

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

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

2:00 PM

August 4, 2026

MEMBERS PRESENT: David Desfosses, Project Manager – Engineering & Operations; Chad Putney, Acting Deputy Fire Chief; Peter Britz, Director of Planning & Sustainability; Shanti Wolph, Chief Building Inspector; Zachary Cronin, Assistant City Engineer; Mike Maloney; Deputy Police Chief; Vincent Hayes; Planner II – Development Compliance

MEMBERS ABSENT: Peter Stith, Chairperson, Assistant Planning Director; Eric Eby, Parking and Transportation Engineer

ADDITIONAL

STAFF PRESENT: Kate Homet, Environmental Planner and Sustainability Coordinator; Stefanie Casella, Senior Planner; Jennifer Crockett, Administrative Assistant I

MINUTES

I. APPROVAL OF MINUTES

A. Approval of the **July 7, 2026** meeting minutes.

P. Britz moved to approve the July 7, 2026 meeting minutes as presented, seconded by Z. Cronin. The motion passed unanimously.

B. Approval of the **July 14, 2026** Work Session meeting minutes.

P. Britz moved to approve the July 14, 2026 Work Session meeting minutes as presented, seconded by Z. Cronin. The motion passed unanimously.

II. OLD BUSINESS

A. REQUEST TO POSTPONE The request of **Rafferty Investment Group LLC (Owner)**, for property located at **64 Bridge Street** requesting Site Plan Review approval for

demolition of the existing structure and construction of a ten (10) room three-story Inn with associated site improvements. Said property is located on Assessor Map 126 Lot 55 and lies within the Mixed Residential Business (MRB) District, Character District 4 (CD4) and Downtown Overlay District. **REQUEST TO POSTPONE (LU-26-36)**

DISCUSSION AND DECISION OF THE BOARD

P. Britz made a motion to postpone the request for 64 Bridge Street to the next TAC meeting. C. Putney seconded the motion. The motion passed unanimously.

P. Britz made a motion to postpone Item II. E, 833 Islington Street to the September 1st TAC meeting. Z. Cronin seconded the motion. The motion passed unanimously.

- B.** The request of **Marissa Valverde (Owner)**, for property located at **20 Central Avenue** requesting Preliminary and Final Subdivision approval and Site Plan Review approval for the subdivision of one lot into three lots, each with a single-family dwelling and associated site improvements. Said property is located on **Assessor Map 209 Lot 30** and lies within the General Residence A (GRA) and Highway Noise Overlay Districts. (LU-26-84)

SPEAKING TO THE APPLICATION

[Timestamp 2:42] Engineer Drew Olehowski of Haley Ward came to present the project. He addressed staff comments noting that they had revised the plantings and that they were willing to provide a six-foot vinyl fence along the northern and easterly property lines for screening. Mr. Olehowski also addressed drainage, explaining that full basements would be challenging based on the test pit logs and discussions with Public Works, so they revised the proposed buildings to use crawl spaces instead. He acknowledged that easement documentation remained outstanding.

[Timestamp 4:53] P. Britz asked for clarification of where the six-foot vinyl fence will start along the property line closest to Central Avenue. Mr. Olehowski stated that it would be along the entire easterly and northernly property lines. P. Britz stated that the fence cannot be more than four feet in height in the front property setback and that a variance would be needed if they had it at six feet the whole length. TAC members discussed the starting location of the fence. Z. Cronin asked if they had located the existing sewer services. Mr. Olehowski stated that they had located the water but were still looking into the sewer. P. Britz asked what the crawl space depth would be. Mr. Olehowski stated that they would need to adjust the finished floors of the buildings to ensure that there is adequate clearance and that they had not made those revisions yet. C. Putney asked why the Sherlock building doesn't have a 16-foot driveway like the other homes. Mr. Olehowski clarified that it was due to the length of the driveway compared to the other two houses.

