

City of Rochester Planning Board
Monday, October 16, 2023
City Hall Council Chambers
31 Wakefield Street, Rochester, NH 03867
(These minutes were approved on November 6 ,2023)

Members Present

Mark Collopy, *Chair*
Robert May, *Vice Chair*
Alan Dews
Matthew Richardson
Dave Walker
Peter Bruckner
Michael McQuade
Keith Fitts

Members Absent

Don Hamann, *excused*

Alternate Members Present

Alexander de Geofroy
James Hayden
Rick Healey

Staff: Shanna B. Saunders, *Director of Planning & Development*

(These are the legal minutes of the meeting and are in the format of an overview of the meeting. A recording of the meeting will be on file in the City Clerk's office for reference purposes. They may be copied for a fee.)

I. Call to Order

Chair, Mark Collopy, called the meeting to order at 6:30 p.m.

II. Roll Call

Planning Department Director, Shanna B. Saunders, conducted roll call.

III. Seating of Alternates

Mr. Collopy asked Mr. Alexander de Geofroy to vote in place of Donald Hamann.

IV. Communications from the Chair

Mr. Collopy stated that there were no communications from the Chair.

V. Approval of Minutes
A. October 16, 2023

A motion was made by Mr. Walker to approve the October 2, 2023, meeting minutes and seconded by Mr. May. The motion carried unanimously.

VI. Opening Discussion/Comments

A. Public Comment

There were no comments from the public to discuss.

B. Discussion of general planning issues

Mr. Dews stated that a subdivision was approved last meeting and the Planning Regulations stated that unless the subdivision is on a collector or arterial road that a power pole can be placed across the street but the line then must be buried. Mr. Dews stated that the subdivision did not qualify for this to be done and that the power should have been run under the road to the new subdivision. Mr. Dews recommended that the regulations be edited to better explain the requirements for extending power to new development.

Mr. Healey stated his support for power being run underground more and asked what the conditions are on the street and would this be the only lot on the street to have conduit under the street.

Mr. Bruckner asked for the subdivision that is being used as an example. Ms. Saunders stated that the subdivision in discussion is State Street.

Ms. Saunders explained the current interpretation of the regulations and explained that due to the expense, the Planning Board did not want developers digging or having to pay to dig up roads to run power. Ms. Saunders explained that Mr. Dews performs most of the City Engineering Inspections and asked if the Planning Board wanted to edit the regulations to state how it is being interpreted.

Mr. Dews gave an example of another subdivision across the street from the new one at 9 State Street and they used an existing pole and did not go overhead to either of those new homes.

Mr. Dews recommended that new subdivisions be required to run power under the streets and not place new poles overhead, or the Planning Board should put in place a new waiver process.

Mr. Walker stated his support for enforcing the under-road power, or waivers to be applied for by future applicants.

Mr. Bruckner stated that he sees that there are many poles within that neighborhood and stated that he did not feel that there would be a large difference in the placement of poles.

Mr. Richardson stated his support for waiver application due to the expense of digging under roads.

Mr. May stated that he didn't feel that the regulation should be changed, but that waivers should be applied for if necessary.

Ms. Saunders and Mr. Dews thanked the Board for the discussion.

VII. Final Plans Approval

A. Green & Company, 19 Old Gonic (Jones & Beach/ Joseph Coronati) Sidewalk Site Plan for townhouse style units and associated parking and site utilities. Conditionally Approved March 6, 2023

Ms. Saunders stated that when the approval was initially reviewed, the Planning Board noted that there were no sidewalks on Old Gonic Road and required the developer to submit proposed sidewalk plans as a Condition of Approval.

Mr. Joe Coronati, Jones and Beach Engineers, Inc., presented the plans and explained the sidewalks and introduced the other representatives for the project. Mr. Coronati explained that the section of sidewalk near Brock Street would be above the curb and into the grass space. Mr. Coronati explained the sidewalk leading further down the road would be 5-foot wide and at grade with the ground to ease maintenance per the Department of Public Works request. Mr. Coronati explained there would be lines for the cross walks. Mr. Coronati explained the road upgrades that will also take place. Mr. Coronati also explained stormwater drainage plans.

