

Town of Newington, NH

PLANNING BOARD

Meeting Minutes, Monday, October 24, 2022

- Call to Order:** Chair Denis Hebert called the October 24, 2022, meeting at 6:00 p.m., followed by the pledge of allegiance.
- Present:** Chair Denis Hebert; Board Members: Ben Johnson; Jim Weiner and Peter Welch; Alternate Board members, Rick Stern; Board of Selectmen's Representative, Bob Blonigan; Town Planner, John Krebs and Jane Kendall, Recorder
- Absent:** Vice-Chair Christopher Cross, and Board Member, Russ Cooke
- Public Guests:** John Chagnon, P.E. with Ambit Engineering; Matt Pelletier, Consult Design Engineer for Until; Tracy Sweeney, Sr., Until Land Agent; Robert Schumrick with Until;

I) Preliminary Consultations

- A) **Unitil/Granite State Gas Transmission/Norther Utilities** to upgrade and replace an existing gas facility to ensure system reliability. The new facility will include a meter station, pig (pipe cleaning) launcher, and retriever, meter, and filter. The project will be located at Tax Map 7, Lot 2A, owned by SNS Equity, LLC

Unitil Land Agent, Tracy Sweeney, Sr. stated that their intention was to move their buildings to a new location off Shattuck Way near Route 16 South, and add to the integrity of the pipeline along the Spaulding Turnpike where it crossed near Rockingham Electric. Mr. Sweeney added that another reason for relocating one of the buildings was safety concerns with the location of their station with the jersey barriers off Exit 4 southbound onto Nimble Hill Road across from Mitchell's Gulf Station.

John Chagnon, P.E. went through the proposal plans with Board members.

Mr. Chagnon noted that they would need access from the property owner to go through an easement in order to put the facility on the Shattuck Way location.

Mr. Chagnon stated that they would require underground single-phase electric connection to feed lights for facility and backup generator, but they would not need sewer or water connection.

Unitil's engineering design consultant, Matt Pelletier stated that the pipeline ran from Haverhill, Massachusetts to Westbrook, Maine, and the meter and regulator station

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that served Newington and Portsmouth crossed the Spaulding Turnpike, and ran up to Newington Public School.

Alternate Board member, Rick Stern asked how much noise would be generated from the building. Mr. Pelletier replied that they had hired a company to do a study, and would supply a report. Mr. Sweeney added that they had done noise studies at other locations, and the noise from the turnpike would be greater than their operation, but there would be noise reduction from the enclosed building, and noise from the had done noise studies at other locations, and noise had been minimal.

Mr. Stern stated that he lived down the street from their building across from their building off Exit 4S, and the noise was like a jet engine when they opened the lines. Mr. Pelletier responded that they were now recompressing and capturing gas into another section of the pipeline to reduce methane released to the atmosphere, which eliminated that noise

Chair Hebert said it was his understanding that SNS Equity had purchased the property from New Hampshire Department of Transportation (DoT), and he was not sure if any residential development would occur there, so they needed to be sure sound levels were kept down. Chair Hebert said the question would be on round the clock sound levels, and if noise would be at night when traffic was down. Mr. Pelletier said leaves equip to record for 24 hours.

Chair Hebert commented that concrete utility buildings were not very attractive, and Shattuck Way and Nimble Hill Road were entrances to town, so he wondered if it could be relocated elsewhere. Mr. Pelletier replied that the current location along the Exit 4S was hit by a vehicle once, so they thought it would be safer to relocate. He said they could not interfere with the DoT right of way. Mr. Pelletier said there were two different size pipes converging, and the inspection ports would be installed for both diameters.

Mr. Weiner asked what would be required to relocate the building. Mr. Sweeney said they were looking to become more compliant by removing the building near the off ramp.

Mr. Pelletier said they would need two different sites instead of consolidating in one location. Mr. Pelletier said they looked at placing the building near Rockingham Electric, but realized it wouldn't be appropriate because it wasn't flat. Mr. Pelletier said they also looked along Arboretum, and Bean Hill, but there was no infrastructure pipeline to serve Portsmouth and Newington. Mr. Pelletier said from this location, they would be able to expand when Newington grew.

