Meeting Minutes, Monday, November 27, 2023

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4 5 6	Call to Order:	Chair Denis Hebert called the Nove at 6:00 p.m., followed by the pledge			
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8	Present:	Chair Denis Hebert; Vice-Chair Chri			
9 10		Members: Russ Cooke; Ben Johnso Selectmen's Representative, Bob B			
11		Krebs and Jane Kendall, Recorder			
12		Trebs and tane rendan, recorder			
13	Absent:	Board member, Jim Weiner, Alterna	ate Board members. Jill		
14		Semprini and Rick Stern;			
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16	Public Guests:	Attorney John Bosen; John Stebbin	s. and Joe Geoheghan,		
17		Partners with Tidemark; Town coun			
18		Town engineering consultant, Eric V			
19		Engineering; Jim Teetzle, CEO of V			
20		P.E. with Gregsak and Sons; John I	Bernier with Bernier		
21		Construction			
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23					
24	l) Work Session !	Discussions			
25	ja si Anthia ya				
26	A) Continued discussion regarding proposed zoning amendment and				
27	development proposal on the southwest side of Route 16, the Spaulding				
28	Turnpik	e and adjacent to Shattuck Way			
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30	Board member, Ben Johnson recused himself from deliberations as an abutter to				
31	the proposal. Chair Hebert said that Mr. Johnson could still comment as member of the				
32	public, but not as a Board member.				
33	Chair Hebert went through the procedures for public meetings, asking that				
34		ed to three minutes after the presenta			
35	Attorney Bosen went on to say that nursing homes were allowed in the				

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Commercial Zone, but not in the Office Zone, so they had submitted a packet for an

overlay district to allow senior living with an independent living, assisted living, and

memory care units on approximately ten acres owned in the Office Zone. Attorney

Bosen said there was little demand for office or manufacturing at this point, and there

was a high demand for senior living that would contribute to economic development,

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jobs, and increased tax revenue, so they thought this site would be a better fit for the use.

Attorney Bosen said they did not have a specific site plan yet, but envisioned state of the art senior living with little impact on municipal services, or the character of the town. Attorney Bosen added that there would be no school age children among the residents, and there would be no demand for theft requiring services from the police department.

Attorney Bosen said there was still plenty of time to have a public meeting and present the proposal to the town for the Town meeting in March 2024.

Town Planner, John Krebs passed out a timeline for Town Meeting deadlines with Thursday January 11, 2024 being the last day to post a public notice for first public meeting for a zoning amendment on Monday, January 22, 2024, and Thursday, January 25, 2024 being the last day to post the final notice for a public hearing on Monday, January 29, 2024, and Tuesday being the last day to present to the Town Clerk, so he was concerned that there was only a month and a half to make things happen.

Mr. Krebs also passed out information by the Rockingham Planning Commission (RPC) regarding a statute passed in the summer of 2023 that says that municipalities that allow an increase in population for senior housing developments may also establish workforce housing.

Mr. Krebs went on to say that the term nursing home may be different than 55 plus housing, and the proposed overlay district of 20 acres would allow healthcare facilities, nursing homes, retail, and restaurants, and could run over to other lots.

John Stebbins with Tidemark said they couldn't discriminate against someone's age if they needed memory care

Chair Hebert said the Ordinance lists a nursing home as licensed by the State of New Hampshire, but independent living doesn't require a license.

Chair Hebert said he was under the impression that the site would be for senior living, and although that would be true of the majority, it now sounded as if it would not be age restricted. Attorney Bosen said they had said at the last meeting that they wanted three levels of care at the previous meeting like the facility in Durham.

Mr. Krebs said the average age of people going into senior living was usually over 70 years old, but he was not sure how the statute addressed nursing homes and senior living.

Chair Hebert said he was concerned that the use could morph into residential apartments, and asked what the percentage of independent living would be compared to nursing care. Mr. Stebbins replied that most facilities divided the care units by one-third with slight variations, and that independent living was a newer term developed to allow someone to move out of their private home to senior living.

