

**DRAFT
Minutes
Hartford Planning Commission
May 23, 2022**

**THIS MEETING WAS CONDUCTED IN COMPLIANCE WITH
THE VERMONT OPEN MEETING LAW
WITH ELECTRONIC PARTICIPATION**

Present: John Reid, Chair, Bruce Riddle, Vice Chair, Toby Dayman, Robin Adair Logan, Dillon Bianchi, John Heath, Colin Butler, Kim Souza, Selectboard Liaison, Lori Hirshfield, Planning and Development Director, and Jo-Ann Ells, Zoning Administrator

Absent: None

John Reid read the Remote Meeting Script and took a roll call.

Administrative Matters

1. Minutes

Toby Dayman moved to approve the minutes of April 25, 2022 with one correction. Colin Butler seconded, and the motion passed unanimously.

2. Administrative Permits

Jo-Ann Ells reviewed two administrative permits:

- Standard Tattoo Company-moved to site of former Wave Reviews
- Tip Top Tire- addition of storage structures

3. Availability for the next Public Hearing

Bruce Riddle stated that he was unavailable for the hearing scheduled for June 27, 2022.

4. Public comment

Lori Dickenson stated that since this is a hearing of the Hartford Planning Commission only residents should be allowed to speak.

It was noted that interested parties (including business owners) would be asked for comments first and then the general public. John Reid noted Lori's concern. Marie Alvin commented that it was not fair to hear from people who do not live in town. John commented that the Planning Commission is empowered to hear from anyone the Commission feels their testimony will be helpful.

Jo-Ann Ells noted that she needed people to give their mailing address so she could mail Decisions to people who participated in the Hearing.

Public Hearing

John Reid opened the Public Hearing, read the remote script, took a roll call, administered the oath, asked that people giving testimony state their name and mailing address, explained the hearing process, interested party rule and definition, and asked that the public direct comments and questions to the Commission and not the applicants.

John emphasized that a lot of testimony had been received already and asked that participants limit testimony to new information.

1. Application #22-14 by Daniel and Jessica Weintraub and Carolyn Braznell (owners applicants) for approval of a boundary line adjustment between lots 12-7065-000 and 12-7066-000, 144 and 172 Robert Frost Lane, in the Quechee Lakes Planned Development.

Nate Stearns was present to represent the applicant.

Jo-Ann Ells reviewed the application.

Nate commented that the intent of the application is to match property boundaries to how areas of lawn are being used.

There was no public comment or questions/comments from the Planning Commission.

Bruce Riddle moved to close the Public Hearing. Dillon Bianchi seconded, and the Public Hearing was closed.

Bruce Riddle moved to approve the application with the one typographical correction. Dillon Bianchi seconded, and the motion passed unanimously.

2. Application #22-12 by St. Paul's Episcopal Church (owner) and Twin Pines Housing Trust (applicant) for Preliminary approval of a Planned Development under section 260-47 of the Hartford Zoning Regulations on proposed lot 43-0074-001, 747 Hartford Avenue, in a VR-C zoning district. (Continued from April 25, 2022)

Andrew Winter and Nate Stearns were present.

Andrew noted that they are seeking preliminary approval of a Planned Development. He reviewed a Power Point Presentation.

Andrew explained that they had met with Marie Alvin to discuss providing additional images as shown on slides #2-5.

Nate Stearns reviewed slide #6 regarding open space. He reviewed the definition of open space, noted that the Zoning Regulations do not require open space to be usable or available for active use, stated that a Supreme Court Decision regarding interpreting Zoning Regulations had been provided to the Commission, and read excerpts from the Town Plan encouraging infill development.

Nate reviewed the proposed parking and shared parking on slide #7.

Nate reviewed infill development on slide #8.

Nate commented that the Town Plan encourages a density bonus for infill development on lots with municipal services. He explained that they could request 14 units with more bedrooms without a density bonus as a Conditional Use, but they are seeking 18 one-bedroom units to serve their target population. He added that he believed the application meets both the Town Plan and Climate Action Plan.

Andrew Winter reviewed slide #9 explaining that the housing with supportive services model has been successful at Parkhurst in Lebanon, NH.

John Reid asked for Public Comment

Marie Alvin commented that the photographs on slide #8 appeared out of proportion.