Chair Hebert asked if Unitil would pay for an expansion, or if the Town would have to pay. Mr. Pelletier said would ask.

Mr. Sweeney said they were trying to go low with the building, and high with the landscaping, but could consider other design recommendations. Mr. Krebs said screening would be most effective, but they could also consider a peak roof. Mr. Welch suggested faux windows.

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Mr. Chagnon stated that Newington's Fire Department was most concerned with their operating plan, procedures, protocols, and guidelines. Mr. Pelletier added that their operations managers talked with Fire Chief Hoyt, and they all agreed. Mr. Pelletier added that Chief Hoyt had asked that they install a lock box to access the site. Mr. Pelletier said someone at Until in Portsmouth would monitor the building 24/7, and sensors inside the building would illuminate a warning light outside if there was a gas leak.

Chair Hebert added that they also needed to consider the Town's dark sky ordinance. Mr. Pelletier said lights wouldn't be on unless maintenance was being done.

Chair Hebert noted that Newington Wastewater Treatment would need access to the sewer equipment that they were crossing. Mr. Chagnon responded that the easement serviced and dead-ended at the NWWT on Shattuck Way, and not the general public easement. Mr. Chagnon said the easement was in the gravel drive, and they had been in discussions with DoT about straightening the turns for better safety. Mr. Chagnon added that they wouldn't change the grade. Chair Hebert said they would need a legal review of the language to be sure their easement didn't conflict with the Town's easements.

Mr. Pelletier stated that running the pigging would only happen every seven years, but technicians would go in once a week.

Board member, Jim Weiner said he understood wanting cost savings, and convenience, but still wanted to know how they intended to address the appearance at the entrance of town, as well creating a sound barrier. Mr. Chagnon replied that they were before the Board for a preliminary consultation and input, but would be hiring a landscape architect.

Mr. Sweeney added that they would also put the valves in the building to reduce sound.

Chair Hebert suggested they might consider using green link fence and post, and place landscape inside the fencing for deer protection. Chair Hebert suggested organic plantings would look better than linear block plantings.

Discussions continued regarding fencing options. Mr. Pelletier said they typically placed 12-inch barbed wire on the of their fences top for protection and security. Town Planner, John Krebs responded that it might be good to use landscaping to screen the fencing from the three sides that were visible.

Mr. Chagnon stated that the property owner would also want screening from their site. Mr. Krebs suggested that they create a three- to four-foot-high berm with planting on top on the northeast side.

Mr. Pelletier said they had also used wrought iron fencing with a rounded top around their project in Greenland across from Lowes, as well as eight-foot-high fencing with no barbed wire.

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Board member, Peter Welch asked if site access was going against traffic. Mr. Chagnon replied that the proposed driveway location was a right in and right out that would provide over 400 feet of site distance.

Mr. Sweeney said they were getting a curb cut permit from DoT, as that was the only way to get to the site from the Spaulding Turnpike, but they still might change the drive access off the ramp.

Mr. Chagnon noted that there were wetlands on the site, and the soil map indicated open water characteristics that required a 100-foot setback. Mr. Krebs said utilities allowed in buffer, and the Planning Board could deal with access, but a variance would be required for the building, and he wondered if they could push the building back a few feet to be in better compliance.

Mr. Pelletier asked if only the building would require a variance. Chair Hebert said anything manmade above ground was considered a structure, including pavement. Chair Hebert went on to say that setbacks from abutting properties, roadways, and wetlands were important.

Mr. Krebs suggested that Mr. Chagnon consider having Town wetlands consultant, Mark West review their soil and wetlands report for another opinion.

B) Proposal for Auto Detailing on River Road

Jamie Aldebot stated that he had approached Mr. Krebs and the building inspector to see if a car care detailing operation would be allowed in the former 4-Way Communications building on River Road. Mr. Aldebot said he had been running a mobile car detailing operation at people's homes and places of business, and now he wanted to expand into a shop base for the colder months.

Chair Hebert asked how many cars a day he expected to service. Mr. Aldebot replied that he could do a maximum of 14 a day, but would average six or seven cars a day out of three bays, and an office space.

