



COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT COMMITTEE

Meeting Minutes Tuesday, November 29, 2016

CDC Members: Claudia King; Caleb Hemphill; Ned Kitchel
Staff: Nathan Poore, Theo Holtwijk, Amanda Stearns (for Item 3 only)
Others: Ford Reiche

Claudia started the meeting at 8:30 AM.

1. Review of Minutes

There were no draft minutes to review.

2. Minor Site Plan Amendment

Nathan explained the current requirements for projects to qualify for a minor site plan review by Town staff: a maximum lifetime expansion of 20% or 1,000 sf, whichever is less. He stated that with small buildings rental income is more limited and the ability to make site improvements required by a more formal review by the Planning Board or meeting the building setbacks of the VC1 district is more limited. He stated that the Town was requested by the owner of the former Pratt Abbott site to create more flexibility with the minor site plan amendment rule to increase the likelihood of that site to be leased instead of it staying vacant.

The CDC reviewed the three tiers of site plan review that involve building expansions. Nathan stated that the site's owner was looking to expand the 1,248 sf building with 850 sf. A separate cooler would not be included in the expansion calculation.

Ford Reiche, the owner of the Pratt-Abbott site, was introduced to the CDC.

Claudia stated that the CDC needed to do its due diligence relative to the Village Center standards, the Town's investment in Route 1, and the streetscape it was looking for, as the site in question was in a prime location and that she first wanted to hear from the CDC.

Caleb said that the Pratt-Abbott case was a good one for the CDC and represented a practical request. He said that the Town could do more to inject activity into Route 1, and should try to something work. Claudia felt the request cuts into the Town's standards.

Ned stated that the site in question represented a unique case and that he preferred a restaurant at that site. He felt it was the Town's role to accommodate a good, attractive project there that fits the site.

Ford stated that he could not guarantee a specific tenant, but felt that increased flexibility would allow him to get a better tenant.

Claudia stated that it would be an appropriate request to ask the owner to make positive infrastructure investments, such as curb cut modifications and stormwater improvements, as these were important to the Town's investment.

Ford stated that for a small property the clash between the costs involved in making significant site improvements compared to the ability to pay for them are accentuated compared to larger sites.

Claudia wondered if the Depot Road curb cut could be eliminated. Ford replied that in that case the only access to the site would be for northbound traffic on Route 1.

Ned asked if the Town had any curb cut rules and what the original use of the site had been. Nathan said the Town had access management rules. Ford stated that the original use was for Jordan's Baked Beef.

Claudia stated that she felt that Town had an interest to make better access on/to Depot Road, especially if there was more traffic using the site. Nathan stated that the Town had looked at the possibility for a new road in the road that would connect Depot Road all the way to Bangor Savings, with connections to/from all the properties along the way. This would be something similar to Hat Trick Drive. There was a high cost for this project and has not been pursued further at this time.

Claudia asked if the Town could financially participate in making curb cut improvements. Nathan said that the Town is limited in its use of public funds on private property, but that a credit enhancement TIF would be one possibility. He noted that a connection to the McDonald's driveway was perhaps the best solution from a traffic point of view. He wondered if a site walk would help the CDC appreciate the situation.

The CDC discussed both amendment concepts. Nathan stated that lot size may also play a factor in how well sites may be able to accommodate building expansions.

Ford stated that the ability for the Pratt Abbott building to expand would create an incentive for the tenant and the owner to improve the site. He felt that he as an owner had more to protect than the length of a lease term. He requested the Town pursue option A.

Claudia was wondering what the process would be to inform the Council. She sensed the CDC's interest to create some flexibility, but also to protect the Town's investment. Caleb felt that those two aspects were not exclusive of one another. Ned felt that something should absolutely be done to create flexibility as long as it met the desired esthetic.

Ford stated that a tenant could probably be a small restaurant. He said the building had been for lease for one year. He felt there was a huge interest in Falmouth. He commended the staff support he had experienced so far.

Nathan stated that staff was acutely aware of the conflict between maintaining standards and providing flexibility and the balance that was needed.

The CDC agreed to conduct a site walk on December 13 at 8:00 AM and then continue its meeting at 8:45 AM in Town Hall.

3. Review Contract Zoning for Foreside Estates

Nathan stated that he requested the Town's attorney to conduct some title work regarding possible access between Route 1 and Clearwater Drive. Theo stated that he had reached out to the property owners involved (People's United Bank, Morong Falmouth, Emery Waterhouse) as well as the Portland Water District.

The committee reviewed the November 22 draft findings as well as the feedback from Princeton Properties.

- A. Stearns asked to contact public safety departments (Police, Fire and Public Works) and request their input on street connectivity. The committee recognizes that the development of a street connection, at least from Route One to the project site, may have challenges but feel strongly that a

second means of egress at a minimum is necessary for a development of this size. They will review the input from other departments at the next meeting.

- A. Stearns to review the 2014 Economic Development Plan to look at housing aspects addressed in that report. Reference to the Plan in the findings should be made with regard to housing goals for the Town that are not articulated in the Comprehensive Plan. The Economic Plan was adopted by the Council.
- The committee recognizes that the details of the public benefit will be negotiated and finalized ultimately by the Council. They do have a concern that the applicant has not expressed a willingness to commit the existing 25 units for affordable housing. If these units come out of the program the number of units would drop to 4 out of 272 and that does not seem acceptable. One option is a monetary contribution per unit if they come out of the HUD program.

The committee also reminded themselves that the full Council will have an opportunity to place restrictions and conditions on the site development design. Of particular note was the change in type of parking (luxury apartment units with surface parking while current units have covered parking), amount of green space to be consumed by new surface parking, lack of additional amenities for the site, possible ring trail could be developed and building design.

A. Stearns will make the final revisions to the draft findings. The Committee scheduled the final approval of the findings for December 20, 2016.

4. **Next meeting** The committee will meet again on December 13 at 8:00 AM
5. **Adjournment** – The meeting was adjourned at 10:15 am.

Minutes prepared by Theo Holtwijk and Amanda Stearns
November 29, 2016