

Town of Gorham

Planning Board Minutes

June 13, 2019

Members Present: Wayne Flynn, Michael Waddell (Ex-Officio), Dennis Arguin (Alt), Abby Evankow, Paul Robitaille, Jeff Schall (Alt) and Brian Ruel

Members Excused: None

Members Absent: Earl McGillicuddy, Barney Valliere and Dan Buteau

Members of the Public: Burke York, John Scarinza (Code Enforcement), Fr. Kyle Stanton and Jacob Therriault

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

Appointments: Chairman Robitaille appointed Jeff Schall to act as a full voting member in place of Barney Valliere and Dennis Arguin in place of Dan Buteau

Accept & Approve Minutes of May 23, 2019 – On a motion from Wayne Flynn with a second from Mike Waddell, the board voted to accept the minutes as presented.

Case #04-2019 – Roman Catholic Bishop – Holy Family Parish – Site Plan Review

Chairman Robitaille recused himself from this case as he is involved with the Church Building Committee. Wayne Flynn recused himself as he is the Chair of the Zoning Board of Adjustment which may have to act on a Variance or Special Exception for this project. The remaining most senior member, Brian Ruel, assumed the Chair. Burke York then presented plans to the board. The Holy Family Parish is looking to operate a full-time, K-8th grade school at this location in the building at the rear of the property known as the Parish building. The proposed hours are 8 am – 2 pm along with afterschool programs. They are preparing for approximately 80 students though the capacity based on Life safety codes is 100 – 125 students. The building will need 2 emergency exits or a sprinkler. The cheaper option will be to erect an 8' x 16' addition to the east side of the building as well as an addition between the parish building and the existing church. There will be no change to the existing traffic patterns. At the request of Fire/EMS Chief Watkins, a painted, "No Parking – Fire Lane" area will be designated near the entrance of the building. The property currently consists of two lots (U5, Lots 42 & 45), these two lots will be merged to make the lot one lot. The setbacks on the plan are shown as if the lots were already merged. Rubbish is currently removed by Holy Family staff. This will continue and will be increased. The back lawn will be used for a recess area and the school will be within walking distance of the Town Common and the Library so those resources will also be used. No cafeteria is planned at this time. Lunches will be either brown-bag or delivery. However, the church currently has a working kitchen in the basement and they may opt to upgrade that in the future to provide meals for the school. Water & Sewer Superintendent Tennis feels the existing supply lines to the building are adequate for the proposed use. However, if that changes in the future, those may not be adequate and will need to be addressed at that time. Any new lighting will be dark-skies compliant. There are no proposed outdoor bells/tones/chimes. CEO Scarinza questioned if the proposed

use would require a Special Exception. The building was built in 1988 and was used at that time part-time for catechism. The zoning regulations at that time did not require a Special Exception nor were Site Plan Review regulations yet established. However, the proposed use would become a full-time use and the property is within the Residential A zone. Both Mike Waddell and Abby Evankow felt though the use was grandfathered, this was a grey area and recommended filing for the Special Exception. An abutter (Steve & Erica Grone) currently allow the church to use their back lawn for functions and this area will be used for a playground. There are no plans to fence the area in, however, if any issues develop in the future, the Church agrees to provide an adequate buffer to the abutting properties. The only sign will be on the building. The project must file an application with the State Department of Education which is pending the Site Plan Review, renovations and review by the Fire Chief. Mike Waddell made a motion to grant approval on the conditions that the project obtains a variance from the Zoning Board of Adjustment, obtains a Special Exception from the Zoning Board, the number of students be capped at whatever life, safety codes require for the building and if the playground becomes an issue in the future, the church agrees to provide an adequate buffer around the playground area. The motion received a second from Dennis Arguin and Acting Chairman Ruel called for a roll call vote. Dennis – Yes Abby – Yes Mike – Yes Brian – Yes Jeff – Yes. Once the conditions are met, Brian will sign the plan as the Acting Chairman,.

Code Enforcement Update –CEO Scarinza updated the board on the following pending items/issues

- 1) Old Colonial Fort Motel is slowly getting better. The property is being cleaned up, life-safety issues are slowly being corrected, outside debris cleaned up. A violation letter was sent approximately 6 weeks ago regarding many issues. One item addressed was that the historical use of the cabins and motel units has been short-term rentals but over the last year and a half that has been changed to long-term rentals which the property is not zoned for so a Cease & Desist order was imposed. The main building was previously used for an apartment but there was a section referred to as the hostel which had 18 beds which exceeds what would be appropriate. He has asked the owner to set up a walk-thru with himself and the Fire Chief but that has not happened yet.
- 2) The Eastern Depot Restaurant renovations at the old Qwik Lube location are continuing. New water & sewer lines have been installed. The State Electrical Inspector and State Plumbing Inspector have been stopping by and they should be prepared to open sometime mid-July.

New Business –

- 1) Lot Merge Application for Roman Catholic Bishop – Holy Family Parish for properties located at 5 Church Street & 68 Railroad Street (U5, Lots 42 & 45). Mike Waddell made a motion to approve the merger with received a second from Abby and all members voted in favor
- 2) Abby questioned if the property across from McDonalds currently being used for Mt. Madison Motel overflow parking should go through site Plan Review. CEO Scarinza is working on it
- 3) Wayne and Abby attended the Spring Planning & Zoning Conference. Wayne attended the class where Short-Term rentals were discussed. One of the recommendations was not to attack as Air BnB's but to regulate short-term rentals. Then if they are not specifically allowed in the ordinance this handles AirBnB and VRBO type rentals. Currently there is a case pending in Portsmouth that will likely affect how those types of rentals are governed, Also, housing stock is being taken up by people buying properties specifically for short-term rentals which is affecting the availability of housing for the general public. Add this to items to discuss with Tara Bamford at the next meeting.

- 4) Abby attended a course on energy and there was a town that added enough solar panels to power the half the town's electricity. Town must pay for electricity for 5 years then they have the option to buy it out at 30% of the cost of installation. This may be something to Town could look at in the future.
- 5) Paul attending the NCC meeting. A presentation by Steve of Albany looking to form a district between towns to get high speed fiber optic internet. Stan Judge and Paul have been invited to attended. Mike reminded the board of a meeting with Carol Miller and the BOS that identified that there are major trunk lines running through town and it is available for a price.

Old Business –

- 1) Mike questioned why a .lpdf of the site Plan for the Roman Catholic Church did not get emailed to the board members. As this was a plan that was changing right up until the last minute, a .pdf wasn't available. Mike would like to see this added to the board's policies and procedures so ti gets sent to all the board members before the meeting.
- 2) Wayne reminded the board that all members must have a minimum of 6 hours of training annually and attending the conference counts towards those hours.
- 3) The Municipal Law Lecture series which was previously set for 3 evenings is now one full-day training.

Public Comment – None

Next Meeting – The board scheduled its next meeting for July 25, 2019 for continuation of updating the Master Plan.

Adjournment: On a motion from Wayne with a second from Abby, the board voted to adjourn at 7:48 pm.

Respectfully submitted,



Michelle M. Lutz
June 18, 2019