Stith said it was a two-lot subdivision north of the high school and that minor utility work was paid through an excavation permit. He said it was requested to waive the requirement to post a bond to do a subdivision and that the Department of Public Works was okay with it.

DECISION OF THE BOARD

Councilor Moreau moved that the Board grant the requested waiver from Section IX.1 of the Subdivision Ordinance.

a) *Strict conformity would pose an unnecessary hardship to the applicant and waiver would not be contrary to the spirit and intent of the regulations.*

Ms. Wolf seconded. The motion passed with all in favor.

B. Board Discussion of Regulatory Amendments and Other Matters

i. Site Plan Review Regulation Amendments [Timestamp 1:14:00]

Mr. Stith said the Site Plan amendments were copied over from Article 11 last month and were simplified with the Planning Board's guidance. He said the guest parking requirement was removed and the Table of Uses condensed and grouped into categories. He said the big change was the Parking Flexibility section which allows the Planning Director to modify parking. He said the amendment was about when Site Plan is required and if more than five parking spaces are created, it could be added to the Flexibility Section so that it would be appropriate for the Planning Director to modify a change of use. He said if there were five or less parking spaces required, the Planning Director could approve it administratively, but it were five or more parking spaces, it would have to go back to the Planning Board for modification. He said he would word Section 4.3.1, Administrative Parking Modification, for the next meeting. Chair Chellman said there were also more changes at the beginning of the document to make it more in conformance with the State code when a Site Plan is required. He said the objective was to delete Section B in the future, but there was talk about amending the Subdivision Ordinance to capture condominium conversions as a subdivision, so for now Section B would remain. He said a lot of the dimensional requirements for parking aisles were not changed and that the Downtown Overlay District (DOD) requirements were left in. He said that inns were added to the DOD in Section 4.8. There was further discussion on whether inns required parking and it was said that the guest parking requirement was removed because it was no longer allowed by the State.

DECISION OF THE BOARD

Councilor Moreau moved to schedule a public hearing on the proposed amendments to the Site Plan Review Regulations at the September 17th, 2026 Planning Board meeting. Ms. Wolf seconded. The motion passed with all in favor.

ii. Subdivision Ordinance Amendments [Timestamp1:21:47]

Mr. Stith said there was one change that was referred to the City Council the previous month about abutter noticing within 300 feet and that it was to make it more consistent with the State statute for abutter notification. He said the current definition of an abutter in the Subdivision Ordinance was any person who owns land within 200 feet of the boundaries of the land under consideration, and the proposed change would be that it would be a person or entity meeting the definition of abutter contained in RSA 6723 as amended to be consistent with the state RSA. He said the Board would notify accordingly for Subdivision applications.

DECISION OF THE BOARD

Councilor Moreau moved to schedule a public hearing on the proposed amendments to the Subdivision Ordinance at the September 17th, 2026 Planning Board meeting. Mr. Almeida seconded. The motion passed with all in favor.

iii. Historic District Boundary Amendments [Timestamp 1:23:28]

Mr. Stith said the Board had discussed advancing just the changes on Middle Street for the Historic District boundary. He said the HDC met in July and did not have any changes to their original recommendations to the Board. He said a letter was received in January from the property owner of 670 Middle Street, a condo property that was proposed to be included. He said the owner requested that his property be removed from the Historic District. He said the house at 873 Middle Street property also accessed Middle Street but the current boundary split that parcel in half. Chair Chellman said it would be unusual to split a front condo unit that was in the Historic District. He said it was not desired to have the Historic District line go through a property because it should be the entire property. He said the condo in question had frontage on two roads and was irregularly shaped and was really acting as if it were two lots even though legally it was not. He said keeping it that way it is made sense.

DECISION OF THE BOARD

Councilor Moreau moved to recommend that the City Council schedule first reading on the proposed Historic District map amendments as amended. Mr. Almeida seconded. The motion passed with all in favor.

iv. Article 10 Amendments [Timestamp 1:30:48]

Chair Chellman said the changes for the Conditional Use Permit (CUP) for the wetland impacts had been in the works for some time and that a meeting was needed with the Conservation Commission to discuss it. He said the HDC also wanted to meet to discuss the Master Plan. He suggested meeting an hour before the regular September 17th Planning Board meeting.

Chair Chellman asked the Board members how they felt about starting the monthly Planning Board meetings at 6:00 p.m. instead of 7:00. The members liked the idea. Councilor Moreau said they should check with the Legal Department to make sure they could do that. Mr. Stith said Utile would be joining the HDC at their September 9th meeting to get feedback for the Master Plan and asked if the Planning Board should be involved. Chair Chellman said it was a joint meeting, so the Planning Board should attend and that he would talk to the HDC Chair about it.

DECISION OF THE BOARD

There was no decision made by the Board.

C. Chairman Updates and Discussion Items [Timestamp 1:36:16]

Chair Chellman said the Master Plan was in the final stages of text compilation and that the recommendations from the consultants would come in the following Monday. He said they had a minor revision schedule and a major one. He said he didn't feel that there was enough time for the Board to adequately review it, so the adoption of the updates would be either at the October 15th Planning Board meeting or the November 5th one. It was further discussed.

V. ADJOURNMENT

The meeting adjourned at 8:40 p.m.

Submitted,
Joann Breault
Planning Board Meeting Minutes Taker