

FINAL

MINUTES
PLANNING BOARD DEVELOPMENT REGULATIONS SUBCOMMITTEE
Friday, May 22, 2020 – 12:30pm
REMOTE VIA MICROSOFT TEAMS
LebanonNH.gov/Live

Members Present: Joan Monroe, Tom Martz, Kathie Romano

Members Absent: Matthew Hall (Chair)

Staff present: Rebecca Owens (Associate Planner), David Brooks (Planning Director)

1. CALL TO ORDER:

Staff asked Ms. Monroe to act as Chair in the absence of Chair Hall's presence, which she accepted. Ms. Monroe called the meeting to order at 12:47pm. Ms. Monroe conducted attendance by roll call vote.

A. Review of meeting procedures and NH RSA 91-A "Right-to-Know" requirements.

Ms. Owens reviewed the requirements for remote meetings, including noting that all votes must be roll call votes and asked participants to identify themselves prior to asking questions or making comments.

2. APPROVAL OF MINUTES:

A. APRIL 24, 2020

A motion by Ms. Monroe to approve the April 24, 2020 Minutes.
Seconded by Ms. Romano.

Roll Call Vote:

*Members voting in favor included: Ms. Monroe, Ms. Romano, and Mr. Martz.
The vote on the Motion was unanimous (3-0). The Motion was approved.*

B. MAY 8, 2020

The Subcommittee agreed to table the consideration of the draft minutes until the next meeting as not everyone had had a chance to review them.

3. STUDY ITEMS:

A. Review potential amendments to Site Plan Review Regulations relative to Pedestrian and Bicyclist improvements

Ms. Owens identified four sections in the potential amendments that were identified for Subcommittee members to review in advance of the meeting, including under Section 6.5, sub-sections C. Orientation and Form (new), D. Access and Traffic (amended), E. Parking and Loading Areas (amended), and H. Bicycle Storage and Parking (new). The Subcommittee began reviewing where it left off after the May 8, 2020 meeting, on Section 6.5.C.

Subcommittee members agreed to change "Respond" as the leading verb in paragraph 1 to

“Orientation”, a noun that is consistent with the other paragraphs and more understandable to regulation users, although as Mr. Martz commented, “respond” and similar verbiage may be familiar to the architects who commonly manage many of the development applications reviewed by the City.

Subcommittee members expressed varying interpretations and favorability of the concept under Section 6.5.C.2, “Highlight the primary entrance”. The proposed intent of the standard, to make the active portion of buildings (e.g., storefronts and entrances) on a property visible to public areas (e.g., streets) was agreed upon as a helpful way to invite interest and invite economic engagement, as well as to make the walkability from public areas, like on-street sidewalks as convenient as possible between the entrance and public way. Ms. Monroe cited Best Buy and Price Choppers as examples of buildings with their “sides”, instead of entrances, facing the main road/frontage. Mr. Martz asked and Ms. Owens confirmed that the requirement would be applied to major renovations and new construction. Ms. Romano suggested changing the requirement to not apply to commercial plaza uses, or to update the wording from “The primary entrance(s) to the building shall be oriented toward the street on which the lot has frontage” to say “toward the public way” instead. Ms. Monroe agreed that it would help to make the language clearer for the public. Mr. Martz noted that a similar concept for architects and developers is to design developments and communities where “buildings talk to other buildings”.

There was discussion about what “frontage” means and Ms. Owens referred to the recently adopted amendment to the Zoning Ordinance that includes a definition for “principal frontage”. She also noted that this requirement complements the best practice for new construction to have vehicle parking located to the side and rear of buildings and not on the principal frontage in front of buildings. Ms. Romano also asked if it would help for this paragraph to be more specific about where it applies, such as in a downtown area rather than to a multifamily project. Ms. Monroe added that more specificity about treatment of existing or new construction developments that have internal roadways may be worth reviewing. Ms. Owens provided the example that corner entrances can be a way for shopping plazas that are L-shaped or U-shaped to highlight entrances so that they are visible and welcoming from both the internal roadway and public roadway (principal frontage).

David Brooks joined the meeting at approximately 2:00pm.

Subcommittee members accepted the addition of Section 6.5.C.3, “Adaptable entrance design”, following clarification of the requirement’s intent by Mr. Brooks. Mr. Brooks provided the examples of 195 Mechanic Street and Panera. He noted that each building has multiple entrances to various tenant spaces, in order to make the building on the whole more adaptable to future modifications. Mr. Brooks said that the idea is that you would have 3-4 possible entryways into a single building space so that there is future flexibility, in contrast to big box stores, which typically have one entrance and cannot as easily be reused.

Subcommittee members accepted the addition of the first three sentences under Section 6.5.C.4, “Parking structure design”. Mr. Martz spoke of a parking structure in Hanover, potentially with reference to West Wheelock Street, that demonstrates comparable intent. Ms. Romano also mentioned an example, which she emailed to Subcommittee members. Ms. Owens elaborated that the intent of having either some variation of uses in addition to structure parking, or to have some variation in the architecture of the structured parking to reduce the monolithic presence of such structures and to increase their overall property land value as parking is not as valued as many other uses.

Subcommittee members varied in opinions about the fourth sentence of Section 6.5.C.4, which requires, with various compliance path options, for garages to be minimized as part of building design along the principal frontage. Ms. Romano cited Quarry Hills condos as a development where such a requirement could not be applied. Mr. Martz noted that he understands the intent of the requirement but asked whether it could be a “should” instead of a “must” and if staff can provide examples that include single family homes and duplexes. Ms. Monroe indicated that she has followed practices for years that say housing is more people-friendly when the garage is not the majority of what you see, and can instead see the building access at the frontage, and that garages are less welcoming than features like porches. However she also understood Ms. Romano’s perspective and asked if this requirement might be brought to the rest of the Planning Board for consideration.

Subcommittee members were reminded by Mr. Brooks of the time before review began of Section 6.5.D. Access and Traffic.

B. Discussion of process for identifying and reviewing other potential amendments to Development Regulations

There was no discussion.

3. ADJOURNMENT:

***A Motion by Mr. Martz to adjourn the meeting.
Seconded by Ms. Romano.***

Roll Call Vote:

*Members voting in favor included: Ms. Monroe, Ms. Romano, and Mr. Martz.
The vote on the Motion was unanimous (3-0). The Motion was approved.*

The meeting was adjourned at 2:27 pm