



City of Westbrook

DEPARTMENT OF PLANNING

WESTBROOK PLANNING BOARD TUESDAY, DECEMBER 20, 2011, 7:00 P.M. WESTBROOK HIGH SCHOOL, ROOM 114 MINUTES

Present: Ed Reidman, (Chair) (Ward 5), Rene Daniel (Vice-Chair) (Ward 1), Dennis Isherwood (Ward 2), Rebecca Dillon (Alternate), Scott Herrick (Ward 3), Robin Tannenbaum (Alternate)

Absent: Cory Fleming (Ward 4), Greg Blake (At Large), Michael Taylor (At Large)

Staff: Molly Just, Richard Gouzie

Chairman Ed Reidman called the Westbrook Planning Board meeting to order at 7:00 p.m. in Room 114 of the Westbrook High School.

1. Call to Order
2. Approval of Minutes

Rene Daniel I move that we accept as presented the minutes for September 6th, 2011, October 11th, 2011, November 1st, 2011 and December 6th, 2011.

Ed Reidman do I hear a second to that motion?

2nd by Dennis Isherwood

The vote was unanimous in favor 6-0

Consent Agenda: Note – Public comment will be accepted for this item.

3. Review of Paper Street Development – Essex Street – Survey, Inc., on behalf of Christopher Wilson, for the extension of Essex Street (a paper street) to provide access to three lots of record for the construction of three single-family homes. This development is consistent with the provisions of Sec. 406 Review of Paper Street Development. Tax Map: 43 Lot: Portion of 47 (Existing Lots 23, 26 and 27). Zone: RGA-1.

Review of Paper Street Development - The construction of existing lots on pre-platted subdivisions was introduced into the Land Use Ordinances as a means to

achieve the Smart Growth goal of infill housing. Infill housing is seen as a means to allow growth in traditional urban centers. This helps to support urban centers, and increase the efficiency of existing utility infrastructure. At the same time, this new housing contributes to the stock of housing that is located in neighborhoods within walking and bicycling distance of services.

Per Section 406 - Review of Paper Street Development, if the proposed development meets the Code requirements for development on paper streets and the applicant proposes no changes to the lot size or configuration then a project may be approved administratively. Section 406 requires that property owners within a 500 foot radius of the proposed street construction be notified about the project. If a property owner within this radius requests Planning Board review of the subject project then the project is sent to the Planning Board for review. Property owners within the 500 foot radius were notified regarding the application for development of a paper street and there was a formal request for Planning Board review.

Project Description - The applicant proposes to construct approximately 328 feet of the approved but unimproved Essex Street, which connects with Cumberland Street, near its intersection with Pierce Street. Along with construction of a portion of Essex Street, the applicant proposes to develop 3 lots of record that exist along the street. The subject property is approximately 3.68 acres in size and includes 18 lots, with 3 to be developed at this time. The subject property also includes the unimproved Whitney Avenue, which extends to Pierce Street. Whitney Avenue is not proposed for development at this time. This development must conform to Section 203.7.1 of the Land Use Ordinances. This section requires that infill lots such as these be developed in keeping with surrounding development.

Jason Farthing Survey Inc., on behalf of Christopher Wilson in his efforts to extend a private way over a paper street known as Essex Street, off of Cumberland Street. This is an effort to gain access to three lots of record of a previously divided parcel of land. As you stated it is Tax Map: 43 and a portion of 47.

We have been able to work with Molly Just and Eric Dudley closely and I thank them for all their help in catering the proposal to meet the requirements.

The project has been fully engineered by Les Berry with BH2M Engineering and we have proposed stormwater retention at the end of Essex Street to accommodate any water that we produce in production of the street.

Ed Reidman this is going to be a private street as I understand?

Molly Just that is correct.

Ed Reidman we are not reviewing the physical structure of the street. It is our job just to approve it to move forward.

Molly Just that is correct. I should note that given that these are lots of record you will recall the Planning Board and the City Council reviewed and adopted updates to design standards for development on lots of record; which are lots that do not meet the current dimensional requirements as too frontage, width and depth and general size of lots. They are required to be compatible with the surrounding neighborhood and those requirements will be imposed on this development as well.

Ed Reidman questions from the Board at this point?

No questions

Ed Reidman questions from anyone in the audience that may be abutters to this project?

Jason Farthing noting that there are no abutters, I would like to mention that Chris has been in close contact with the immediate abutters and during the development process Chris has agreed to remove a couple of trees to accommodate the neighbor's wishes.

*Editor's Note: Jason pointed out the general area of the trees that need to be removed as requested by neighbors.

Ed Reidman does anyone want to take a site walk?

Robin Tannenbaum I have a question, is there a plan to continue the street in the future?

Jason Farthing not at this time.

Robin Tannenbaum but the bigger site plan shows there are other paper streets out there.

