

**VILLAGE OF ESSEX JUNCTION
PLANNING COMMISSION
MINUTES OF MEETING
September 4, 2008**

MEMBERS PRESENT: Mark Thibeault (Chairman); Dan Kerin, Diane Clemens, Andrew Boutin. (Liza Kilcoyne was absent.)
ADMINISTRATION: Robin Pierce, Developer Director.

1. CALL TO ORDER and AUDIENCE FOR VISITORS

Chairman Mark Thibeault called the meeting to order at 7:30 p.m. There were no comments from the public at this time.

2. ADDITIONS/AMENDMENTS TO AGENDA

None.

3. MINUTES

August 21, 2008

MOTION by Dan Kerin, SECOND by Diane Clemens, to approve the 8/21/08 minutes with the following corrections:

Page 3, Roscoe Court application, Public Comment, 3rd paragraph, 4th sentence – delete “(down one foot and across four feet)”;

Page 5, Pearl Street application, Applicant Comments, 1st paragraph, 9th sentence – change “...one way in by the credit unit” to “...one way in by the bank”.

VOTING: 4 ayes; motion carried.

4. PUBLIC MEETING

Mark Thibeault explained the procedure to be followed with applications before the Planning Commission and swore in those individuals to give testimony.

Major Site Plan Amendment for roof repairs, new fascia, awnings, and signage at 4 Park Street in the VC District by Alex McEwing, LI Park Street Properties, LLC, owner

Alex McEwing appeared on behalf of the application. Mark Thibeault recused himself from review of the application. Dan Kerin assumed the duties of chairman.

APPLICANT COMMENTS

Alex McEwing explained the addition of awnings to the front of the Lincoln Inn building. Necessary roof work was done (structural improvements and removal of the old HVAC equipment). The railing screened the equipment on the roof and provided a support for the sign, but also held snow and ice on the roof which created leaks. Mr. McEwing showed renderings of the work done to the building. The fascia will continue across the full length of the roof. Ductwork will be on the interior of the roof. The railing will be on the left side of the roof only to screen the new HVAC unit. On the building side facing Park Street awnings will be added on the windows. The removal of trees on the street

looks good, but the result is taxing the HVAC system to keep the building cool. The trim and building will be painted next year similar in color to the existing color scheme.

STAFF REPORT

Robin Pierce pointed out Section 714 (sign standards) of the Code says awnings can be no higher than 14' above grade and eight feet above ground level. If there is lettering on the awning it could be considered a wall sign and must be no greater than 20 s.f. Mr. Pierce mentioned the awning toward the end of the building that goes to the ground (deck). Alex McEwing explained the curtain (not an awning) is there as a wind break in winter. Mr. Pierce asked about roof shingle color. Mr. McEwing said the roof is a black rubber membrane. There are slate shingles on the top part of the roof which will remain.

Diane Clemens asked about the fascia change on the north side of the building and if the sign will remain. Mr. McEwing stated the lower fascia was proposed to be built out from the wall, but this will not happen. The sign will either be restructured or there will be a wall sign on the second story of the building. A sign permit will be secured if a new sign is needed.

PUBLIC COMMENT

There were no comments from the public.

MOTION by Andrew Boutin, SECOND by Diane Clemens, to close the public portion of the application for the Lincoln Inn at 4 Park Street. VOTING: 3 ayes; motion carried.

DELIBERATION/DECISION

Major Site Plan Amendment, Exterior Repairs/Improvements, Lincoln Inn, 4 Park Street, Alex McEwing

MOTION by Diane Clemens, SECOND by Andrew Boutin, to grant approval of the amendments to the site plan for exterior repairs and awnings as presented by the applicant. VOTING: 3 ayes; motion carried.

Major Amendment to Site Plan to extend the roof over the access ramp and add roof over the entrance at 34 Park Street in the VC District by Alex McEwing, McEwing Properties, LLC, owner

Alex McEwing appeared on behalf of the application.

