

**Approved
Minutes
Hartford Planning Commission
May 20, 2024**

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

Present: John Reid, Bruce Riddle, Toby Dayman, Dillon Bianchi, John Heath, Colin Butler, Dylan Kreis, Kim Souza, Selectboard Liaison, and Jo-Ann Ells, Zoning Administrator

Absent: None

John Reid read the hybrid meeting script, and took a roll call.

Administrative Matters

1. Public Comment

None

2. Minutes

Bruce Riddle moved to approve the minutes of April 15, 2024. Dillon Bianchi seconded, and the motion passed unanimously.

3. Administrative Permits

Jo-Ann Ells reviewed the following projects that received administrative permits:

- 657 Hartford Ave. Convert apartment to office
- Snow Village condominiums. Replace & enlarge deck
- Landscaping change, Prospect /Maple St.

4. Act 250 Applications

Jo-Ann Ells noted the following project was under review by Act 250:

- Attached garage and interior renovations, Quechee West Hartford Road

5. Town Plan Steering Committee update

No Update

6. Regional Planning Commission update

Bruce Riddle reported that the RPC has released the first draft of an energy plan. He noted he sent a copy to Hartford's Environmental Sustainability Coordinator, Dana Clawson. John Reid asked Bruce to share the report with the Chair of the Energy Commission, Jesse Pollard. Bruce Riddle added that the RPC has also shared revisions to the transportation chapter of the Regional Plan.

7. Climate Action Plan update

John Reid noted that the Climate Action Committee is getting ready to review the Hazard Mitigation Plan with consultants.

8. Availability for the next Public Hearing.

John Heath and Bruce Riddle stated that they were not available for the June 24th Hearing. Dillon Bianchi stated that he might not be available.

Public Hearing

John Reid opened the Public Hearing, asked people to sign in, noted that the Hearing will not continue past 9:30PM unless agreed upon by the Commission, explained the Hearing process, asked that comments from the public be limited to 2 minutes given the length of the agenda, and administered the oath.

1. Application #24-03 by Matt P. Bucy III (owner/applicant) for approval of a lot line adjustment between lots 32-0085-000 and 32-0085-001, 434 and 436 Woodstock Road, Hartford, in a R-3 zoning district.

Matt Bucy was present.

Jo-Ann Ells gave a brief overview of the application including one correction.

Toby Dayman asked if access easements needed to be recorded. Jo-Ann Ells explained that this would occur if either lot is sold.

John Reid noted a typographical error.

There was no public comment.

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

Bruce Riddle moved to approve the application with the noted changes. Colin Butler seconded, and the motion passed unanimously.

2. Application #24-02 by Josh Jasmin, Sean Jasmin and Raymond Jasmin (owners/applicants) for Site Development Plan Approval under sections 260-45 of the Hartford Zoning Regulations for approval of a parking facility, lot 14-0015-000, 344 North Hartland Road, White River Junction, in a GCR zoning district.

Josh Jasmin, Sean Jasmin, and Skip Nalette were present.

Skip Nalette gave an overview of the project.

John Reid asked for confirmation that vehicles would be repaired and leave the lot so that it would not become a junkyard. Skip Nalette confirmed.

Toby Dayman requested that the proposed fir trees be 8'-10' high.

There was no public comment.

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

Bruce Riddle moved to approve the application with the noted changes. Colin Butler seconded, and the motion passed unanimously.

3. Application #24-04 by 12 Tremont Street, LLC (owner/applicant) for Preliminary Approval of a Planned Development under the Subdivision Regulations and section 260-47 of the Hartford Zoning Regulations for a Multi-Unit Dwelling, lot 09-0072-000, 1200 Christian Street, Hartford, in a R-3 zoning district.

Tim Sidore, Mike Davison, Jim Wasser, and Adam Morse were present.

Jo-Ann Ells noted that the application was for preliminary approval of a Planned Development. She added explained that the project also requires final approval of a Planned Development and Site Plan approval from the Planning Commission. In addition, Conditional Use Approval is required from the Zoning Board of Adjustment.

Tim Sidore introduced himself and stated that this company specializes in redevelopment and can quickly turn the building into dwelling units. He added that the traffic and density will be less than when the building was a nursing home.

Adam Morse reviewed the proposed parking along Brookside Drive. Colin Butler expressed concern with 90 degree parking spaces in this area. Jim Wasser explained that this is the accessible entrance to the building and accessible parking spaces should be available, noting parallel accessible units are not preferred.

Tim Sidore noted that there is an accessible parking space proposed near the entrance to on the lower level.

There was a discussion about accessible access to the building and parking.

Bruce Riddle asked if the applicant would be testing for radon. Tim Sidore stated that they would consider it.

Bruce Riddle asked what the applicant meant by “lifestyle community” as noted in the application.

Tim Sidore stated that this refers to a living environment with a slower pace, opposed to a downtown apartment.