[Timestamp 8:20] D. Desfosses asked that Mr. Olehowski make sure that when modifying the Sherlock house that the foundation wall for the garage stayed out of the area of influence for the drainpipe that's along the frontage of the house. TAC members discussed the inclusion of the crawl spaces, their depth, and the water table. D. Desfosses stated that it would be appropriate to put a rain garden in each lot that drains into the pipe. P. Britz asked what they were doing with the

transformer. Mr. Olehowski was unsure at this time. TAC members discussed the potential location of the transformer. V. Hayes asked if any of the future boundary lines bisect the existing structure. Mr. Olehowski stated that it may cross over the northern edge of the existing building. TAC members stated that the existing structure will have to be demolished before a subdivision is completed, so that nonconformities are not created or have counter lines going through buildings.

PUBLIC HEARING

[Timestamp 13:30] The public hearing was opened, no one spoke, the public hearing was then closed.

DISCUSSION AND DECISION OF THE BOARD

P. Britz made a motion to postpone the application to the September 1st TAC meeting. D. Desfosses seconded the motion. The motion passed unanimously.

- C. The request of **Alea LLC (Owner)**, for property located at **238 Austin Street** requesting Preliminary and Final Subdivision approval to subdivide one lot into two lots and demolition of the existing structures to construct a single-family dwelling on each lot. Said property is located on **Assessor Map 135 Lot 61** and lies within the General Residence C (GRC) District. (LU-25-177)

SPEAKING TO THE APPLICATION

[Timestamp 15:02] Engineer Alex Ross of Ross Engineering and Matt Boyer of the owner/development team came to present the project. Mr. Ross handed out updated plans and reviewed their responses to staff comments. He noted that they are not proposing any grading adjustments for either parcel as there will be a significant decrease in impervious surfaces which should improve the drainage situation. Mr. Boyer reviewed the demolition and construction plan for the project. He noted that safety fences, silt sox, and erosion control measures would be used. Most of the trees on site will be removed prior to demolition and a demolition company will start with the barn on Coffins Court then will demo the Austin Street house and shed. Before demolition, asbestos will be removed from the basement of the Austin Street house. Once demolition is complete, work on the Coffins Court house will begin, it will be accessed through the lot from Austin Street, and they will work towards Austin Street. He explained that since the barn needs to be removed surgically in order to not disturb surrounding neighbors it would be demolished first with small machines from Coffins Court. V. Hayes asked that once the subdivision occurs would they need a temporary construction easement. Mr. Boyer stated they hadn't discussed that and would make a note of it.

[Timestamp 27:02] Mr. Ross addressed previous abutter concerns regarding oversight, utilities, and landscaping. C. Putney asked them to remove the ladder hanging out the window and have a rescue balcony that follows fire code. D. Desfosses asked them to confirm that the foundation wall is higher than the slab.

PUBLIC HEARING

[Timestamp 31:52] John Mayer of 68 Cabot Street asked about the ability to preserve the home and the barn and said it would be consistent with the City's master plan's goal in preserving historic resources. He questioned how a fully constructed building could be approved on a substandard sized street and lot and that it would affect the quality of the neighborhood and their home. Mr. Mayer stated that due to how narrow Coffins Court is, their home has been hit by cars and their sidewalk has been driven over by construction vehicles that cannot make a tight turn. He would like assurances that any damage caused by the project will be fixed. Mr. Mayer said that the neighbors were all worried about the condition of Coffins Court and that it took a long time for the City to do the repair and repaving. They are worried that because of this project the quality of the street will be diminished. He stated that there was concern regarding the garage and adjacent parking area, as they are accessed by making a 90-degree turn off of Coffins Court and that turning radius and amount of space seems unreasonable. Already when people are moving on and off Coffins Court, people have to drive on other people's property. Mr. Mayer said that there should be planning and design work done for snow management, as it is a problem for such a narrow street. He has privacy concerns, as they will be replacing a storage building with no windows with a generic contemporary home with windows that are inconvenient and intruding on the privacy that people in the neighborhood have enjoyed. He wonders if the window locations can be adjusted so it might be more fitting of the nature of the site. Mr. Mayer also expressed that it is unfortunate to lose mature trees and that he would like to see a landscape plan.