Jason Farthing there are other paper streets back there, time will tell, but at this time we are not proposing anything like that.

Ed Reidman is anyone interested in taking a site walk?

Denis Isherwood and Rene Daniel confirmed interest in a site walk.

Ed Reidman how about a public hearing?

*Editor's Note: The indication from the Board is yes.

Ed Reidman when?

Molly Just I have Saturday, January 7th open and Saturday January 21st.

Ed Reidman does the Board have any preference?

Rene Daniel I would rather go earlier than later.

Ed Reidman will you make a motion January 7, 2012 at 10:00 a.m.

Rene Daniel so moved

The vote was unanimous 6-0

Ed Reidman the Public Hearing would be on Tuesday, January 17, 2012. Could I have a motion?

Rene Daniel so moved

The vote was unanimous in favor 6-0

4. **Site Plan and Subdivision – 211 Longfellow Street** – Terradyn Consultants, LLC, on behalf of Longfellow Development, LLC, for a 12-unit, 6-building duplex rental residential development on an approximately 1.42 acre parcel located at 211 Longfellow Street. Tax Map: 27, Lot: 116, Zone: RGA-1.

Ed Reidman the way the Board conducts its meetings is the there is no public comment unless there is something special or actually a public hearing or the Board votes to allow the public to speak.

Summary. - The proposed project would be located on an approximately 1.42-acre site located at 211 Longfellow Street. The project would include a 12-unit, 6-building duplex rental residential development. Each unit would be allocated the required 2 parking spaces - one in an attached parking garage and the other in the driveway for the duplex. There would be 6 guest parking spaces. The property is surrounded by multi-family condominiums and single-family homes.

Jon Whitten Terradyn Consultants, LLC, on behalf of Longfellow Development, LLC. The applicants are in the room for direct questions, Chris and C. J. Lefebvre along with Bob Chamard.

The project as you stated earlier is located on 211 Longfellow Street and the property is just under an acre and a half, sixty-two thousand square feet in size. The parcel was recently purchased by the applicant. The site was a single family home that had been abandoned for approximately three (3) years and was kind of an un-kept property. The applicants soon after closing on the property split off a single family house lot that is 13,600 square feet for Bob Chamard to a single family house on as depicted on the plans here.

The remaining area of the parcel is for development. That development comprises of six (6) duplex units a total of twelve (12) residential units that will all be owned by the

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applicants, maintained and rented out. There is a common access drive into the property aligned the entrance off of Longfellow to make a four (4) way intersection with Palmer Street, for safety reasons.

We worked with the City Staff to come up with a layout that will fit the neighborhood. The resulting layout has three (3) of the units along the frontage of Longfellow and three (3) in the rear of the property.

I believe there are architectural drawings in your packets showing garages in the front of the building, also with front porches and architectural features that set the building apart from the basic kind of condo building that you may expect.

There will be a proposed dumpster on site at the end of the driveway that will be fenced in. The property will be serviced by under ground electric, public sewer, public water and gas. Each unit will have its own services.

We have included a landscaping plan that we think is a little above and beyond the minimums that the Ordinance requires. On this development the applicants did want to look at a nice entrance to the property to give a good neighborhood feel to the property.

The setbacks to the property are fifteen (15) feet all the way around. We do have stone patios that will be installed on the ground for units one (1), two (2), three (3), four (4), five (5), six (6), seven (7) and eight (8). Units nine (9), ten (10), eleven (11) and twelve (12) will have wooden decks due to the topography. We feel that wooden decks will be a better fit for those buildings. The stone patios will be set on the ground and we checked with City Staff and those do not have to meet the same setback requirements but the wooden decks do have to meet the setback requirements. You will notice that patios for units two (2) and three (3) do slightly go over the setback lines. Otherwise other than landscaped areas the rest of the property will be kept as lawn.

Due to the depth of the sewer on Longfellow Street we tried to keep the sewer main located easterly as much possible on the site. We do have a small corner of the Chamard property that has sewer easement for the sewer main to cross over the Chamard property, prior to entering the Longfellow Street right of way. That serves two purposes; it gets us so we only have to dig approximately eight (8) feet for a connection rather than fourteen (14) feet and offers a connection for the Chamard property directly to the sewer main. Then they can connect with one street opening permit.

