

SANFORD PLANNING BOARD MINUTES
MEETING November 14, 2012 – 7:00 P.M.
Town Hall Annex Third Floor Chambers

MEMBERS PRESENT: Kelly Tarbox, Chair
Lela Harrison, Vice Chair
David Mongeau, Secretary (arrived at 7:06)
Joseph Herlihy
Robert Hardison
John McAdam
Matthew Treadwell

MEMBERS ABSENT: None

STAFF PRESENT: James Q. Gulnac, AICP, Planning & Development Director
Charles Andreson, P.E., Town Engineer
Michael Casserly, P.E., Assistant Engineer

STAFF ABSENT: Barbara Bucklin, Administrative Assistant (w/notice)

I. CALL TO ORDER

Chair Tarbox called the meeting to order at 7:00 P.M.

II. PUBLIC HEARINGS

1. **File #11-12-R: Rockwell Investment Group, LLC, c/o John Hutchins**, Corner Post Land Surveying, Inc., 2 Mill Street, Springvale, Maine.

Chair Tarbox called for a representative to present the application.

John Hutchins, Corner Post Land Surveying, Inc., representing the applicant showed the original plan to the Board and gave a brief overview of some of the issues that staff members and committee members had such as building design, emergency vehicle access, drainage and runoff, parking, etc. He then explained some of the changes made to the project design:

- Building design changes – 1 building increased in number of units and stories, 1 building decreased in number of units; roof pitch; smaller building footprint
- Gained recreation area
- Direct access off the parking lot
- Changed walkway location
- Changed the drainage system

Chair Tarbox asked if there were entrances/exits on the backside of the building; Mr. Hutchins said there was and explained where they were located and that the main entrance to the building was accessed by the parking lot.

Chair Tarbox asked if there were any questions from Board members; there were not.

Staff member Gulnac said there were copies of the design committee's report if the Board members had not received them before the meeting.

Chair Tarbox asked if anyone present wanted to speak in favor of the application.

Fred Smith, a resident of Springvale asked if there were any playgrounds being proposed in the recreation area for kids to play in and if the property is secured by fencing so residents of the complex won't wander onto neighboring property.

Mr. Hutchins said there wasn't any playground equipment being proposed but the field area was going to be left in a natural state. He then said that the property is outlined by trees that act as a natural barrier.

Chair Tarbox asked if anyone present wanted to speak against the application.

Roger Dearborn, an abutter on Elm Street asked if anybody had done a study on the impact of people and traffic the project would have on the neighborhood and where the dumpsters would be located.

Mr. Hutchins showed where the dumpsters would be located on the property but said that the location is subject to change.

Mr. Dearborn also asked if propane tanks were going to be used. He was concerned about seeing tanks from his house. Mr. Hutchins replied that underground propane tanks were going to be used.

Roland Cote, an abutter on Goodwin Street said he was concerned about the following:

- density of the area
- in 4-5 years these buildings would become low-income rentals
- still feels there would be a problem with traffic
- doesn't believe we need more rental units in Sanford/Springvale with +/- 200 apartments available in the area

Mr. Cote explained his reasons behind his concerns:

- density – he feels that the area is already populated enough
- low-income – there are already areas in the neighborhood that have had problems and needed to have the police called
- traffic – he believes the increase in traffic will become a safety hazard
- number of units – he thinks that 17 units is too much and feels that a good compromise would be to allow only 10 units on the property

Mr. Cote asked the Board to think about the residents in the neighborhood before considering approval of the project as presented with 17 units. He, along with other residents in the area, feels that is too much of an increase for the area.

Chair Tarbox asked about the number of parking spaces for the project. Mr. Hutchins said that 30 spaces are being proposed, which is the required number of spaces per the ordinance. Mr. Hutchins said that a traffic study has been done and Mike Casserly, town engineer, has reviewed it. He then addressed the issue of density and the number of vacant units by saying that newer apartments that are appealing do not have trouble staying rented and he feels these units qualify, and said that these apartments are less dense than the existing neighboring apartment buildings.

Board member McAdam asked Mr. Hutchins how many single-family houses could be built on the property if that was being proposed instead of the apartment complex. Mr. Hutchins replied that four (4) houses could be built on the same property. Chair Tarbox said that more than two bedrooms could be put into each house built; Mr. Hutchins agreed and added that he knew of no limit to the amount of bedrooms that could be put into a single family home.