APPLICANT COMMENTS

Alex McEwing explained due to the changes to Park Street the entrance/exit at the front of the building at 34 Park Street must be changed. The entryway for SB Signs and the Flag Shop must be covered per Labor & Industry requirements. SB Signs will move to the left and the canopy will extend at the same level as the existing green metal roofing over the stairway and landing. There will be a fabric awning creating a two season enclosure for protection from snow and wind in fall and winter. The accessible ramp must be covered per ADA and Labor & Industry requirements. In the center area the hip roof will be extended to the end to cover the ramp. Metal handrails will be installed. The

existing roof slope will be maintained. Grey shingles will be used on the roof instead of green metal roofing.

STAFF REPORT

Robin Pierce asked if there will be lighting under the extended roof and if there will be new signs. Alex McEwing said there will be lighting by the old loading dock. The lights are down directed commercial halide lights. The same could be done or lights producing less illumination could be used because the new streetlights on Park Street do provide light in the area. There are no new signs proposed. The same signs will be moved and re-used. Mr. Pierce asked if the two season canvas is an awning, noting the Code does not address the canvas. Mr. McEwing clarified the canvas is protection from the weather and will be removed in the spring and summer. The canvas can be removed from the application if there is a problem. Andrew Boutin asked if there will be a temporary canopy on the accessible ramp to prevent snow and ice on the ramp. Mr. McEwing said this is not planned, but could be considered. The area by the accessible ramp requires much maintenance in winter (shoveling and snowblowing). Robin Pierce asked if paint colors will match the existing colors. Mr. McEwing confirmed the color scheme will be beige/off-white.

PUBLIC COMMENT

There were no comments from the public.

MOTION by Andrew Boutin, SECOND by Diane Clemens, to close the public portion of the application for 34 Park Street. VOTING: 3 ayes; motion carried.

DELIBERATION/DECISION

Major Amendment to Site Plan, Roofing, 34 Park Street, Alex McEwing

MOTION by Dan Kerin, SECOND by Andrew Boutin, to table the application for 34 Park Street pending further information on the proposed canvas enclosure and requirements/consideration in the Land Development Code. VOTING: 3 ayes; motion carried.

Mark Thibeault returned to the Planning Commission and assumed the duties of chairman.

Sketch Plan for a three lot subdivision at the end of Taft Street in the R-1 District by Union 46 School District and Center for Technology at Essex, owners

Mike Burke with Krebs & Lansing Consulting Engineers and Bruce Murdough (U-46 School District) appeared on behalf of the application.

APPLICANT COMMENTS

Mike Burke explained the proposed three residential lot subdivision off an extension of Taft Street on 9.95 acres of land owned by U-46 School District. The lots will be for houses built by students at the Center for Technology at Essex as part of the home building program. It takes an average of two years to build out a lot and the school then sells the house and land for the amount invested. The land is currently undeveloped

though there is a water line that loops through it. An easement for the water line can be done. One section of the water line will be relocated so the line is in the existing easement for Taft Street or in the proposed easement. There is gravity sewer on Taft Street and an extension of the gravity system is proposed to serve the lots. Regarding the street construction, there will not be curbs and drainage will be handled with swales. Storm water will be treated on-site. The existing cul-de-sac will be relocated 200' to the west. There are some apple and Christmas trees planted on the property. Management of the property includes meeting the needs of the Center for Technology at Essex by utilizing the land. The proposal will meet the needs for the next five or six years.

STAFF REPORT

Robin Pierce noted the Public Works Department will be doing road work on Taft Street and would like curbs and grass swales, not gravel, on the new street so the entire roadway is consistent. Mike Burke felt this could be accommodated though the calculations have not yet been done. Mark Thibeault stated if existing conditions include curbs then this should apply to the new length of street. Mr. Pierce mentioned recreation and open space opportunity, noting the Planning Commission can request 15% open space. Mr. Pierce commented it is good planning policy to look at the bigger picture with regard to open space/recreation opportunity. Mike Burke noted the street will be public and the school property is publicly owned. Mark Thibeault observed there is access through the property as a trail, but the access will change as the property is built out over the next 30 years. Mike Burke stated a pedestrian easement could be added along the water line easement. Bruce Murdough noted there 60 acres of school property nearby that is used by the public. There was discussion of having a floating easement and future connectivity of streets in the area. Mike Burke suggested an area by the water line easement could be designated for future pedestrian connectivity. Possible future development may include further extension of Taft Street and four more residential lots with the street again ending in a cul-de-sac. There may be a connection from the cul-de-sac to the school property via an easement. The cul-de-sac will have a 60' radius. Mark Thibeault asked if the land recovered from the cul-de-sac goes to the village. Mike Burke said he believes the land reverts to the landowners.