Mr. Bruckner asked for further clarification of the visual provided.

Mr. Walker asked if a crosswalk could be added for access to the condominium to the sidewalks for children walking to bus stops. Ms. Saunders stated that the change can be added and discussed.

Mr. May asked if there was any intention to separate the pedestrian portion with the road where the at-grade level sidewalks are proposed. Mr. Coronati stated that in discussions with the Department of Public Works that the addition of a buffer could hinder maintenance to the sidewalks.

Mr. Coronati stated that a full-raised sidewalk is proposed at the Emerson entrance.

Mr. May asked for clarification of public hearing. Ms. Saunders stated that abutters were notified and that there is a public hearing for this project.

Mr. Dews stated his concerns for the 4-foot crosswalk and felt that the Department of Public Works would not support truncated domes at grade due to the complications of sidewalk plows. Mr. Coronati stated that the plan was done in conjunction with the Department of Public Works and that further changes can be made.

Mr. Dews asked if the developer will stripe the sidewalk areas. Mr. Coronati responded yes that the developer will have the lines initially stripped then maintained by the Department of Public Works. Mr. Dews stated that the City would not maintain the striping due to it being a one-way road. Mr. Coronati stated that further discussion can be had regarding the striping maintenance. Ms. Saunders stated that it is expected that the City take over the maintenance after the initial construction. Mr. Dews stated that he felt that the maintenance of the striping for the development should not be on the City to maintain. Ms. Saunders explained the construction that is taking place in the City's right-of-way.

Mr. Walker asked what the purpose was of the truncated dome. Ms. Saunders responded that it is an ADA requirement for visually impaired persons.

Mr. Walker stated his concern for the truncated domes without a curb to cause damage to and increased issues for maintenance.

A motion was made by Mr. Walker to accept the Final Plan for Sidewalks at 19 Old Gonic and seconded by Mr. de Geofroy, with the addition of the crosswalk. The motion carried with an 8 to 1 vote; Mr. Dews opposed.

VIII. Review of Inspections and Surety for September 2023

The Planning Board reviewed the City Inspections performed in August and there was no discussion or questions.

The Planning Board reviewed the Surety accounts on file.

Ms. Saunders explained that the Planning Department has been reviewing Surety accounts heavily and is in the process of sending letters to account holders for updates on project status. Ms. Saunders gave a brief overview of the known Surety Accounts.

Mr. Collopy stated his concerns regarding the Highfields Subdivision. Ms. Saunders stated that the City is holding less surety for work that needs to be done and that the development is coming into more and more compliance.

Mr. Keith asked what the process was for expiration dates and how they are being enforced. Ms. Saunders stated that the only action that can be taken is to revoke the approval of the subdivision. Ms. Saunders explained the process of how the Planning Department reaches out to account holders when they are expiring. Ms. Saunders stated that one of the only compliance assurances that can be taken is to withhold Certificate of Occupancies for housing developments.

Mr. Dews stated that he did not feel that the City collected enough surety for the Highfields Project due to the number of issues that have arisen with the development.

Mr. Walker asked about the Planning Department going to the Lydall facility and speaking with business representative from the new company and getting contact information. Ms. Saunders responded that staff have not gone to the facility at this time.

Mr. Dews asked if there was a way to make the Norway Plains townhouses come into compliance with their Site Plans. Ms. Saunders explained that before the COVID pandemic there was vesting of projects and that the Norway Plains townhouses project was one of those vested.

Mr. May stated that he recalled that the Planning Board required that the developer of the Highfields Project hires an outside inspector regarding statuses of their project and asked if that was still in effect. Ms. Saunders responded yes and stated that the Planning Department still receives some reports.

IX. Other Business

A. Planning Update

There was Planning updates to discuss.

B. Other

There was no other business updates to discuss.

X. Adjournment

A motion was made by Mr. Walker and seconded by Mr. Dews to adjourn the meeting at 7:04pm. The motion carried unanimously.

Respectfully submitted,

Jaclyn Millard,
Administrative Assistant II

and

Shanna B. Saunders,
Director of Planning & Development