Stormwater, we looked at the over all watershed that contributes to this area. If this plan were extended, there are two thirty six (36") inch pipes that run underneath Longfellow in this area east of the property. Talking to Mr. Dudley, the City Engineer the watershed was a major concern of his that this project was not going to increase flooding of those culverts. The culverts are inlet driven and what I mean by inlet driven is the water ponds on the inlet side or upstream side of the culverts. In our analysis we delineated over one hundred and seventy-five acres of land that actually heads off to this point. The land extends all the way up to the area of R.J. Grondin and Sons, Beal's Ice Cream, down New Gorham Road and actually crosses under Longfellow Street. There is a significant amount of water that comes into those culverts and in talking to Mr. Dudley and dealing with projects ourselves over the years, when your project is literally a few feet from the inlet side of these culverts, a lot of the time it is better to get that water through those culverts prior to the bigger peak, slower peak of the one hundred and seventy-five acres coming down. We have shallow ditches on the property that collect water and it move to the northeast corner of the property which is how the topography lies today, let the water be

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accepted by wet land off the site that is there today and go through the culverts. That way we reduce the peak flow a minuscule amount but we are not adding to an increase of peak flow and we are also lowering the flood levels of that ponding by a few tenths of a foot in the twenty-five year storm. The stormwater report has been reviewed by City Staff and has heard nothing but positive comments on it.

We have 2 ½ parking spaces per unit. A parking space within the garage, a parking space outside of each garage space and we have six visitor's spots. That is where we get the 2 1/2 spaces per unit.

Ed Reidman does the Board have any questions or comments?

No comments

Ed Reidman I will ask the same questions that I did on the previous item to start off, does anyone want to do a site walk on this one?

Rene Daniel and Dennis Isherwood indicated interest in a site walk.

Ed Reidman can we have the site walk on the same date; January 7th, 2012 at 8:30 am?

Rene Daniel I move that we have a site walk on January 7th, 2012 at 8:30 am.

2nd by Dennis Isherwood

The vote was unanimous in favor 5-0

Ed Reidman can I have a motion on a public hearing on January 17th, following the previous one?

Rene Daniel so moved

2nd by Dennis Isherwood

The vote was unanimous in favor 5-0

Ed Reidman Ms. Tannenbaum had a conflict with this project so she has left the building.

Does anyone want to ask anymore questions tonight?

Rene Daniel I have two concerns, one of which is that I know this particular lot and we are putting a lot of un-vegetated land exposed because there were quite a few trees there. Granted I am not a "tree" person but I believe there should be shrubberies in the buffer zone.

I do understand that you are going to have the water flow to the northeast. The one thing that concerns me and I understand the lot has been broken to a separate lot but I have concerns that whenever it is going to be developed some point in time that the future

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drainage is going to be a problem. I remember in '98 the ice storm where that particular part of town the water was quite high. I know maybe every hundred years, but I remember that storm and that is still my concern is the drainage and probably linked to that when we go to the site walk and public hearing, has anyone given consideration to a rain garden to pick up extra water? I know it will not necessarily stop all the water flow but will help.

I do like landscaping but I need to be told exactly on the plant list how many plants will be used for the plantings.

My other comment is you did say that you have had at least one if not more meetings with the surrounding neighbors.

Jon Whitten yes the applicants had a meeting at the existing Chamard house with a number of neighbors. I was not in attendance but I was told it was positive.

Ed Reidman any other questions or comments?

Rebecca Dillon I have a comment. Just driving down Longfellow Street, I do not know if you have noticed that there is a distinct pattern of house facing street. I know that there are a couple of existing condo developments there that break that and they look odd, this is doing something similar with the backs of units eleven (11), twelve (12), nine (9) and ten (10). I understand why and this is laid out very efficiently getting your maximum density but I am wondering, just to piggy-back on Mr. Daniel's comments if more buffering between street and homes might be a way to minimize that and also provide more privacy for the back yard areas that are facing Longfellow.

Jon Whitten that is certainly a good comment and we have heard that comment previously in Staff meetings. Our understanding of the wants of the City and meeting the neighborhood feel of Longfellow Street was to actually have those building exposed enough so you could recognize that there was a building parallel facing, even though it is the back of the building, still house, tree, house, tree kind of feel. We tried to balance privacy and being able to see the buildings but not yet be glaring at the same time. I hesitate to put too much up there but we certainly put a lot of thought into this layout, to credit the City Staff, they made us put a lot of effort into the layout to fit the neighborhood and appease that neighborhood feel.

Molly Just I do want to thank the applicant for really paying attention to the character of the neighborhood and putting emphasis on the architecture of these units.

One thing I did notice which is in keeping with what Rebecca was mentioning. I did not pick up on this and until this meeting and I have put a note on the plan to bring it up is the placement of the wooden decks on units nine (9), ten (10), eleven (11) and twelve (12), I realize on the unit closest to the Chamard property that the deck could not go on the side of the building but is the decks on the other units could go to the side of the building while that is not providing total privacy for the decks as they are on Longfellow Street but you will not be sitting directly on Longfellow Street. It looks like the decks on the units away from the Chamard property could be put to the side of the building instead of along Longfellow Street.

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Ed Reidman any other comments or questions?

No Comments

Ed Reidman how many people in the audience are neighbors or live in the area?

*Editor's note audience members raised hands

Ed Reidman you are welcome to come to the site walk when we have that as well as the public hearing.

5. Adjourn

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