Attorney Bosen commented that nursing homes were allowed in the Commercial District, so they were not seeking anything that was not allowed in other areas of town.

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Chair Hebert read from Section 2 describing the Office District as being strategically located between the Commercial and Industrial Zones to provide a large geographical separation, as well as a separation from the Residential Zone.

Chair Hebert other uses like biotech, hotels, light manufacturing, and veterinary hospitals, etc. were also allowed in the Office Zone, but it could look like spot zoning if they allowed senior living, so they would have to allow the use in the entire zone, and they would open residential dwelling near the Industrial Zone, which they would be concerned with, so they were not likely to allow the overlay to the other side.

Attorney Bosen said he understood that was why Mr. Krebs had suggested limiting the overlay use to this side of Spaulding.

Mr. Cooke said his understanding of independent living was that a spouse would be in the adjoining nursing home. Mr. Stebbins said that could be, or they were not comfortable living alone anymore.

Vice-Chair Cross asked if the proposal would compare to Kittery Estates or Maplewood Estates on Back River Road with a single entrance, individual access to connecting apartments, a common dining room, and shuttle to medical services. Mr. Stebbins replied that it would be like Cornerstone, the senior living facility in Hampton that does have a van service, but would have one to three entrances common, not individual.

Town engineering consultant, Eric Weinrieb, P.E. with Altus Engineering asked if density would be tied to the land area or the number of units. Chair Hebert said the proposal was for 150 -125 senior living units with an overlay district that originally only involved their lot, but may now include other lots.

Mr. Krebs said it was a good question, but noted that the number of units for the site would not be any different than a hotel proposal which was allowed in the Office District.

Board member Peter Welch asked how they could say there wouldn't be a demand for safety services for this age group. Attorney Bosen replied that most of the residents would receive most of their medical treatments on site unless they needed to go to hospitals.

Mr. Welch said there still could be medical needs in response to trips slips and falls.

Mr. Weinrieb responded that there would be fewer accidents because the site would have professional staff on board, and there would be regularly scheduled medical trips paid for by the facility.

Mr. Welch asked if they would hire a private ambulance service for routine trips. Mr. Stebbins said they would for scheduled trips.

Attorney Bosen added that similar facility uses had be approved elsewhere, so those considerations would have already been weighed.

Vice-Chair Cross said his concern was regarding independent residential living, compared to those with monitored care and restricted rooms. Attorney Bosen agreed

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that independent living was not allowed outside of the residential zone, but nursing home living was allowed in the Commercial Zone.

Mr. Krebs said the days of going to a nursing home for final days are over, and now upscale private care included step care. Mr. Krebs said that the definition of nursing home facilities in the Ordinance included convalescent facilities for 55 and over, so it was all encompassing.

Vice-Chair Cross said he was concerned with being asked to open the overlay district to Commercial/Residential which was a departure from the Town's zoning.

Vice-Chair Cross went on to say that the Board also wanted to continue protecting the Waterfront Industrial Zone on the other side of the highway from residential encroachment, and their use near the waterfront.

Mr. Krebs said he spoke with the New Hampshire Department of Transportation (DoT), and they would never sell the small parcel off Shattuck Way, and he didn't see the Gulf station going away either.

Mr. Krebs asked Vice-Chair Cross if the issue would go away if they removed the three parcels on the other side of the Spaulding Turnpike, and limited the overlay district to ten acres between Nimble Hill Road, Shattuck Way, and the Spaulding Turnpike. Chair Cross said it would help.

Vice-Chair Cross said he was concerned with access proposed, and traffic delays from the line of site on both sides because Spaulding Turnpike Exit 4 and Shattuck way were part of the industrial corridor.

Board member, Russ Cooke asked if they had any idea how much traffic would be involved with the proposal. Attorney Bosen said they were seeking a specific use that would have to be supported by traffic studies.