Marie shared four photographs of other projects done by Twin Pines Housing. She stated that the proposed building was out of character with the neighborhood, and that the multiple applications by Twin Pines and The Haven caused confusion. She asked if people who were previously homeless lived at the applicant's project on Wentworth Way. Andrew Winter responded that 25% of the residents at Wentworth Way were formerly homeless or at risk of being homeless.

Marie stated that she thought the proposed project should provide housing for families, not single people, that there was not enough parking for residents and guests, and the embankment should not be counted as open space.

Michael Redmond introduced himself as the Director of The Haven. He explained that residents of the adult shelter (Hixon House) could move from the shelter to the multi-unit dwelling. To offer an example of potential residents he shared that in Hixon House currently there are 4 people who are working, 1 person waiting for a job to start, 1 person searching for a job, 1 person with a temporary disability, 1 retired person, and 1 person without any current plans.

Jess Bowen stated that she was concerned with the applications by Twin Pines and The Haven and worried someone would get hurt. She expressed frustration from a letter she received from The Haven asking people to write letters of support and shared that her daughter had several scary encounters with people, one who had just left The Haven. She commented that she wished The Haven would address safety concerns and that the letter

she received from them felt manipulative. She expressed concern regarding the proximity to schools, density, and parking. She noted she understood the Planning Commission has criteria to follow when deciding on an application and asked that they consider what happens when people leave the campus.

Leslie Black stated that she is a resident of the neighborhood and member of St. Paul's Church. She urged the Commission to support the project noting it would provide 18 people with housing. She added that Twin Pines has experience and the location adjacent to The Haven improves the chances for success.

Lori Dickerson told the Commission that she lived on Goudreau Street in the past. She stated that she did not see where the plan addresses mental illness or drug addiction. She expressed concern with the growth of The Haven over the years and stated that 18 units was improper for the location.

Sherry West stated that she did not support the project, would prefer to see housing for families and stated that the structure does not fit in the neighborhood.

Kerry Heavisides stated that she shared Jess Bowen's concerns and asked that the existing safety concerns be addressed.

Scott Neal stated that he was excited about the project and has spoken with single homeless people in the past who are desperate for housing. He added that housing is key to health. He agreed that existing safety concerns need to be addressed.

Michelle Boleski stated that the project was needed, but it is too big, there is not enough parking, and it is lacking green space. She reminded the Commission that the application was previously denied in part regarding the requirements for a density bonus and noted that nothing had changed regarding this criteria. She added that there are no other three-story buildings on Hartford Avenue and wondered if the Commissioners had done a site visit.

Susanne Abetti stated that she has been a supporter of The Haven in the past and was shocked by the testimony regarding safety. Noting Susanne was not an Interested Party, John Reid asked her to wait to testify until after Interested Parties had spoken.

Heidi Duto stated that she wondered if the hill could support the structure, that the amenities on the first floor sounded like a shelter could be run there, and questioned where people would go when they leave the property.

Linda Miller stated that she agreed with Lori Dickerson's statements and added that the structure was out of character with the neighborhood, and expressed support if the building was limited to two stories, with 14 units for families.

Susanne Abetti stated that the campus had an institutional feel, was too big, and thought a building with two stories with 14 units for families would be better.

FX Flynn told the Commission that they were faced with a tough decision and observed that with climate change additional pressure for more and larger housing development would be seen in the future. He expressed support for the project.

Doug Heavisides expressed concern with the location of the project, the density, and the use of the word “campus” to describe the project and The Haven.

Marcy Bartlett stated that she supports the Haven but thinks it is getting too big. She asked the Commission to deny the application and for the applicant to look to locate in an area with less residents such as the area across from the VA hospital. She stated that she shared concerns expressed regarding safety.

John Haffner expressed support for the project and asked the Commission to plan thoughtfully to provide needed housing.

Margo Howland characterized the project as valuable, but in the wrong location. She stated that two stories with 14 units would be better. She acknowledged that the application was being confused with a pending application by The Haven.

Lannie Collins stated that this type of development is not what the neighbors planned on when they moved into the area.

Becky Chollet noted that comments seemed to be focused on the pending application by The Haven. She stated that she supports the project but is concerned with the number of safety concerns expressed by the neighbors.

The Commission took a brief break.

Bruce Riddle questioned why the building couldn't be longer and two stories.

Dillon Bianchi stated that the parking was very confusing.

John Health agreed that the proposed parking, the traffic and parking study by Wall Group, and testimony about parking was confusing. He expressed concern that there is no room for overflow or guest parking. He voiced concern with the testimony regarding safety issues, and thought it was premature to decide on the application without understanding the full impact on the neighborhood.