[Timestamp 37:39] Laura Stewart of 20 Coffins Court expressed that she and her husband shared many of the same feelings as Mr. Mayer. She is concerned about the increased noise, traffic, pollution, and size of the new structure. Ms. Stewart stated that a big concern was that tearing down the barn would impact her foundation and walls. She stated that every time people drive down the street their porch is at risk of being ripped off, so having another large building with additional people and construction was worrying. There could be a lot of issues with the people turning in and out of the driveway if the proposed structure is that large, maybe if it was smaller, it'd be more amenable to the area. Ms. Stewart said the proposed windows were all looking directly into her home.

[Timestamp 39:43] John Ragonese of 74 Cabot Street echoed the need for a pre-designed landscape plan and noted that many of the trees are on the property line. He stated that he did not believe the grade and foundation information was being depicted correctly and that affected the slope or the building height. Mr. Ragonese said he questioned the plan to demolish the barn first and how that would be accomplished without removing the utility lines. He stated that accessing the barn from Austin Street is just as wide as Coffins Court and if you demolish the house first and create a way to access the barn from the other side, you avoid disturbing the neighborhood, closing the road, or having to move the utility lines. Mr. Ragonese stated that the water line was undersized for another lot, as he had asked in the past about connecting to that water line and was told it was not possible. He asked if that would require a water line coming in from somewhere else or if the street would be dug up to put in a larger water line. He stated that he would like the street not to be torn up at all, but if it would be that a substantial bond or impact fee be assessed to repair it to its previous condition. Mr. Ragonese would like to know electrical service details such as pole placement and height.

[Timestamp 49:12] Joe Lewinski of 187 Union Street stated that he had three concerns, first that his house has also been hit several times over the last few winters by a snowplow due to the narrow street. Second was that if Coffins Court was 6 feet narrower the structure on Coffins Court would just be an auxiliary unit to the property on Austin Street and all its services would be from there and not from Coffins Court. He stated that right now it is a dormant structure and if we build a residence, we're changing the very nature of the parcel of land. Lastly Mr. Lewinski stated that he was concerned about animals, debris, and atomized poison that might be in the soil or in the structures as the demolition occurs. He would like some assurances that particulates in the air will be addressed during the construction and that post-construction measures will be taken to make the neighbors whole with respect to cleanup.

DISCUSSION AND DECISION OF THE BOARD

[Timestamp 52:33] P. Britz asked if they have landscaping plans that they can talk about. Mr. Ross said that there are plans to install landscaping, but at this point they have not made a landscaping plan due to the size and nature of the parcel. S. Wolph asked about access and the order of demolition and why it doesn't make sense to remove the primary structure first. S. Wolph and the project team discussed the demolition and construction sequence, access from Austin Street, the challenges with access through Coffins Court, and the barn demolition process. V. Hayes asked if they had considered a pre-construction survey. D. Desfosses stated that they will require foundation vibration monitoring during the demolition and foundation stage of the project that will be apart of a preconditioned survey.

[Timestamp 58:21] D. Desfosses addressed the utility issues and noted that Eversource plans to move the electrical pole 5 or 6 feet to the left, closer to Union Street and install a 5-foot higher pole so that the wires will still have currents. He stated that the water line is adequately sized for an additional structure and that the discussion with the neighbor had been that it would be easier for them to stay connected via Cabot Street and that the Cabot Street water main is larger, so it wouldn't make sense to downsize. TAC members, the neighbors, and the project team discussed the size of the structure and the number of bedrooms impact on water needs. TAC members discussed the need for a CMMP. D. Desfosses asked the project team to clean up how the utilities are drawn on the plans. P. Britz asked if bringing power through the property would be a better situation from an Eversource utility supply standpoint. D. Desfosses stated that Eversource says they can service the house from Coffins Court.