Mr. Stebbins said they had built a few of these facilities before, and this proposal would have around 100 employees between 3 shifts around 7 a.m., 3:30 p.m. and 11 p.m., as well as infrequent occupant and visitor traffic. Mr. Weinrieb added that residents went out infrequently during late morning, and afternoons if at all.

Vice-Chair Cross explained the intent of keeping a buffer with residential use out of the Industrial Zone. Vice-Chair Cross said he was also concerned that allowing a more lucrative use than was currently available in the district would create continual pressure to approve other proposal attempting to do the same closer to the industrial area.

Mr. Krebs said he understood the concern, but noted that they were talking about a small scale, and suggested that they limit the size. Mr. Krebs said they could further define the uses so it would be the same as limiting the size of a coffee shop to support residents, but not a larger restaurant, or a florist or gift shop, but not large retail to enhance the gateway to town.

Chair Hebert agreed that he would like better definitions for the overlay district, and he wanted another meeting to invite feedback from the public.

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Chair Hebert said they also needed to consider how opening the door to an overlay district would affect the mail development of 80 acres because they already had a proposal for a large development.

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Mr. Krebs said nursing homes were different now than the nursing homes built in the 1970's, and they were an approved use in the Commercial Zone. Mr. Krebs went on to say that every zoning district in town was unique, so an overlay district to support senior housing on the other side of the Spaulding Turnpike would be quite different than what was happening at mall. Town counsel, Attorney John Ratigan agreed.

Chair Hebert commented that housing with 150 units, some of which could include couples, could add a 25% population increase in one spot that could affect voting trends in the town. Chair Hebert gave an example where Riverwoods in Exeter said they didn't want increased taxes for a new school that was needed. Attorney Bosen responded that was the owner of Riverwoods that expressed concern, not the residents of Riverwoods. Attorney Bosen said it was not likely that two-thirds of the residents in assisted and in memory care would vote at all.

Attorney Bosen noted that the proposed operator would give a preference to town's people applying for residence, and Mr. Stebbins agreed. Chair Hebert pointed out that would not be a requirement for approval, however.

Vice-Chair Cross asked if there was any chance of including workforce housing for those earning \$90,000 per year. Mr. Stebbins said he was not opposed to it if the Board wanted to include workforce housing.

Chair Hebert said he was concerned with workforce housing complications if independent living was allowed in response to the statute changes made in July 2023.

Mr. Cooke said he saw workforce housing as a different question to this overlay district proposal.

Chair Hebert said the letter included in the application sounded like housing, so they needed a better definition of what was being proposed. Chair Hebert said there would be no promises for implied approval because he was not sure if the proposal was something the town would support.

Chair Hebert said the Board could either present the proposal to the town for vote through the Planning Board, present petition from 25 townspeople for the Planning Board to vote on a warrant article, or it could go to the courts.

Chair Hebert recommend having a public meeting on the overlay use for feedback, but they needed to clarify what the proposal entailed.

Mr. Krebs recommended removal of the parcels on the other side of the Spaulding Turnpike, and to tighten up permitted uses in Section 4, with a good description for each third of the unit proposals.

Mr. Krebs said they would need to get word of the meeting out to get public attendance because there was not a lot of participation in meetings, so he would put a notice on the Town website, and newsletter.

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Chair Hebert said he was concerned with timing unless the Board was willing to work through the Christmas holiday. Mr. Krebs said he would like to keep the discussion going and recommended that the Board meet again on Monday, December 11, 2023.

B) Continued discussion regarding proposed parking Site Plan for **Wilcox Industries** located on Piscataqua DriveDrive and Woodbury Avenue

Jim Teetzle, CEO of Wilcox Industries appeared before the Board to present a new proposal for a one-story parking garage. Mr. Teetzle said that the new proposal would reduce the number of parking spaces from 1,200 for the dimensional requirements, to 603 parking spaces in relation to their actual use. Mr. Teetzle went on to say that they only needed 500 parking spaces, but he thought that adding a buffer of 100 spaces would be prudent.

