

PLANNING BOARD MINUTES
WEDNESDAY, MARCH 16, 2022
MUNICIPAL COUNCIL CHAMBERS – 6:30 P.M.

Present: Michael Costello, Dave Thompson, Phil Ruck, John Beckett, Jud McIntosh, Bob Bayer, Christa Schwintzer, Lisa Buck

Absent: Ashley Case

Town Staff: Kyle Drexler, Jessica Chadbourne

Acceptance of the Agenda

Mr. Ruck asked for a motion to accept the agenda.

Motion: John Beckett

Second: Michael Costello

Mr. Ruck asked for a roll call vote. The vote to accept the agenda passed with eight in favor, none opposed. Mr. Drexler pointed out that with the seven full board members in attendance, there was no need for Mr. Bayer to be elevated to a voting member, so the following votes for the meeting will be recorded with seven votes, not eight.

Approval of the Minutes of the January 19th Planning Board Meeting

Mr. Ruck asked for a motion to approve the January Planning Board Minutes.

Motion: Lisa Buck

Second: John Beckett

There were no corrections to the January minutes, so Mr. Ruck asked for a roll call vote. The vote to approve the January meeting minutes passed six in favor, with one abstaining, as Jud McIntosh was absent from the January meeting.

Old Business

There was no old business.

New Business

Item A: An amendment to an approved subdivision by Forest/Orono Associates LLP for the Forest Hollow Subdivision located on Grant Rd in the Low Density Residential District. The application is to re-create lots 16 and 18 from a piece of retained land on the eastern side of Grant Rd as it was shown on the originally approved subdivision plan.

Before discussions began, Mr. Ruck informed the Board that he has assisted the applicant professionally in the past. He asked whether the Board felt there would be an issue with him voting on this application. Hearing no concerns from the Board, Mr. Ruck then invited the applicant to present their amendment to the Board. Mr. Drexler explained that the applicant, Mr. Benson could not be present and had asked Mr. Drexler to speak in his stead.

Similar to his previous petitions to the Planning Board, Mr. Benson's application pertained to recreating a lot from the original Forest Hollow Subdivision plan, as approved by the board in 2006. These lots has been previously combined to form two large lots of retained land during a time in which there were no interested buyers. But now that there is renewed interest in the subdivision, Mr. Benson has been recreating lots as the land is sold.

In this case, his intention was to recreate lots 16 and 18 of the original, on the eastern side of Grant Rd, for the purposes of selling the land for development. The lots would be recreated exactly as depicted in the original subdivision. It still meets the acreage and frontage requirements of the district per the ordinance, and all other standards of approval would remain the same.

The applicant is aware that they will have to get an amendment to their site location permit from Maine DEP, and are in the process of doing so, and before the Planning Board actually signs copies of the amended subdivision plan the applicant will provide a copy of the DEP approval to Town staff.

Mr. Ruck asked for comments or questions from the Board. Hearing none, he opened the public hearing. There were no comments from the public, so after a few minutes Mr. Ruck closed the public hearing and read the proposed findings of fact. There were no comments from the Board on the proposed findings of fact, so Mr. Ruck asked for a motion.

Motion: Jud McIntosh moved that the Board accept the application from Forest/Orono Associates LLP for the Forest Hollow Subdivision located on Grant Rd in the Low Density Residential District to re-create lots 16 and 18 as they were shown on the originally approved subdivision plan, with the following conditions:

1. That all findings of the Planning Board with respect to this development at its meeting of July 19, 2006, and all conditions of approval and requirements pertaining thereto, are unchanged and remain in place.
2. That the applicant be granted an approved Site Location of Development permit for the amended plan by the Maine Department of Environmental Protection and provide evidence of such approval to Town staff prior to the Planning Board signing the plan.
3. That the signed, amended subdivision plan, to include conditions of approval that run with the property, be recorded at the Registry of Deeds within 90 days of approval of the amended plan.

Second: John Beckett.

Mr. Ruck then asked for a roll call vote. The vote to approve the amended subdivision plan for Forest/Orono Associates, LLP passed with seven in favor, none opposed.

Item A: A site plan review application by the University of Maine, located on 168 College Ave, Tax Map 11-0 Lot 77, in the University District. The application is for a recreational facility use and proposes the redevelopment of the soccer field located adjacent to the other athletic facilities on the northern side of the campus east of the Charles Place neighborhood. The project proposes to renovate the soccer field to synthetic turf, install athletic field lighting, and install a new grandstand with press box.

Before discussions began, Mr. Ruck informed the Board that he has assisted the applicant professionally in the past. He asked whether the Board or the applicants felt there would be an issue with him voting on this application. Hearing no objections from the board or the applicant, Mr. Ruck invited the applicants to step up to the podium.

A representative from Activitas, Inc., the project's landscape architect, and a representative from WBRC, Inc., the project's civil engineering firm, were present in person to present their application to the board. The Activitas representative presented the University's proposal to renovate an existing soccer field on campus to make it a more functional, professional space, with the intention of improving gender equality within the athletics programs at the University of Maine, as it is the women's soccer team that primarily

use that space.