James Gulnac, Planning Director, added to the discussion of density and it is noted that four (4) duplex buildings, totaling eight (8) individual dwelling units could be built on this particular property. Discussion followed.

Chair Tarbox confirmed that all access would be from Payne Street and that access to the units would not be allowed from Mill Street. Mr. Hutchins said that the access from Mill Street would be for emergency purposes only or unless the other entrance is blocked for some reason, but other than that the Mill Street access route would be gated and locked.

Chair Tarbox asked if there were any other comments before the public hearing was closed.

Mr. Smith would like to know which neighborhood was used to compare this proposal to in relation to density. Mr. Hutchins used a combination of multi-family lots to get his comparison, all the lots can be seen from the property, and the lots are not contiguous.

Melanie, a resident of Payne Street is concerned about the loss of trees, grass, etc. that will be replaced by concrete, buildings, traffic, trash, people, etc. She also does not want to see the buildings; she would like to see the natural view that is there right now.

She also said she went on Craigslist to check out the number of apartments and homes available for rent in the Sanford/Springvale area. There were 100 available for rent in the area, and combine this with the 143 apartments being built in the old mills totals over 200 units available to rent compared to the 32 jobs, also on Craigslist, that are listed in the area.

Melanie asked if a traffic study was done by the Notre Dame church as well. She said that this is a bad intersection and there are many accidents. The only good thing she can see with this project is that the town will make some money off of taxes and other things and the owner will make some money as well, but she doesn't see any benefit to be added to the neighborhood.

Melanie finished by asking the Board to consider the impact this project will have on the neighborhood before voting.

Denise, who lives with Loraine St. Pierre (mother) at the beginning of Beaver Hill Road, will be right behind the project. She asked if the applicant knew of the clientele of the house he just purchased. She wanted to know the type of people the applicant would be renting to.

Chair Tarbox said that the questions the Board is addressing right now are related to the project and the issues she (Denise) is raising aren't something the Board has control over.

Denise said that she believes drugs are being sold out of the house that is currently there, is concerned about the little girl that lives in the house with the type of activity going on all hours of the night and the number of men that are in and out of the house. It was recommended that she speak to someone at the police department because this is not something the Planning Board can help her with.

Janet Cloutier, a resident of Payne Street, is concerned about the traffic – especially at the Notre Dame intersection. She also asked where the overflow of vehicles from visitors would park. She said that Payne Street already has a lot of cars parked on the side of the road. It was determined that on-street parking is also available on Beaver Hill Road.

Bruce Fowler, a resident of the area, said the project looks and sounds good but wonders who will benefit from it, because the neighborhood will not – only the developer would. The current residents will have to deal with more traffic, additional kids in the neighborhood, and more congestion.

Chair Tarbox asked if any others would like to speak.

Roger Dearborn added that he believes the real problem is the number of units being proposed. He feels that if the number of units decreased, the design problems could be about discussing how to make the buildings more energy efficient instead.

Chair Tarbox asked if there was anyone else that would like to comment; there were none.

Staff member Gulnac wanted to add something to the public hearing. Mr. Gulnac thought it might be beneficial for Board members to do a site visit. If the Board decides to do this, he suggests tabling the public hearing. Discussion followed.

Chair Tarbox asked Board members if they would like to do a site visit. After a brief discussion, it was decided to schedule a site walk for November 16, 2012 at 7:00AM.

Chair Tarbox tabled the public hearing until the next Planning Board meeting being held on December 5, 2012.

Discussion took place to decide if the Board should go into work session to discuss the project details now or to wait until after the site visit. Mr. Gulnac explained an item that will need to be discussed when the item is brought into a work session and that is the issue of the project having two front setbacks due to the corner lot. Discussion followed.

It was decided to postpone the work session until after the site walk.

III. OLD BUSINESS

Since the Board postponed the work session, there were no old business items.

IV. APPROVAL OF MINUTES

There were no minutes ready for approval.

V. PLANNING DIRECTOR'S REPORT

Staff member Gulnac told the Board that he will be introducing his land stewardship plan in late December, will schedule a joint meeting between the Planning Board and the new city council in early January to review the stewardship plan so the proposal can finish going through the process for approval of an ordinance change.

Mr. Gulnac also informed the Board that Mr. Elwell's contract zone request was denied by the council at last night's (November 13, 2012) council meeting.

VI. ADJOURN

The meeting adjourned at 8:00 PM.