Bruce Riddle stated that he was not convinced that the applicant had submitted adequate justification for a density bonus. He expressed concern with the lack of sidewalks and public transportation in the area. He noted that while he found the offer of a shared vehicle generous, people who do not drive may be stuck there. He noted that he read the letters from the public.

Tim Sidore stated that housing is needed in the area and the project is an opportunity to provide housing without needing to build a new building. He agreed that while the location might not work for everyone, it will work for many.

Jim Wasser explained that the building lends itself to small units, and with the high cost of construction, it would be hard to build an affordable project with a new building. He added that the financing that non-profit housing groups receive is not available to the applicant.

There was a brief discussion regarding how car sharing would work.

It was noted that legislation that becomes effective in December restricts the Planning Commission from requiring more than one parking space per unit in zoning districts served by municipal sewer and water that allows residential uses.

Dylan Kreis asked if parking spaces would be assigned. Tim Sidore stated that they would. There was a discussion regarding parking enforcement. Tim Sidore offered that there would be a number that residents can call 24/7 for assistance, e.g., a vehicle is parked in a resident’s assigned parking space.

There was a discussion about maximum occupancy of a unit and State law governing the topic.

Dillon Bianchi stated that he shared Bruce Riddle’s concerns regarding the density bonus.

Toby Dayman commented that he did not support 90 degree standard parking spaces along Brookside Drive, but thought accessible parking spaces could work. He added that he questioned if the proposed number of parking spaces was adequate.

John Heath asked about usable outdoor recreation/natural areas, noting the presence of wetlands on the property. Jim Wasser noted that there is a gazebo on the lot and that the applicant is working on the design of amenities including an area for picnic tables and a BBQ. He noted that a dog run area is proposed.

John Heath asked if a landscaping plan would be provided later. Jim Wasser confirmed it would.

There was a discussion regarding the State's definition of Affordable Housing. Tim Sidore confirmed that the affordable units would be permanent.

John Heath asked how the existing garage would be used. Tim Sidore stated that it will be used as a maintenance garage.

It was noted that a parking spaces for delivery vehicles needed to be provided.

Colin Butler asked if the car provided in the car share program would be rented. Tim Sidore stated that a nominal fee will be charged.

Colin Butler commented that there were not enough amenities proposed to support the requested density bonus. He added that he would prefer to see larger units and wants to see more amenities. He requested that the applicant contact Advance Transit to determine if they could add a bus stop. He concluded by stating that he wants to see the project move forward, but additional work needs to be done.

John Reid questioned the applicant's comment in the application materials and Finding #13 that the project is ... "conveniently located in proximity to neighboring Upper Valley communities and amenities" noting that the location seems isolated. He added that he would like to see a management plan for the natural areas.

John Reid asked for public comment.

Frank Klymn expressed concern that the project would change the character of the neighborhood. He noted that the nursing home was rarely full, and the project would result in a big increase in occupancy and traffic. He stated that he did not see how this helps the town, there is no room for people who have a second car, and cars might be parked on the road. He expressed concern with the impact on the deer nesting areas and access to the stream and pond. John Reid noted that there would be an open space management plan. Frank Klymn stated that the project was too big.

Dan Loskutoff expressed concern with access to the building, parking, circulation, flow of the project, and impact on the neighborhood.

Tim Sidore explained that experience with other similar developments is that typically only one person occupies the unit.

Tim Sidore offered that a call box to “buzz” people in to the building could be installed.

Colin Butler moved to continue the Hearing to the Commission’s June meeting. He withdrew his motion after some discussion.

Mark Detzer stated that he shared the concerns expressed regarding density and Jen Horn stated that she agreed.

Bruce Riddle apologized for needing to leave the meeting.

Jeff Arnold expressed concern with the lack of landscaping, and stated that he supported the proposed use for affordable housing.

Colin Butler moved to close the Public Hearing. Dillon Bianchi seconded, and the was closed.

Jo-Ann Ells reviewed changes to the Findings of Fact.

Colin Butler moved to approve the application with the noted changes. John Heath seconded, and the motion passed 5-1 with Dillon Bianchi opposed. Dillon stated that he did not find that the application met the requirements of sections 260-2 E or 260-2 G of the Subdivision Regulations.

4. Application #23-22 by Black Rock Investment LLC (owner/applicant) for Final Approval of a Subdivision involving a boundary line adjustment between lots 45-0243-000 and 45-0162-000, Sykes Mountain Avenue and Hickory Ridge, White River Junction, in R-2 and R1-M zoning districts.

Earle Simpson, Dennis Marquise, Kevin Worden, Paul Simon, Adam Wagnor, Irwin Perret Jr., and Irwin Perret Sr. were present.

Jo-Ann Ells noted that preliminary approval was granted in December of 2023.

Kevin Worden explained that the proposed boundary line has shifted since preliminary approval to allow the proposed building for the 48-unit dwelling to move away from the road.

John Reid noted one correction to the Findings of Fact.