Mr. Teetzle went on to say that the new proposal would increase the setbacks from five feet off Woodbury Avenue to 20 feet, and they would add an additional ten feet from the abutter's easement. Mr. Teetzle noted that the TD Bank parking lot already came up to their property line.

Mr. Teetzle added that they had also removed the security fencing from the property line around the garage, and would add landscaping to appear less intrusive on Woodbury Avenue.

Mr. Krebs stated that the Planning Board could consider the number of parking spaces, but they would still need to go before the Zoning Board of Adjustment (ZBA) to request a variance from the setback requirements. Attorney Ratigan agreed that it was common for Planning Boards to provide waivers from parking requirements all the time based on actual use.

Mr. Cooke said he was having a problem with the number of parking spaces required and requested, and asked how they estimated their actual parking needs based on employees. Mr. Teetzle replied that they estimated parking for 500 employees during the first shift, and the remainder for the second shift over the next two years, so parking for 603 was close for the 623 square foot of parking, in addition to six additional parking spaces under the manufacturing building.

Bill Gregsak, P.E. of Gregsak and Sons said they had updated their plans, but hadn't brought them. Mr. Teetzle said he thought this was an informal preliminary discussion, and he didn't want to present too many plans before the actual site review.

Mr. Teetzle stated that they had already done a traffic study that indicated there would be no problem handling the flow of traffic.

Vice-Chair Cross said he thought it was a reasonable looking plan, but there was still a difficulty regarding right-of-way easements, drainage, and landscaping when not meeting the front setback requirements on a major thoroughfare. Mr. Teetzle responded that there would only be approximately 25 feet where the pavement starts to the edge of the road so there was sufficient space for drainage, and landscaping.

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Vice-Chair Cross said he also had concerns regarding traffic going in and out of the site access across from the Olive Garden entrance so close to the median on Woodbury Avenue. Mr. Teetzle stated that the grandfathered entrance was already there, and the site was very restricted with the Eversource easement across the property.

Vice-Chair Cross asked if the owner of the former Chevy Chrysler Auto would consider access. Mr. Teetzle said he had talked with him many times, and he highly doubted it.

Chair Hebert asked about traffic queuing up. Mr. Teetzle said they could put up a gate, and have vehicles go out on Piscataqua Drive or Wilcox Industries Way. could put up gate

Mr. Krebs commented that these were site review questions, but the Board had made a good point about employees coming off Piscataqua Drive. Mr. Teetzle agreed that parking could avoid cuing up on Piscataqua Drive when checking in.

Mr. Welch asked if there would be a controlled left turn on Woodbury Avenue, and Mr. Teetzle said there would be.

Mr. Johnson pointed out that a left turn was allowed in and out of TD Bank a couple of hundred feet down the road. Chair Hebert responded that that was a tough crossing, and it would be an even larger issue with several hundred employees leaving Wilcox Industries at once, so he would only want a right in and right out.

Chair Hebert said they had discussed setback requirements when denied their previous variance request from the ZBA, but were still asking for relief. Chair Hebert went on to say he thought they had discussed meeting the setbacks with a parking waiver for up to 750-800 spaces, but now they were saying they didn't want to build the previously proposed garage. Chair Hebert said he wondered why they kept creating hardships for themselves.

Mr. Teetzle responded that he was originally told that they had to meet a requirement of 1,200 parking spaces out of consideration of the site if went out of business or moved, but were denied a variance. Mr. Teetzle said he was trying to be mindful of the Town's requirements, but he was getting frustrated because they kept drawing up new plans.

Mr. Teetzle went on to say that he had already spent \$6,000,000 on the project, with the parking lot worth \$2,000,000 and the corner lot worth \$4,000,000, but he was starting to wonder if he should put it back on the market because it was a bad investment for his needs. Mr. Teetzle said he combined the lots because he understood that banks could go to the Town and ask why they had approved an expansion without enough parking.

