

Town of Gorham

Planning Board Minutes

April 15, 2021

Members Present by Remote Connection: Paul Robitaille (Chairman), Abby Evankow, Michael Waddell (Ex-Officio), Reuben Rajala, Peter Gagnon and Earl McGillicuddy

Members Excused: Wayne Flynn and Daniel Buteau

Members Absent: Barney Valliere and Brian Ruel

Members of the Public Present by Remote Connection: Tara Bamford, Steve Grone, Terry MacGillivray, Denise Vallee, Michael Scontsas, Edith Tucker, John Scarinza (CEO), Barbara Laplante and Michelle Lutz (Board Secretary)

Due to the COVID-19 Pandemic and per Emergency Order #12 issued by Governor Sununu on March 23, 2020 and by Executive Order 2020-04, all members listed as present attended the meeting electronically with both video and audio capability. The public was able to attend the meeting in the same manner. All votes were taken by roll call as required.

Call to order: The meeting was called to order at 6:32 by Chairman Robitaille

Appointment of Alternates –

Chairman Robitaille appointed Earl McGillicuddy and Peter Gagnon as full voting members

Review & Accept Minutes of March 11, 2021: Secretary Lutz asked to amend the minutes to correct the end time of the meeting from 9:05 to 7:32 pm. On a motion from Peter with a second from Abby, all members voted by roll call vote to accept the minutes as amended.

Case #03-2021 – Grone Family Rev Tr – Site Plan Review – 139 Main Street

Steve Grone explained to the board that he was proposing to change the use of the existing building to 3 or 4 rental apartment units. This would require an expansion of the second story over the existing footprint. The use would be either long term with possible short term rentals.

Tara Bamford reviewed the plan and felt this was a conceptual plan and that the site plan review regulations require a professionally signed plan. Though it may not need to be resurveyed, at least making sure the existing plan was updated to identify the items required in the regulations such as parking and the ability for vehicles to maneuver around the lot. She also pointed out that the project would not be allowed to have 4 units as the current zoning ordinance required 10,000 additional square feet for each unit above 3 units. Reuben questioned whether the building would require sprinklers. Mr. Grone stated that 3 units would not require sprinklers. John explained that sprinklers are not a part of site plan review and he wanted to clarify that because there was commercial on the first floor it may require sprinklers even if there are only 3 residential units. Tara recommended that the board reject the plan until the applicant can develop a proper plan. She also recommended that the board have the applicant escrow \$330 for her review of that plan. Reuben questioned the moratorium on digging on Main Street once the road is repaved. Denise Vallee explained that the BOS have a meeting with Phil Beaulieu of NH DOT and Lee Carrol from Water & Sewer on 4/26/2021 to discuss this issue. Mike recommended that Mr. Grone take the existing plan and work with a professional to develop a plan and resubmit. Mike made a motion to reject the plan which received a second from Reuben and all members voted in favor by roll call vote.