Mr. Welch asked what other uses were in the building. Mr. Aldebot said the owner used offices on the other side, using two parking spaces, and he would use seven parking spaces.

Chair Hebert asked what chemicals would be used. Mr. Aldebot replied that he would use water and soap for washing, and wax for buffing.

Board member, Ben Johnson responded that he would need oil separation. Mr. Aldebot said the location had a floor drain. Mr. Stern asked where the drain went, and Mr. Aldebot said he thought that it went to the sewer. Mr. Stern stated that floor drains were not supposed to go to sewer.

Mr. Johnson said they might have an oil separator, or a separate septic tank for the drain. Mr. Krebs said they would need to talk to the property owner to provide the service record, and then talk to the building inspector to see if they could confirm the information.

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Mr. Johnson said they could cut the sewer line, and install a tank that would be pumped once a year if necessary. Chair Hebert said the owner would need to install proper drainage anyhow.

Mr. Weiner asked if they would need extra exhaust venting, and Mr. Aldebot said it would not be required.

Mr. Stern asked about signage. Chair Hebert said would need to be compliant.

Chair Hebert said he could work with Mr. Krebs to determine if he needed to return to the Board.

(Board of Selectmen's representative, Bob Blonigan arrived at this point in the meeting at 7:40 p.m.)

II) Discussion of potential **Zoning Ordinance and Regulation Amendments for 2023.**

Mr. Krebs said he and Chair Hebert had talked, and decided that the Board had presented quite a few Ordinance and Regulation Amendments over the last couple of years, and aside from fixing the building height regulation, they thought that it would be nice to take a break from presenting any additional changes for 2023.

Mr. Krebs said Capital Improvements Program (CIP) and the Master Plan done, and would be good to devote some time to alternate uses over the long term.

Mr. Krebs suggested that the Board review the Office Zone considering so many offices were leaving.

Chair Hebert said the Board might also look at housing and residential zoning as well.

IV) **Other Business and Discussions:**

(This item was taken out of order)

Mr. Stern commented that Stoneface Brewing had put up "No Parking on This Side" signs in front of their building instead of "No Parking" as listed in their conditions of approval, and patrons were still parking on both sides, which was a safety concern when traveling down Shattuck Way, especially as evenings were getting darker earlier.

Mr. Stern also noted that Atco Lanair had violated their conditions of approval by removing their pervious grass paving, and paved within the setback.

Chair Hebert commented that the Town was having difficulty recruiting volunteer members for boards with a different mix of people.

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Mr. Weiner suggested that the Economic Development Committee (EDC) consider setting up more meetings with potential businesses. Mr. Krebs agreed that the Town could do more with the EDC, but didn't think it would be a good policy for the Planning Board to identify companies.

Mr. Krebs went on to say that Pease was getting filled, and opportunities could spill over to Newington eventually, but there were only a small number of parcels left in Newington, and they needed to be used wisely.

Minutes: *Rick Stern moved to approve the Minutes for the September 12, 2022, meeting. Peter Welch seconded, and all were in favor.*

III) Non-Public Session under NHRSA 91-A:3. II

(This item was delayed to hear the previous discussion)

Chair Hebert called a non-public session at 8:08 p.m. to discuss a personnel matter under NHRSA 91-A:3. II. Rick Stern seconded the motion with Ben Johnson, Peter Welch, Jim Weiner, Rick Stern, and Bob Blonigan voting in favor.

Chair Hebert moved to come out of the public session and go back into the public session at 8:15 p.m. Rick Stern seconded the motion with Ben Johnson, Peter Welch, Jim Weiner, Rick Stern, and Bob Blonigan voting in favor.

Rick Stern moved to seal the non-public minutes. Ben Johnson seconded, and all were in favor.

Chair Hebert moved to increase Town Planner, John Krebs hourly pay rate by \$2.50 for the year. Peter Welch seconded, and all were in favor.

Adjournment: *Rick Stern moved to adjourn the meeting. Peter Welch seconded the motion and the meeting adjourned at 8:20 p.m.*

Next Meeting: Monday, November 21, 2022

Respectfully

Submitted by: Jane K. Kendall, Recording Secretary

These Minutes were approved and adopted by the Planning Board at their November 21, 2022 meeting.