

City of Rochester Planning Board
Monday January 22, 2018
Retreat
City Hall Annex, Cocheco Conf. Room
33 Wakefield Street, Rochester, NH 03867
(These minutes were approved on February 5, 2018)

Members Present

Nel Sylvain, *Chair*
Dave Walker, *Vice Chair*
Matthew Kozinski, *Secretary*
A. Terese Dwyer
Robert May
Kyle Starkweather
Mark Sullivan

Others Present

Seth Creighton, *Chief Planner*
Owen Friend-Gray, *Assist. City Engineer*
Karen Pollard, *Economic Development Manager*
Michelle Mears, *Staff Planner*
Ray Varney, *City Council*
James Grant, *BZLS Director*

Members Absent

Tim Fontneau, excused

Alternate Members Present

Joyce Bruckner, arrived at 6:32pm
Mark Collopy
James Gray

Staff: James Campbell, *Director of Planning & Development*
Crystal Galloway, *Planning Secretary*

(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. It may be copied for a fee.)

Mr. Sylvain called the meeting to order at 6:30 p.m.

The Planning Secretary conducted the roll call.

Mr. Sylvain presented former member Tom Willis with a certificate of appreciation and thanked him for his hard work and service.

III. Discussion on By-Laws

The Board reviewed the by-laws. Mr. Campbell proposed using the consent agenda again or remove it from the by-laws. Mr. Sylvain said they stopped using it because there were issues in the past with items being put on the consent agenda that shouldn't have been on there and the projects were approved when they shouldn't have been.

Mr. Walker asked if the applicant would still be present at the meeting if there were any questions from the Board. Mr. Campbell said yes, they would be required to be there.

The consensus of the Board was to try the consent agenda again and see how it goes.

Mr. Campbell said under section 9 – minutes it said the Clerk of Records shall prepare the minutes; he asked that a change be made to Planning Secretary.

The Board discussed section 11(d) that states any member can be disqualified if they are absent from more than two meetings in a calendar year. The Board would like to change it to three or more absences in a calendar year.

IV. General discussion on the rules and desire for sidewalks

Mr. Campbell said there has been discussion over recent applications regarding sidewalks. He said the Board should take this opportunity to discuss where they want and don't want sidewalks. He said a lot of applicants don't want sidewalks for one reason or another.

Mr. Sylvain said right now there is approximately forty miles of sidewalks in the city. Mr. Walker said we can't have sidewalks that go to nowhere. Ms. Dwyer said the Board needs to be mindful of making sure connectivity is available. Mr. Starkweather disagreed as he thinks the city needs to be uniformed.

The Board discussed the cost put in a sidewalk and the cost to maintain them. Mr. May said developers should provide a sidewalk, wider road beds, or a walking path.

Mr. Friend-Gray provided a map of the sidewalks in the City. Mr. Sullivan said using the map as a tool will be very helpful when making decisions in the future.

Mr. Campbell talked about the criteria for sidewalks the Board are supposed to be following. Mr. Collopy said he doesn't feel the interior neighborhoods need the sidewalks, it the more main roads like Milton Road, Old Dover Road, and Norway Plains Road that need them.

Mr. Sylvain asked that staff remind the Board of the criteria on sidewalks when an application in before them.

V. Update on Chapter 50 (Stormwater) – Discussion with Assist. City Engineer

Mr. Friend-Gray explained what the stormwater permit is and explained that when the Board grants waivers they are for the site plan or subdivision and not directly for Chapter 50 its self.

VI. Update from Economic Development Department

Ms. Pollard explained a few of the things her department has been working on over the last year. She said they have been working on the Riverwalk Committee, Wayfinding, and they have renewed their contract with Buxton.

Mr. May asked how many people are employed in Rochester. Ms. Pollard said there are approximately 14,000.

Mr. Sylvain called a recess at 7:33pm

Mr. Sylvain called the meeting back to order at 7:43pm

VII. Discussion and recommendation on Zoning Amendment for Density

Ms. Pollard said the REDC made a recommendation that density be changed from 5,000 sq.ft. to 500 sq.ft. She said the challenge right now is getting someone to invest in a vacant building and we need to make it attractive or developers won't come. Ms. Pollard said one example is the Kelly building, at current density it

would only allow for one residential unit but at 500 sq ft it would allow for seventeen. Mr. Grant added that there are a lot of requirements that go into adding units so there probably won't be seventeen. Councilor Varney said the City Council recommended changing the left side of North Main Street up to Subway to Downtown Commercial and changing the right side up to Holy Rosary Church to Downtown Commercial. He added the density change would only affect the downtown commercial area. Mr. Grant explained how parking would work and went through a list of buildings that are currently for sale and the number of units they might be able to support. Mr. Sylvain asked if both the Fire Department and Police Departments were okay with the proposed change; Mr. Grant said they both were.

There was a discussion regarding parking. Mr. Walker said he feared all the municipal parking would be taken if they put in that many units.

Ms. Dwyer asked how strong the demand is for apartments in the downtown area. Ms. Pollard said all the residential units at 1 Wakefield Street are full and there is a waiting list. She went on to say they have developers interested but the obstacles are too big right now.

A motion was made by Mr. May and seconded by Mr. Starkweather to recommend the change to 500 square feet. The motion carried unanimously.

VIII. Annual Meeting

A. Election of Officers

Mr. Campbell opened the nominations.

Mr. Walker nominated Mr. Sylvain for Chair, seconded by Mr. Kozinski.

A motion was made by Mr. Walker and seconded by Mr. May to cease nominations. The motion carried unanimously.

The vote was taken unanimously in favor of Mr. Sylvain as Chair.

Mr. Sylvain nominated Mr. Walker for Vice Chair, seconded by Mr. Kozinski.

Mr. Starkweather nominated himself for Vice Chair, seconded by Mr. Sullivan.

A motion was made by Mr. Collopy and seconded by Mr. Walker to cease nominations. The motion carried unanimously.

A ballot vote was taken in favor of Mr. Walker as Vice Chair.

Mr. Walker nominated Mr. Kozinski for Secretary, seconded by Mr. Sylvain.

A motion was made by Mr. Walker and seconded by Mr. May to cease nominations. The motion carried unanimously.

The vote was taken unanimously in favor of Mr. Kozinski as Secretary.

The officers are as follows:

Nel Sylvain, *Chair*
Dave Walker, *Vice Chair*
Matthew Kozinski, *Secretary*

B. Review of 2017

Mr. Campbell reviewed some of the applications and Zoning Ordinance amendments that were before them in 2017

C. Plans for 2018

Mr. Campbell provided the Board with a memo outlining everything that Staff will be working on in 2018.

IX. Other Business

Mr. Friend-Gray said there are three projects that are problems and he and the Planning Staff are working with the Legal Department to pull the surety for them. He said the Board needs to follow through and also revoke the subdivision approval.

Mr. Campbell said that if the surety for a project is insufficient if the developer hasn't responded within 60 days the Board can revoke the approval.

There was a brief discussion regarding putting a lien on property if a developer doesn't put up additional surety.

Mr. Sullivan asked if staff has performance guarantee agreements signed for each of the projects. Mr. Campbell said yes and the legal department is reviewing them.

X. Adjournment

A motion was made by Mr. Kozinski and seconded by Ms. Dwyer to adjourn at 9:25 p.m. The motion carried unanimously.

Respectfully submitted,

Crystal Galloway,
Planning Secretary