Colin Butler stated that he continued to be concerned with density and lack of green space. He noted it was hard to attribute existing safety concerns to a proposed project. He added that the Planning Commission has a responsibility to work on the issue of homelessness with the surrounding towns. John Reid noted that the housing chapter of the Town Plan is being revised.

Toby Dayman commented that he had been thinking about how cities grow, and that the growth of The Haven's campus might need to be limited at some point. He noted that parking needs to be clarified. He commented that the reported behavior in the area needs to be addressed. He added that he was not sure that there would be adequate parking in the future if the units were not operated as described.

John Reid commented that the application is linked with future/pending applications by The Haven with regard to parking and that additional information regarding parking is needed to move forward. He noted that he did not like that the counts for the Wall parking study were limited, did not include the pending application by The Haven or their temporary structures.

Dillon Bianchi agreed that linking parking to other application is confusing.

Nate Stearns reviewed details regarding shared parking. He noted that 18 parking spaces would be dedicated to the multi-unit dwelling and on average only 6 cars are parked at the Parkhurst development. Andrew Winter noted that as long as Twin Pines is around the development, it will remain affordable housing. He added that one parking space will be provided for each unit and that Twin Pines has found this to be more than adequate for similar projects.

Nate Stearns noted that information on traffic parking is provided in the Wall study as well as from counts done by The Haven. He reviewed the proposed shared parking arrangements (which is part of a future/pending applications).

Toby Dayman commented that the parking scenarios are hard to follow.

Bruce Riddle commented that the applications assume that St. Paul's does not grow.

Toby Dayman added it also assumes that no Church activities occur during the week.

Nate Stearns commented that the Wall Study looked at the Church and The Haven sites.

Andrew Winter commented that The Haven and St. Paul's could negotiate parking if the Church needs additional spaces in the future.

John Reid asked if the applicant had considered a two-story building. Andrew Winter explained that they had not considered a two-story building because they were trying to keep the building away from the neighbors. He added that the proposed building sits down on the site.

Bruce Riddle questioned why the building could not be moved further to the south. Andrew Winter commented that they wanted to provide a smoking shelter and bike racks on the south side away from the neighbors to the north.

Robin Adair Logan stated that she likes the more traditional design of the building and is not as concerned with parking. She said she is moved as a mother and grandmother by the testimony regarding safety concerns. She stated that she believes in the missions of Twin Pines and The Haven, and noted that concerns are not related to the missions of these organizations. She stated she did not think this is the right location for the project.

Bruce Riddle commented that while this is not a perfect project, he is inclined to approve it because he did not believe it would have a lot of impact on the neighborhood. Dillon Bianchi concurred.

John Heath stated that he feels the project is too big for the site, out of character with the area, and not in harmony with the area. He noted that while the project is modeled after Parkhurst, that site is very different. He acknowledged that housing needs are real, but the project should be in an area with similar scale buildings, or it should be changed to a two-story building with 14 units. He voiced concerns with the safety issues that had been raised and commented that it is premature to approve the application until safety issues are addressed.

Colin Butler commented that he agreed with Bruce's statement that the project is not perfect. He stated that given the new renderings he is not as concerned with the character of the area and that he did not see how the project has anything to do with safety in the neighborhood which is different for the pending application by The Haven.

Toby Dayman stated that 18 units will give people stable housing. He noted that he believes that parking will work for this application.

John Reid expressed concerns with the testimony the neighbors had shared regarding safety. He said that he did not see how existing safety concerns could be attributed to this application and that the application could improve safety.

Bruce Riddle moved to close the Public Hearing. Colin Butler seconded, and the Public Hearing was closed.

Colin Butler made a motion to approve the application. Bruce Riddle seconded. The motion passed 5-2 with Robin Adair Logan and John Heath opposed because they do not believe the application provided an environment in harmony with surrounding development.

Colin Butler moved to open the Public Hearings on application #22-13, #22-11, and #22-15 and continue the Hearing to June 13, 2022 at 6:00 p.m. Dillon Bianchi seconded, and the motion passed unanimously.

Adjournment

At 10:10 p.m., Bruce Riddle moved to adjourn. Dillon Bianchi seconded, and the Hearing was adjourned.

8. 05-23-22

Respectively Submitted,

Toby Dayman, Clerk