

**VILLAGE OF ESSEX JUNCTION
PLANNING COMMISSION
MINUTES OF MEETING
May 21, 2009**

MEMBERS PRESENT: Mark Thibeault (Chairman); Diane Clemens, Andrew Boutin, Dan Kerin, John Alden, Aaron Martin, Liza Kilcoyne.
ADMINISTRATION: Robin Pierce, Development Director.

1. CALL TO ORDER and AUDIENCE FOR VISITORS

Chairman Mark Thibeault called the meeting to order at 7 p.m. There were no comments from the public.

2. ADDITIONS/AMENDMENTS TO AGENDA

None.

3. MINUTES

May 7, 2009 – Work Session

MOTION by Andrew Boutin, SECOND by Diane Clemens, to approve the 5/7/09 minutes with the following corrections/clarifications:

Page 2, top of page – insert “a portion of” before “the second story of the hotel”;

Page 4, top of page – delete the word “canopy” in the sentence reading “...under the second floor canopy”;

Page 5, Applicant Comments, 2nd paragraph, sentence reading: “Mark Thibeault clarified that making changes to comply with regulations ...” – change “is maintenance” to “may be considered maintenance”.

VOTING: unanimous (7-0); motion carried.

4. PUBLIC MEETING

Deliberation of Conceptual Plan for a 60-room hotel with parking at 9&11 Park Street and 2 Park Terrace, removal of a retail building at 11 Park Street, and removal of a dwelling at 2A Park Terrace in the Village Center District by Ruggiano Engineering, Inc., agent for Park Street Holding Co., owner

There was discussion of the area behind the Hinsdale property. It was noted the proposed road is right up to the property line so there is not much room for improvements. Presently the area is overgrown with scrub brush. Hinsdale uses the area for delivery trucks and for the dumpsters.

Robin Pierce reported on his conversation with the architect at LaQuinta headquarters in Texas. According to the architect it is usual to serve a simple continental breakfast at the hotels. A full restaurant has been included in one LaQuinta hotel. Mr. Pierce said he suggested a joint entrance for the hotel and a restaurant in the building. LaQuinta representatives were receptive to the idea. Mark Thibeault noted the village regulations encourage multiple uses in developments in the downtown area. John Alden observed a

restaurant just serving breakfast will generate foot traffic in the village as hotel patrons will go elsewhere to shop and eat throughout the day. A full serve restaurant will keep the patrons on the site. Mr. Alden mentioned a gift shop in the hotel open to the public to meet the multiple use requirements in the regulations. There was discussion of having the hotel and existing restaurant combined to provide a more cohesive and planned look (perhaps attached with a canopy). As presently proposed the hotel appears 'squeezed' between two buildings that will not relate to one another. Dan Kerin said the modern building (hotel) connected to an older clapboard house style building (restaurant) will not mesh. Mark Thibeault pointed out the applicant indicated the house (duplex) and restaurant are separate from the hotel. Andrew Boutin commented the existing restaurant building needs to be cleaned up. John Alden read the Purpose section of the Village Center regulation and questioned how tearing down the existing restaurant building addresses the regulation. Mark Thibeault stated the two parcels (duplex and restaurant) are part of the project. The applicant cannot ignore a building that is falling down. Liza Kilcoyne stressed the applicant needs to make the existing buildings worth keeping if they are to remain. Diane Clemens agreed with making the buildings more compatible with the neighborhood. The consensus of the Planning Commission is the condition of other structures (on lots 2 & 3) needs to be improved. John Alden said the building needs to be remodeled to where it is sympathetic to the rest of the buildings in the neighborhood. The building needs to be made part of the community and brought into context with the LaQuinta hotel.

There was discussion of other issues with the application including access, parking, site circulation, land deeded to the village for improvement to Park Terrace, and exterior design of the hotel. John Alden noted every one of the three lots in the block is impacted by the hotel. The access is really a road, not just a driveway. All three lots are under the same ownership. There was agreement the proposal is essentially redesigning the corner block. Mark Thibeault said it appears the house on lot #2 may have to be removed eventually. The Planning Commission needs to look forward 20, 30, 40 years in planning the village center. The applicant's property is part of a greater plan for the area.

There was continued discussion of traffic matters. Aaron Martin suggested traffic to the site enter by the existing restaurant and exit by the hotel. A "Right Turn Only" sign could be posted at the exit. One-way traffic by the hotel was mentioned. It was noted the road by the hotel will be used by the residential development on the adjacent Naef property so revising internal traffic circulation for the hotel is difficult. Park Terrace without improvement cannot handle more traffic. Access over the school property may be an option. The drive lane needs to be increased and the Hinsdale property needs to be considered (straighten the jog by the Hinsdale property). There was discussion of other ingress/egress scenarios. The Planning Commission requested a larger aerial picture of the block showing all existing and proposed conditions (on-site circulation, parking, buildings). A traffic study is also needed. There was brief discussion of having a pedestrian connection to the hotel building from the street (i.e. to the portion of the hotel facing Park Street). The regulations specify there should be a pedestrian connection.

MOTION by Mark Thibeault, SECOND by Liza Kilcoyne to grant conceptual approve of the application for a 60-room hotel with parking at 9 & 11 Park Street and 2 Park Terrace, removal of the retail building at 11 Park Street, and removal of the dwelling at 2A Park Terrace by Park Street Holding Co. with the following conditions:

- 1. Lots 2 & 3 shall be included in the application and upgraded on the exterior to meet Village Center District design criteria.**
- 2. All properties shall be included on the site plan.**
- 3. All access points shall be included on the site plan including access through the school property.**
- 4. Traffic circulation on the site shall be changed to generally utilize the access to the school property, once an agreement between the Village and the School District is formalized; and behind the properties as the main source of exiting.**
- 5. A comprehensive traffic study including all on and off site properties shall be done to show traffic circulation and how it works.**
- 6. Land shall be deeded to the village for expansion of Park Terrace.**
- 7. A portion of the property shall be set aside for a cross easement to the Hinsdale property.**
- 8. Colored architectural renderings, floor plans, and product samples shall be provided.**
- 9. Landscaping shall be improved.**

VOTING: unanimous (7-0); motion carried.

Continued Site Plan for an after-the-fact building addition of 31.6'x 13.1', a new containment structure, and revised parking and landscaping at 33 Park Street in the R-2 District by Chad Whitehead, Dufresne & Associates, agent for D&C Transportation, owner

TABLED.

5. OTHER PLANNING COMMISSION ITEMS

Request for Extension of Park Street School Site Plan Approval

Robin Pierce reported the village is still in negotiations with the school district regarding the front portion of the property at 21 Park Street. There was discussion of issues involving the school property including access for the proposed hotel and public parking.

MOTION by Mark Thibeault, SECOND by Diane Clemens, to grant a six month extension of the site plan approval for 21 Park Street (Park Street School).

VOTING: unanimous (7-0); motion carried.

6. ADJOURNMENT

MOTION by Mark Thibeault, SECOND by Aaron Martin, to adjourn the meeting.

VOTING: unanimous (7-0); motion carried.

The meeting was adjourned at 8:24 p.m.