

HAMILTON PLANNING BOARD

MINUTES OF MEETING

Via Zoom 7360044541

Password 775770

October 20, 2020

Members Present: Corey Beaulieu, Richard Boroff, Marnie Crouch, Dan Hamm, Rick Mitchell, Brian Stein (Chair), and Bill Wheaton.
Planning Director: Patrick Reffett.
Others present: Erin West (DMS), Dave Traggorth (Traggorth Companies, LLC)

This meeting was called to order by Brian Stein at 7:02 pm with a quorum established via zoom. Roll Call: Marnie Crouch - aye, Bill Wheaton – aye, Corey Beaulieu - aye, Rick Mitchell - aye, Richard Boroff - aye, Dan Hamm - aye, and Brian Stein - aye.

Request to Modify a Site Plan Review Permit. Traggorth Companies. 59 – 63 Willow St. Minor design change to previously approved project.

Brian Stein and Rick Mitchell recused themselves as members of the Hamilton Development Corporation. Dan Hamm was the acting Chairman.

Dan Hamm read the notice to open the meeting. Dave Traggorth described the passive house project and hoped to receive an approval of floor plan changes and elevation changes. Mr. Traggorth said he would return to discuss colors or other items if the Board requested. Mr. Traggorth presented slides showing energy use, heat loss, and heat gain. According to Mr. Traggorth, the DHCD was encouraging carbon neutral housing that optimized solar orientation, high performance windows, increased insulation, air tight construction, and balanced ventilation. Mr. Traggorth described the triple pane windows being proposed. Members discussed whether window inserts were appropriate or not.

Floor plans were discussed. No change was proposed in the commercial space. The fitness and wellness rooms were reconfigured. Two larger trash rooms and a double sided elevator were proposed. The second and third floors were the same square footage with units being switched around. Bump outs were eliminated as they were exposed to weather on three sides and were not energy efficient. Balconies and Juliette balconies would remain. One discrepancy in the length of the building was noted. The roofline extended beyond what original elevations had indicated. Two windows into the carport were removed and vines would be planted instead. Balconies had been shown on the west elevation in the first set of elevations but they did not exist. Other elevations did not have noticeable changes. The site plan was the same. The applicant had a conference with the neighbors regarding the landscape plan and intended on meeting with them again.

Patrick Reffett asked the Board to determine if the changes would be considered a minor amendment, as the proposal did not add units, height, square footage, or parking. Dave Traggorth said he was confident that a State grant would be forthcoming and planned on starting work in the spring. Mr. Traggorth thought what had originally been approved was consistent with local architecture. Mr. Traggorth noted that higher fuel efficiency could have been achieved if the proposal had diverted away from the conceptual renderings that featured local architectural features. The building would have cedar shakes, gabled roofs, and traditional trim.

Members discussed details such as making the entry ways more prominent, adding gables, and breaking the façade with material changes. Dave Traggorth said his design team would study the suggestions. Patrick Reffett suggested varying the ridge line but Mr. Traggorth said a portion of the roof was actually flat. Changing the ridge line would drastically change the look of the building by increasing the appearance of its height.

Motion made by Bill Wheaton to approve the overall modified floor plan footprint and unit configuration scale but hold on the exterior for further review of it being a minor modification. Dan Hamm said the building was fitting with the character with a materials change versus a real, physical, or structural change, which should be reviewed.

Bill Wheaton asked to amend the motion to state the Board accept the floor plan as shown on the electronic plans transmitted to the Board on October 19, 2020, which were acceptable to the Board as submitted.

Seconded by Richard Boroff.

Roll Call Vote: Corey Beaulieu - aye, Bill Wheaton - aye, Richard Boroff – aye, Marnie Crouch – aye, and Dan Hamm – aye. Unanimous in favor of voting members.

The applicant would return to the Board on November 17, 2020.

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

The goal was to finalize the By-law matrix and have developers review it. The version being discussed (Wheaton amended) allowed not only 20%, 40%, and 60% land conservation, but also incremental percentages. Other bonuses would be offered for specific features such as incorporating low income units, energy efficiency, and accessibility of open space by the public. The spirit of the proposed By-law (Wheaton) compared to the previously considered By-law (Mitchell) was that there would not be as many density bonuses offered in the RA district than as in the R1a and R1b districts. The bonuses would be smaller in low density areas in an effort to maintain the character of those districts.

Corey Beaulieu had provided a comparison of both matrices to understand the development on developable land versus the entire parcel. Members discussed that the proposal might be complex, but simplicity would be preferred. A maximum per acre was missing, which would quell the fears that large parcels might have a large number of units. Members discussed that in the Senior Housing By-law, a base density for each zone was different and that wetlands did not

count toward the developable acreage. A bonus maximum had been created. For the current proposal, (except for R1b) the maximum density would be four units per acre. Members considered the benefits of density in each district.

The maximum for each development per acre, distance between developments, and town wide (150) had been incorporated into the Senior Housing By-law. Members discussed that residents of the R1a district may feel discriminated against due to the high density allowed and residents of the RA district should share in the process of development. The requirements that developments in the RA district would need to start with 40% open space might limit the developer. It was noted that development would occur on lots that had 5 to 10 acres and a 40% open space requirement might have less impact on surrounding neighborhoods. Developments would be hidden from view on larger parcels.

Patrick Reffett said during the Special Permit process, the Board would work with the developer to site the project in the most advantageous location. Members discussed that the Board had approval/disapproval rights under the Special Permit process and that the matrix was a guide rather than a promise of approval, but the chart was critical in letting developers know what could be approved. The Board did not expect multiple projects to come to the town. Bill Wheaton would revise the document and distribute it to members before the next meeting.

Board Business.

Review/authorize support letter for Town Hall Preservation Project.

Patrick Reffett, a member of the Town Hall Building Committee, asked the Board to write a letter of support for the project. Members discussed that they had not seen details regarding design or the tax impact of the \$9M project. The Board had approved the Site Plan and design presented but might not agree to supporting spending \$9M on the proposal. The Board would state they found the plans to be good, if the town decided to spend the money on the project. Members agreed that the Town Hall Building Committee should come to the Board with final plans if they wanted an endorsement. Mr. Reffett noted that the Town Hall Building Committee website had plans, cost estimates, charts, and comparable project information. Mr. Reffett said the building had not been maintained for decades and code requirements were not met. Members noted that the need was not being questioned but the timing for the request was a concern.

The letter would be redrafted to indicate that the design and plans presented to the Board were found to be completely suitable in terms of Site Plan Review and were approved. The Board agreed that the present status of the Town Hall was inadequate in terms of codes, usage, and needs.

Minutes – October 6, 2020.

Motion made by Bill Wheaton to approve the minutes of September 15, 2020 as amended.
Seconded by Marnie Crouch.

Roll Call Vote: Rick Mitchell – aye, Marnie Crouch – aye, Bill Wheaton – aye, Corey Beaulieu – aye, Richard Boroff – aye, Dan Hamm – abstain, and Brian Stein – aye. Unanimous in favor of voting members.

Liaison/Staff reports

A sizable senior housing project at 133 Essex St. might be proposed at the next meeting.

Adjournment.

Motion made by Bill Wheaton to adjourn at 9:08 pm.

Seconded by Rick Mitchell.

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

Prepared by:

Marcie Ricker

Attest

Date