The field is located adjacent to the Alford Stadium and baseball field, and is currently only a large stretch of natural grass, making the field unplayable in certain seasons and weathers. The scope of the project includes:

- replacing the existing grass field with synthetic turf, which will be a lot more usable in various kinds of weather;
- formalizing seating which includes the construction of improved lighting, a new press box, and new grandstands that can seat up to 512 spectators, which is approximately the amount needed for college soccer;
- and providing facilities, utilities, and walkways to service these improvements.

Designs will be adjusted as necessary to meet local and state code requirements.

The new synthetic turf field will have an underdrain system to manage surface runoff that's created and should actually improve the current drainage issues by diverting stormwater away from the field and the lower part of the existing wetland. The proposed project will improve the conditions of the field, but will not fundamentally change the existing use of the space. Dimensions of the field will be similar to the existing field, but the grading and stands will exceed the current footprint. The 15 pine trees that currently serve as a buffer between the soccer field and the track and field area will be removed to accommodate that slight expansion. The soil removed in order to install the synthetic turf will be repurposed to create the embankments on which the new stands and press box will sit so that they can be elevated on earth, rather than on a fabricated structure.

With regards to meeting the standard criteria for this project: both the new grading and the new elevation of the field are intended to avoid impacts on the adjacent wetlands. The new elevation has been finalized to promote positive flow of storm runoff into the underdrains rather than down over the sides of the field and into the surrounding area. The existing use of the field is being maintained, so they do not anticipate any resulting wetland impacts. and because the project does not fall within 100 feet of any University property line, it does not trigger and setback standards that might impede the plans as laid out.

The WBRC representative expanded on the ways in which the new synthetic turf would allow for improved stormwater management. He explained that the actual turf is laid on a bed of crushed stone which creates a ponding area for the stormwater, which then filters down through into the under drains and is directed out of the field and into the upper portion of the wetland, away from the field and away from the wetland area directly behind Charles St. Per the applicant's presentation, analysis of potential runoff does not indicate an increase in ponding in the existing wetland that might lead to increased concerns about flooding in the surrounding area.

The Activitas representative explained the details of the new six-point LED lighting system, which is designed to concentrate light on the actual field without casting it up into the sky or leaking it into the surrounding area. Though the immediate field area will be brightly lit, outside the arena light levels will drop off precipitously and become negligible well before it reaches any neighboring communities.

Mr. Ruck thanked the applicants, then asked Mr. Drexler to provide the Board with his report. Mr. Drexler brought up the issue of drainage on Charles St and referred the board to the comments submitted by Public Works and the Town Engineer that were included in the application packet for the project, stating that the project meets all requirements of the Town ordinance and DEP regulations. The engineer had a few questions, mostly pertaining to the volume of stormwater not just the peak rate discharge, and about any additional ponding of water in the wetlands. The applicant followed up with additional information that left Staff satisfied in that regard. Mr. Drexler explained that Town is aware of the drainage issues on Charles St and has had a conversation with the University about possible infrastructure improvement projects for that area that might provide a solution to those drainage problems. He also pointed out that if the proposed project was taking place anywhere else on the university property, it would not have come

before the Planning Board at all. The only reason this project is being reviewed by the Board is because the field in question happens to fall within 500 ft of the edge of the property.

Mr. Ruck asked if the WBRC representative could pull up the grading plan slide in their presentation and indicate where the outlet for the new drainage system would be. The representative pulled up the requested slide and indicated a point in the eastern portion of the wetland where the water will discharge, rather than dispersing radially as it currently does. This diverting stormwater away from the western portion of the wetland which currently abuts Charles St.

Mr. Ruck also asked about access to the site during construction, and whether they would have to create access or would be using the existing university roads. The Activitas representative confirmed that they would be using the existing access since most of the work would be self contained, and over the course of the renovation there would only be a few truckloads of supplies that would have to be delivered to the project site.

Hearing no comments from other Board members, Mr. Ruck opened the public hearing for comment. Mr. Drexler read a comment into record that was emailed to the Planning Office prior to the meeting. Douglas Allen of 6 Charles St wrote to express his concerns about drainage on the street. He offered his support for the project, but asked that as part of the planned work on the athletic fields that the University and the Town consider the existing issues and take care not to exacerbate them.

There were no other comments from the public or from the Board, so Mr. Ruck closed the public hearing and read the proposed findings of facts. There were no comments from the Board on the proposed findings of fact, so Mr. Ruck asked for a motion.

Motion: Jud McIntosh moved that the board accept site plan review application by the University of Maine, located on 168 College Ave, Tax Map 11-0 Lot 77, in the University District for a recreational facility use and proposes the redevelopment of the soccer field located adjacent to the other athletic facilities on the northern side of the campus to renovate the soccer field to synthetic turf, install athletic field lighting, and install a new grandstand with press box, with the following condition:

1. That if any changes are made to the site plan application because of SLODA, the University will return to the Planning Board for an amended site plan approval.

Second: Michael Costello

Mr. Ruck asked for a roll call vote. The vote to approve the site plan application for UMaine passed with seven in favor, none opposed.

Other New Business

There was no other new business.

Discussion

Mr. Ruck asked Mr. Drexler about any forthcoming projects slated for Planning Board review. Mr. Drexler provided him with a short summary of possible April projects.

Adjournment

Mr. Ruck asked for a motion to adjourn the March meeting of the Planning Board.

Motion: Lisa Buck

Second: John Beckett

The motion to adjourn the meeting passed seven for, and the meeting was adjourned at 7:22 pm March 16th, 2022.