Code Enforcement Update – This item was passed over

New Business –

- 1) Barbara LaPlante who owns Fuzzy Kid Kare had a dog grooming business in the building at 20 Glen Road. Since the building has been sold, she was forced to find another location for her business. She has found a spot in the property owned by Initech at 212 Main Street in the building previously occupied by the Vac Shop. She only does grooming and no boarding. She grooms 5 – 8 dogs per day. She only needs 2 – 3 parking spots and the building has sufficient parking. Reuben felt it was a good use of the empty building. Secretary Lutz added that a letter was received from the State of NH DES saying that they had received a complaint about some digging near the river. DES spoke to the property owners who explained that they needed to add a water line to the building. DES reviewed the project and sent a letter clearing it of any violations. The board felt that the project did not rise to the level of requiring a site plan review.
- 2) Terry MacGillivray came to the board with a possible project to help decrease the amount of ATV traffic on Main Street from his ATV rental business. He is working to rent the property owned by P&L Cote Land & Partnership for 6 months to try moving some of his rental business to that lot. It would mean that those people that come to rent an ATV, if they have never previously rented from his business, they would be required to take a guided tour. They would meet at 177 Main Street, do their check-in at that location, then follow the guide to the property at 435 Main Street (aka Eastern Depot) where the machines will be stored. They will take the tour from that location, return to that location and none of those machines would be driven down Main Street. The only machines that will leave from 177 Main Street will be those that are for people who have previously rented from them. Mike Waddell explained that the BOS has expressed concerns over the amount of congestion the 177 Main Street property caused and the proposal for 197 Main Street also raised concerns with the neighbors there and the BOS met with Mr. MacGillivray to hopefully avoid litigation from either the neighbors of 177 & 197 Main Street or even Mr. MacGillivray himself. The BOS felt that this was a move in the right direction. The new location already has history as the new ATV center. Mike did express concern about the power washing of the machines. Mr. MacGillivray explained that they would no longer use pressure washers but may use washers that use compressed air instead. He also said that if this project works, they would eventually like to look into an underpass under the railroad which would allow them to move all of their rentals (ATV/OHRV and Snow machine) to this location which would get the ATV's off Main Street completely and allow both the ATV/OHRV's and the snow machines to access the trail systems directly from the property. They will have 100 2-seat machines and 100 4-seat machines. However they will only be renting 120 machines at a time (50 rentals plus 10 guides from the new location and 50 rentals plus 10 guides from 177 Main Street). Earl questioned the board's procedure. Could they grant approval without noticing abutters? Tara said the board could decide that it didn't rise to the level of needing a site plan review because it is a one year trial of an existing use of that lot or they could waive many of the requirements and perhaps they could ask Mr. MacGillivray to submit a 1 page description explaining everything presented to the board tonight for their next meeting and the board could vote to accept that and notify the abutters. However, if Mr. MacGillivray purchases the lot in the future, it would need to go through full site plan review at that time. Reuben was uncomfortable with the numbers and was concerned about the neighbors in the area. Mike reminded the board that 177 Main Street exists already has site plan approval and we know what the impact was last year which they would like to avoid this year. Regardless of whether the machines were rented from 177 Main Street, 197 Main Street or 325 Main Street, all those machines now go to the Eastern Depot so this proposal lessens the impact on Main Street. Tara suggested that Mr. MacGillivray submit a 1 page description before the next meeting and the board could vote at that point to determine that it may not need site plan review but at least there would be something concrete for the board to act on. Mr. MacGillivray wanted the board to know that he was shocked by the negative comments during the site plan review for 197 Main Street. He understands the issues they had at 177 Main Street last year and he was trying to make things better by buying the 197 Main Street property and moving there but that didn't work. He has increased his rates by 20% and they are now requiring guided tour. They are trying to alleviate the problems and this is a step in the right direction.
- 3) Secretary Lutz presented a lot merge application to the board for property owned by Beth Newhouse and Jonathan Mackey. They own 3 properties (R1, 2L, 2M & 2N). They wish to merge all 3 lots which will become

9 Marion's Way. There are no structures on lots 2L & 2M. On a motion from Mike with a second from Peter and all members voted in favor by roll call vote.

- 4) Paul explained that he had been discussing the site plan review regulations and what projects would or would not require Site Plan Review with Tara. She is willing to write up a description that explains when it would be required and when it wouldn't as well as updating the application at a cost of \$780 for each project. Mike asked that the fees be wrapped into the application so an applicant knows what fees they are going to be responsible for. On a motion from Reuben with a second from Mike to spend \$1560 to have Tara complete those projects, the board voted to approve the expenditure by roll call vote..
- 5) Paul asked the board members if any of them would be willing to volunteer to meet with himself and the BOS and Tara to discuss the new zoning changes.

Public Comment: Denise Vallee asked for a Letter of Support from the board as the Town is applying for an NBRC grant for sidewalks and would appreciate the support.

Paul also mentioned that he had attended the TAC meeting where they had 4 projects to rate for DOT to to approve. The first rating which was done by the commissioners ranked Gorham as the #1 project. The staff of NCC met and rated the projects and Gorham was ranked #3. The final vote will be by DOT sometime in May or June. DOT has enough money to cover 3 projects. Hopefully there will be enough money in the budget to complete the Gorham project.

Next Meeting – The board scheduled its next meeting for April 22, 2021.

Adjournment – On a motion from Abby with a second from Earl, the board voted unanimously to adjourn at 8:00 pm by roll call vote.

Respectfully submitted,



Michelle M. Lutz