D. Desfosses made a motion to recommend approval of this application to the Planning Board with the following conditions:

- 1) Clarify existing and proposed utilities.*
- 2) Show all existing utility connections and clearly call them out for abandonment if applicable.*
- 3) Show water and sewer service separation, with 5' between water and sewer services. All utilities entering structures shall be no closer than 3' from each other.*

- 4) *Show whether gas connections are proposed for the structures and show the gas main location on both streets.*
- 5) *Show spot grades in the gutter line and for the sidewalk crossing of Austin Street to ensure compliance with ADA rules.*
- 6) *Confirm whether the 24" tree in the driveway will be removed.*
- 7) *Show path to the front door on the plans for Austin Street.*
- 8) *Tie the Austin Street house gutters directly to the storm drain.*
- 9) *Identify the two objects on the driveway side that are 9.1' from the property line.*
- 10) *Show the total width of the driveways at the property line for permitting, with a maximum width of 24' unless a zoning variance is approved.*
- 11) *Barn must be removed prior to recordation of the subdivision plan.*
- 12) *CMMP is required.*
- 13) *Provide vibration monitoring and pre-construction survey.*
- 14) *No primary power or transformer shall be located on Coffins Court, and service shall be limited to no more than 200 amps.*
- 15) *Show landscaping features on the plan.*
- 16) *Comply with applicable roadway restoration and surety requirements for any disturbance of Coffins Court.*

P. Britz seconded the motion. The motion passed unanimously.

- D.** The request of **124 Group Inc (Owner)**, for property located at **124 Heritage Avenue** requesting amended Site Plan approval for minor site improvements including a garden, ADA accessible ramp, parking lot re-striping, stormwater conveyance modifications, lighting and landscaping. Said property is located on Assessor Map 284 Lot 8 and lies within the Industrial (I) District. (LU-26-61)

SPEAKING TO THE APPLICATION

[Timestamp 1:09:20] Engineers Neil Hansen and Ben Curcio of Tighe & Bond, Anthony Santana of The Kane Company, and Anne Hayes of Gather came to present the project. Mr. Hansen reviewed staff comments including adding a bypass for the rain guardian, revising the photometric plan to add a light at the east entrance drive, providing a paved apron to direct water from the east driveway

to the catch basin, and verified that the visible portions of the CMP and RCP pipes appeared to be in good condition and were free flowing during a recent rain event. C. Putney suggested that the applicant may also want to consider striping for dumpsters on the side of the property to help keep tenants organized.

PUBLIC HEARING

[Timestamp 1:12:23] The public hearing was opened, no one spoke, the public hearing was then closed.

DISCUSSION AND DECISION OF THE BOARD

P. Britz made a motion to recommend approval of this application to the Planning Board with the following conditions:

- 1) Add a light at the east entrance drive.*
- 2) Provide a bypass apron downstream of the rain guardian to allow runoff to continue to the swale/detention area in the event the rain guardian becomes clogged and prevent stormwater from flowing down the driveway and into the roadway.*
- 3) Ensure water from the east driveway finds its way into the catch basin by providing a paved apron to the drain.*
- 4) The front monument sign needs to be certified by the surveyor after construction to be completely out of the ROW.*
- 5) Verify that all the CMP pipes shown are still in good condition and don't need replacement.*
- 6) Provide additional striping for dumpsters.*

D. Desfosses seconded the motion. The motion passed unanimously.

E. REQUEST TO POSTPONE The request of **Colonial Properties LLC (Owner)**, for property located at **833 Islington Street** requesting a Parking Conditional Use Permit to allow 9 parking spaces where 21 are required. Said property is located on Assessor Map 165 Lot 6 and lies within the Character District 4-W (CD4-W). **REQUEST TO POSTPONE (LU-26-85)**

DISCUSSION AND DECISION OF THE BOARD

P. Britz made a motion to postpone the request to the September 1st TAC meeting. Z. Cronin seconded the motion. The motion passed unanimously.

III. ADJOURNMENT

The meeting adjourned at approximately 3:16 PM.