There was no public comment.

Dillon Bianchi moved to close the Public Hearing. Colin Butler seconded, and the was closed.

Dillon Bianchi moved to approve the application with the noted change. Colin Butler seconded, and the motion passed unanimously.

5. Application #23-23 by Black Rock Investment LLC (owner/applicant) for Site Development Plan Approval under section 260-45 of the Hartford Zoning Regulations for 48 dwelling units in a Multi-Unit Building, proposed lot 45-0243-000, Sykes Mountain Avenue and Hickory Ridge, White River Junction, in a R1-M zoning district. (Continued from April 15, 2024)

Earle Simpson, Dennis Marquise, Kevin Worden, Paul Simon, Adam Wagnor, Irwin Perret Jr., and Irwin Perret Sr. were present.

Jo-Ann Ells noted a correction to the Findings of Fact and stated that the Commission had reviewed the application in December of 2023 and February of 2024.

Dennis Marquise noted that while the applicant is finishing some items with staff, they will need to talk to the Selectboard, and obtain State permits, the application is ready for the Planning Commission to act on.

John Reid asked if the Planning Commission needed to approve the height of the building. Jo-Ann Ells noted that the applicant is seeking an increase in height of the building based on the project meeting the requirements of an Affordable Housing Project as allowed by State Statute (24 V.S.A. 4412 (13)) and that the Planning Commission does not need to approve the request.

John Reid noted that he was concerned with safety surrounding the proposed fire pits. Paul Simon explained that they would be gas not wood and are located the required distance to structures per State Regulations. It was noted that timers could be added to the units so they would automatically turn off.

John Reid complimented the applicant on the landscape plan.

There was a discussion regarding the addition of landscaping at the bottom of the drainage swale.

Paul Simon reviewed the lighting plan.

Dylan Kreis asked if the leasing office in the building was limited to the units in the building. Adam Wagner confirmed.

There was no public comment.

Dillon Bianchi moved to close the Public Hearing. Colin Butler seconded, and the was closed.

Dillon Bianchi moved to approve the application with the noted changes. Toby Dayman seconded, and the motion passed unanimously.

6. Application #23-24 by Black Rock Investment LLC (owner/applicant) for Final Approval of a Planned Development under the Subdivision Regulations and section 260-47 of the Hartford Zoning Regulations for 192 dwelling units in four Multi-Unit Buildings, proposed lot 45-0162-000, Sykes Mountain Avenue and Hickory Ridge, White River Junction, in R-2 and R1-M zoning districts.

Earle Simpson, Dennis Marquise, Kevin Worden, Paul Simon, Adam Wagnor, Irwin Perret Jr., and Irwin Perret Sr. were present.

John Reid commented that the Master Plan does not include a lot of detail Jo-Ann Ells explained that it was an overall guide for development of the lot.

Colin Butler asked if the applicant expected that the general public would use the trail system. Dennis Marquise explained that the intent is to provide an amenity for the immediate neighborhood.

There was no public comment.

Dillon Bianchi moved to close the Public Hearing. Colin Butler seconded, and the was closed.

Dillon Bianchi moved to approve the application. Dylan Kreis seconded, and the motion passed unanimously.

7. Application #23-25 by Black Rock Investment LLC (owner/applicant) for Site Development Plan Approval under section 260-45 of the Hartford Zoning Regulations for 192 dwelling units in four Multi-Unit Buildings, proposed lot 45-0162-000, Sykes Mountain Avenue and Hickory Ridge, White River Junction, in a proposed Planned Development. (Continued from April 15, 2023)

Earle Simpson, Dennis Marquise, Kevin Worden, Paul Simon, Adam Wagnor, Irwin Perret Jr., and Irwin Perret Sr. were present.

Jo-Ann Ells noted several changes to the Findings of Fact.

Colin Butler noted a correction to Finding #27.

Paul Simon reviewed the lighting plan.

Dylan Kreis asked about including a stop sign near the project on the lower lot. Kevin Worden stated that there is a stop bar as you exit the 48-unit project and noted that the DPW approved the signage/markings.

Dylan Kreis asked if the entire project would be cleared in phase #1. Dennis Marquise stated that it would.

9. 05-20-24

At 9:30PM Colin Butler moved to continue the Hearing to 10PM. Dillon Bianchi seconded, and the motion passed unanimously.

There was no public comment.

Dillon Bianchi moved to close the Public Hearing. Colin Butler seconded, and the Hearing was closed.

Dillon Bianchi moved to approve the application with the noted changes. Colin Butler seconded, and the motion passed unanimously.

Adjournment

The Commission adjourned at 9:33 p.m.

Respectively Submitted,

Toby Dayman, Clerk

Planning Commission Terms

Toby Dayman 06-28-24
Colin Butler 07-12-24
Bruce Riddle 02-07-25
Dillon Bianchi 09-05-25
Dylan Kreis 6-26-26
John Reid 02-05-27
John Heath 03-11-27