

HAMILTON PLANNING BOARD
MINUTES OF MEETING
Via Zoom 862 3609 7323
Password 034194D
August 18, 2020

Members Present: Corey Beaulieu, Richard Boroff, Marnie Crouch, Rick Mitchell (Acting Chair), and William Wheaton.
Planning Director: Patrick Reffett.

This meeting was called to order by Rick Mitchell at 7:00 pm with a quorum established via zoom.

Request to modify a Site Plan Review Permit. 59 to 63 Willow St.

Harborlight had been chosen for the management company. An application for affordable housing funds (Phase 1) had been filed with the Department of Housing and Community Development (DHCD) and technical due diligence had been completed. Affordable funding had been requested for nine units and not just 2 as had been the case in the submitted application. All 18 units would be counted on the affordable inventory as the units were all rental. A Zoom meeting with the neighbors had been conducted. The Planning Board meeting was being held to consider the increase in affordable units. DHCD might offer grant awards in September or October. The application had been filed in July.

The units would be constructed to meet passive housing certification. The sustainable design goals would encourage the use of materials that were in concert with climate change mitigation. Windows would be triple paned and have the appearance of double hung windows. The advanced design components increased the cost of construction but the developer hoped the operating costs, which would be passed on to tenants, would be lower. The applicant would return in October with proposed design changes.

Review and Discussion of various potential By-law language changes.

Members discussed changes to the Flexible Development By-law. Changes included the transferring of money to a fund for land acquisition, which needed to be consistent with Town policy. Criteria for land acquisition acceptance was in a document dated, November 2, 2015. Developers would need to satisfy the provision of Section 8.1.2. Patrick Reffett suggested keeping the acquisition process flexible.

Provisions that were discussed included: Section 8.1.6.1., Section 8.1.2., Section 8.1.6., and Section 8.1.7. "Contiguous open space" would be referred to as "open space," which would be defined elsewhere in the document. Section 8.1.7.1 would be deleted. Language was added regarding how to accomplish the maintenance of the open space. "Where not practicable" was changed to "may be used for conservation."

Members discussed the ownership of open space, Section 8.1.8. Ownership would remain under the control of those who lived in the development or under a corporation or trust. It would be made clear how maintenance would be accomplished and funded. If the Town needed to assume maintenance, a fee or annual assessment would have been collected to complete the work or a lien could be placed upon the lots if maintenance did not occur. Planning Board Rules and Regulations would cover the enforcement. Exceptions to having the owners gift the land to the Town were discussed. The land would need to be socially, environmentally, or economically important for the Town to accept the gift. In any case, the open space would need to be deeded for perpetuity as open space. Liability for open spaces connecting to trail systems was discussed. Essex County Trail Association assuming maintenance of the trails would be further discussed.

Density would be determined by the criteria set. The tax impact of small housing units was discussed. While the diversity of housing stock would result, allowing smaller units might raise the tax liability. It was agreed the lack of affordable housing stock would be resolved by the re-use of apartment units at Gordon Conwell. Previously constructed senior housing developments had made contributions to the Affordable Housing Trust Fund rather than incorporate affordable units on site. Incorporating language for affordable housing within the development site would be put on hold.

Members discussed water efficiency standards and how housing might stress the water system. Existing building and plumbing codes were considered stringent. Wenham required developers to pay into a Water Efficiency Trust Fund. Standards could be set in accordance with the number of bedrooms proposed. Green construction would assist in limiting water consumption within the residence while using drought tolerant plants would help conserve water outdoors.

Members discussed that growth was stagnant. The Capital Committee and Schools had a list of needs. If the tax base was not expanded, moderate income residents and seniors might not be able to afford to live in town in the future.

Members discussed offering a base of 40% open space to be set aside. If 50% open space was proposed, a density bonus would be offered. A sliding scale was discussed. A formula would be discussed at the next meeting. Open space needed to be usable land and/or trails to accommodate access to other open space parcels. Members discussed offering a bonus for smaller units of approximately 1,500 sf or for units dedicated as affordable or senior use. Members debated whether or not the town had an adequate supply of smaller homes and that the By-law would preserve open space, increase the diversity of housing stock, and increase the tax base.

Members would research public access or connections to trails for liability issues. A developer would be asked to review the final draft of the By-law.

Board Business.

Minutes – July 21, 2020 and August 4, 2020.

Motion made by Richard Boroff to approve the minutes of July 21, 2020 and August 4, 2020 to include the changes as submitted by Marnie Crouch.

Seconded by Corey Beaulieu.

Roll Call Vote: William Wheaton – aye, Marnie Crouch – aye, Richard Boroff – aye, Corey Beaulieu – aye, and Rick Mitchell - aye. Unanimous in favor.

Adjournment.

Motion made by Rick Mitchell to adjourn at 9:00 pm.

Seconded by Marnie Crouch.

Roll Call Vote: William Wheaton – aye, Marnie Crouch – aye, Richard Boroff – aye, Rick Mitchell – aye, and Corey Beaulieu – aye. Unanimous in favor.

Prepared by:

Marcie Ricker

Attest

Date

