

**STURBRIDGE PLANNING BOARD
MINUTES OF
TUESDAY, TUESDAY APRIL 24, 2018
CENTER OFFICE BUILDING**

Ms. Gibson-Quigley called the regular meeting of the Planning Board to order at 6:30 PM.

Ms. Gibson-Quigley noted the members present:

Present: Charles Blanchard (arrived 6:40)
Russell Chamberland
James Cunniff
Penny Dumas (arrived 6:35)
Heather Hart
Sandra Gibson-Quigley, Chair
Susan Waters, Clerk

Also Present: Jean M. Bubon, Town Planner
Rebekah DeCoursey, Administrative Assistant
Frank Bicchieri, Bertin Engineering
John Riel, Architect
Douglas Rawan, Developer

Ms. Gibson-Quigley opened the meeting read the agenda.

APPROVAL OF MINUTES

Motion: Made by Mr. Chamberland to approve the draft minutes of April 10, 2018
2nd: Ms. Waters
Discussion: None
Vote: 4 – 0 – 1 (Mr. Cunniff)

**INFORMAL PRESENTATION AND DISCUSSION OF REDEVELOPMENT AT
9 HOLLAND ROAD**

Frank Bicchieri and John Riel presented the project on behalf of the developer. This project is to be proposed at 9 Holland Road, the current location of an existing mill building. The site is roughly 8.5 acres in size, with 4.5 acres currently developed. This project would be on the 4.5 acre portion of the site. The remaining land is mostly wooded and would remain as such. There is roughly a 10' elevation drop to the Quinebaug River from Holland Road.

The proposal includes two buildings. One would be larger and three stories in height. There would be drive under parking, entrance in the rear, at basement level; first story office space; second and third story condominiums. The second building would be single story and hold retail space, including a potential restaurant or café. The building is located in the Commercial Tourist District and the site has been identified as a gateway into Sturbridge. The final part of this proposal includes a Riverwalk.

This presentation is a rough concept plan for the site. Mr. Bicchieri stated that the plans the Board is seeing will have a lot more detail if this project moves forward. Currently the project team is looking for a general understanding of how the Board feels about the plan. The main building design would require a special permit for the height and with the proximity to the river they understand best stormwater management practices will need to be taken.

Mr. Bicchieri stated that for the Riverwalk, they intend to put it close to the river in accordance with all state and local regulations. The Riverwalk would include paths, seating, and an outdoor café at the retail building. There is the possibility of connecting the Riverwalk with the Grand Trunk Trail, which is located south of the project site. The path would be paved and gravel for universal access.

In the Commercial Tourist District, special permit is allowed for height over 35'. The proposed building has two towers that will extend beyond this; the majority of the building will be within the 35' height allowed by right. The fire department will review site plans to be sure that there is adequate access to the site for the necessary equipment. The Wetland Protection Act does not allow new buildings within 50' of a natural resource area and there is a 25' no new disturbance local bylaw regulation. To mitigate stormwater runoff with the change elevation of the site from Holland Road to the river there are several large detention basins on site that will be designed with appropriate plantings to help increase water quality.

The Board had the following questions, comments, and concerns:

- Proposed materials are real brick veneer with standard asphalt pavement on the parking.
- The current access to the site on Route 20 would be closed off, possibly left gated for emergency access.
- The third floor is roughly half the size of the second floor (due to parking constraints). The second floor would have roughly 16 units, and the third floor to have 8 units.
- There is a proposed roof deck on the southern roof top for potential condo owners. The option of a green roof was also explored, but there is a large cost increase to structurally support a green roof.
- The improvements to both the site and the streetscape would be wonderful to see. There is the potential to connect with the Blackington Building and existing trails in the area.
- When final plans are submitted, the Board would like to see a height comparison to the Blackington Building. Due to the fact that 9 Holland Road has a large elevation change, the additional height of the proposed new building above the by-right 35' height may not even be perceived as much taller when passing by at road level.

Mr. Rawan spoke on behalf of the project; he would like to see this site with great potential become something that will bring numerous benefits to the town. Conversations with the Planning and Conservation Departments has allowed this project to evolve in a way that follows local Bylaw regulations, supports the design and development goals of the

Commercial Tourist District, and presents the opportunity to better connect the community with the river.

At this stage in the project, the Board did not have any major concerns with the concept design plans presented at the meeting. It would be a vast improvement at the site. As with any project, there are notable concerns and constraints of the project that will be reviewed and addressed during the Site Plan Review process.

TOWN PLANNER UPDATE

- ✓ The Open Space and Recreation Public Forum was a success. There was a great turn out and there was great feedback from residents. Thank you to all that attended and/or took the survey. Winners of the Photo Contest are posted on the Open Space Committee Webpage.
- ✓ The Planning Department and Open Space Committee is in the process of finalizing the Open Space Plan and a draft should be ready for review in a few weeks.
- ✓ The Planning Department is orchestrating the upgrade of their permitting software. It will take roughly 6-7 months to implement. The new software will allow residents to submit plans online, make payments online, and help reduce paper.
- ✓ May 15th there will be a Public Forum and Presentation on the Green Communities and Stretch Code at 6:30 pm in the Town Hall Veteran's Meeting Room.
- ✓ May 16th the Community Preservation Committee will be holding a public meeting to study the needs, possibilities and resources of the community at 7:00 pm at the Town Hall Veteran's Meeting Room.
- ✓ Next meeting date: May 8th

On a motion made by Mr. Blanchard and seconded by Ms. Hart, and voted 7 - 0, the meeting adjourned at 7:40 PM.