Chair Hebert said the Board still had to determine what the front and side setbacks were, and they still could meet setbacks with a two-story building for their parking requirements. Mr. Krebs commented that they wanted to be careful because they had made an investment in the property, and didn't want to fall short.

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Chair Hebert said there would be a 75-foot frontage setback on each side if they didn't determine the side setback, whereas they would only need a 30-foot side setback from Woodbury Avenue if their frontage was on Piscataqua Drive. Mr. Weinrieb noted that it wouldn't be a corner lot if they separated the garage lot with a lot line adjustment

 Chair Hebert pointed out that there would be an additional 25-foot setback between the two lots that would require another variance. Mr. Krebs suggested that they just move the parking lot over another 30 feet to accommodate the requirement. Mr. Weinrieb added that relocating the utility pole would help

Mr. Weinrieb noted that regulations required a center island, but they should talk about lot end landscaping to create more spaces, along with underground drainage in the limited space.

Mr. Johnson asked Mr. Teetzle if he would be comfortable removing 60 parking spaces so they wouldn't need a variance. Mr. Teetzle said he was concerned that they wouldn't have sufficient parking, and he was hoping that the ZBA would consider that they were removing the parking structure, and not installing fencing along the lot line would be less intrusive to Woodbury Avenue.

Chair Hebert said setbacks were established for a reason, so they needed to consider whether they would be granted variances. Mr. Johnson noted that Stoneface Brewery was granted variances for parking lots.

Attorney Ratigan said it would be useful for the Board to make a motion if they supported variances.

Chris Cross moved that the Planning Board endorses Wilcox Industry's preliminary parking site proposal on Woodbury Avenue that would require setback variance. Bob Blonigen seconded, and the motion passed.

Chair Hebert said he initially was going to abstain from the vote because there was less and less space for development in town, but he changed his mind because he supported business in town. Vice-Chair Cross agreed, but pointed out that parking spaces could get torn up and moved a lot easier than a building structure. Board of Selectmen's representative, Bob Blonigen, added that they would be 25 feet off Woodbury Avenue, not ten feet.

Chair Hebert said he thought the consultation could go easier if they had a joint meeting with the ZBA, but the Chair said she was not interested.

Mr. Cooke agreed that it should be approved because it was only a parking lot, even though parking lots were called structures in the Ordinance.

Mr. Krebs advised the applicant to submit an application for variances to the ZBA next.

(Attorney Ratigan and Mr. Weinrieb left at this point in the meeting at 8:20 p.m.)

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C) Continued discussion of Planning Board Rules of Procedure

 Mr. Krebs passed out an update to Rules of Decorum that was put together with Attorney Ratigan, along with a letter from Board member, Jim Weiner.

Chair Hebert said they had reviewed the rules of decorum that other towns had, and he thought it was a good tool for chairs to utilize.

Chair Hebert recommended that they increase the 10 second warning to 30 seconds.

Mr. Krebs said that the limit would apply to applicants, the public and members of the Board, but he hoped they wouldn't need to use a timer.

Mr. Welch commented that he thought they should implement a three-minute speaking limit all the time.

Mr. Welch also suggested that they change the wording on the three-minute limit to "shall" so there wouldn't be any debate back and forth. Chair Hebert said they could, and do, but someone could also ask the chair for another minute or two. Mr. Blonigan and Vice-Chair Cross agreed that the wording should be changed to shall.

Chair Hebert said Mr. Weiner had asked in his letter that debates and questions go through the chair and not other members of the Board. Chair Hebert added that there shouldn't be debates between applicants and others.

Chair Hebert said Mr. Weiner also asked in his letter about offering alternate solutions to applicant's problems. Chair Hebert said it was fine to share an idea or suggestion, which was different from engineering for an applicant.

Chair Hebert said Mr. Weiner also asked for language to outline the process if a Board member witnessed the chair violating the rules. Vice-Chair Cross responded that the chair runs meetings, and Board members could comment, but there was no need for rules of command. Mr. Blonigen added that it was common practice to raise a hand and say point of order. Mr. Krebs said the rules applied to everyone, and it was appropriate that others could comment without going on and on.

Mr. Cooke said he was not at the last meeting, and was taken by surprise by the new Rules of Decorum, wondering why it was necessary to have rules to solve a problem with interruptions that could apply to anyone.

Vice-Chair Cross agreed that it might not be necessary if everyone followed civil discourse, but it hadn't come to pass. Vice-Chair Cross said the document might look like new rules, but they seemed like common courtesy that didn't impose on anyone. Vice-Chair Cross added that it was simple and straightforward without voting on each item, and there was no harm in having the reference when necessary.

Mr. Cooke asked where the Rules of Decorum came from. Chair Hebert replied that it came from a culmination of different sources in other towns that all had established recourse on how to deal with issues.

Mr. Cooke said he would prefer the document to be briefer. Mr. Krebs responded that he could go online to view other towns' rules of decorum that were similar.

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Mr. Krebs added that the ZBA and the Board of Selectmen also had Rules of
Procedure that others may never look at, but they had not been wrought with issues and
infighting, so it was a good reminder for all.

- Mr. Blonigen noted that a physical altercation had broken out at the Seabrook Board of Selectmen's meeting, which may not have gotten to that point if they had rules of decorum.
- Mr. Cooke said it seemed like overreach. Mr. Krebs said rules asking people to behave civilly in a public meeting wasn't overreach.

Mr. Welch moved to include the Rules of Decorum, and adopt them with the Rules of Procedure. Ben Johnson seconded, and the motion passed with Russ Cooke abstaining.

II) Planner's Monthly Report

Mr. Krebs said he had just returned from a two-week hiatus, and that he expected to see some plans coming in from the mall soon.

III) Other Business and Discussions:

Chair Hebert informed the Board that Town Administrator, Martha Roy had recommended that they reduce the Planning Board budget by \$9,000 or \$10,000; however, the Planning Board budget was small compared to others considering some expenditures were returned from applicant fees.

- Mr. Blonigen said it was also on the table not to add a third day to Mr. Kreb's work week, but he thought it critical to maintain a third day considering upcoming business.
- Mr. Blonigan said they also moved to cut the ZBA's tie to the Planning Board budget. Mr. Blonigan said he thought that would make it difficult to budget legal services even though the Board of Selectmen never denied paying legal services, but they would like to know what boards thought they would incur year to year.

Chair Hebert noted that legal fees had to be paid by law.

A brief discussion ensued regarding setbacks for business uses.

Chair Hebert suggested that the Board review setbacks. Chair Hebert said he was concerned that applicants would keep requesting variances, and the Town would be asked why they didn't hold the line.

- Mr. Cooke commented that everyone wants setbacks, and people wonder why variances exist, but parking lots are considered a structure.
- Mr. Welch responded that was why the Board might want to change what was allowed in the setbacks.

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Mr. Krebs said some towns do differentiate buildings from parking lots, but he				
was not sure if it was worth changing considering there were not that many lots left in				
town, making a good case for variances.				
Mr. Krebs asked the Board to invite people to the public meeting on the overlay				
district proposal in two weeks, but not to share their opinions on the proposal.				
Minutes:	Peter Welch moved to approve the Minutes for the October 23, 2023,			
	meeting with corrections as noted. Ben Johnson seconded, and the			
	motion passed with Bob Blonigen and Russ Cooke abstaining.			
Adjournme				
	the motion and the meeting adjourned at 9:11 p.m.			
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Next Meeti	ng: Monday, December 11, 2023			
Dagnaghtul				
Subinitted	by: Jane K. Kendall, Recording Secretary			
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