Mark Thibeault asked if there is municipal sewer service on the street. Mike Burke said there is service, but it is felt a better job can be done on-site. The design will be in full conformance with present rules.

Andrew Boutin asked if the students design the proposed houses and if the houses will match those in the area. Bruce Murdough stated students designed and built the houses on Drury Drive Extension and Taft Street through the Technology Center program.

PUBLIC COMMENT

Alan Reed, 12 Taft Street, stated Taft Street will be 28' wide with curbing once the reconstruction work is done and the extension of the street should be the same. Also, there is a pedestrian walkway from Athens Drive to Drury Drive Extension which is not shown on the site plan. The path has been there for the past 25 years and should remain though the school has not been maintaining (mowing) the path; the residents have been

doing this. Mr. Reed mentioned having a pedestrian connection with the new construction. Regarding design of the new houses, the houses in the area of the existing cul-de-sac are single story. The new houses should be consistent with the area. Mark Thibeault noted there is not design review in the zone so the design of the house is at the discretion of the designer. The houses must be built within the building envelope though. Mr. Reed stated the soil in the area is clay, not loamy as noted by the applicant. Also, there are only two streetlights on the existing street and more are needed. Mark Thibeault cited the requirement per the Land Development Code of a streetlight at 400' intervals. Mike Burke pointed out the proposal is less than 800' from Route 15 so if there are already two streetlights on Taft Street another light will not be required, however, if one is needed it will be installed. There was mention of possibly installing a streetlight at the end of the new cul-de-sac.

There was discussion of the pedestrian trail to Athens Drive. Mike Burke acknowledged there is evidence of a trail to the school, but a record of a pathway to Athens Drive or an easement was not found. The proposal can be configured to not interrupt the existing trail though the trail may be moved. Alan Reed stated the trail was written into the plans for Drury Drive Extension. Bruce Murdough confirmed there is an easement at the end of Drury Drive Extension that follows the property line and goes to Athens Drive. At one time there was a gravel walkway that was plowed by the village. The path is no longer gravel, but is still used by school children. Diane Clemens commented a recreational easement may be a logical course of action. There was discussion of delineating the pathway so homeowners do not inadvertently install a fence and block access. Mike Burke suggested the lot lines be moved 15' to ensure the path is clear. There was also discussion of the informal path that appears to follow the water line easement across school property and potential connection to the path to Athens Drive and Drury Drive Extension.

Kathy Finck, Director of the Technology Center at Essex, briefly reviewed the house construction program. The main house is built in the first year and the garage and bonus room are built in the second year. The program is instructional. Students are involved in the complete construction process.

Peg Reed, 12 Taft Street, stated there are existing drainage problems on Taft Street so grass swales may not be sufficient. Catch basins may be needed. There is lots of water coming off the hill and hitting the curb. The storm sewer is only half way down the street so this should be extended as more houses are built. Mark Thibeault pointed out the applicant is proposing to treat storm water on-site. Regarding open land, Ms. Reed stated many people use the open land now (30-40 people each day) so having this available for continued use is desired.

There were no further comments.

MOTION by Dan Kerin, SECOND by Andrew Boutin, to close the public portion of the application for Taft Street. VOTING: 4 ayes; motion carried.

DELIBERATION/DECISION

Sketch Plan, Three Lot Subdivision, Taft Street, U-46 School District

MOTION by Mark Thibeault, SECOND by Diane Clemens, to deny the request for a waiver to allow a 22' wide road with gravel shoulders. VOTING: 4 ayes; motion carried.

MOTION by Mark Thibeault, SECOND by Dan Kerin, to approve the sketch plan for a three lot subdivision on Taft Street with the following conditions:

- 1. Easement documents shall be provided to the Village and approved by staff prior to being recorded in the land records.**
- 2. Final plat shall show eight foot easements on all side and rear lot lines for future drainage and utility purposes.**
- 3. There shall be a 15' wide pedestrian easement between the existing house on the existing cul-de-sac on Taft Street (Turman lot) and Lot #2 on the site plan.**
- 4. A streetlight shall be installed at the end of the new street extension/cul-de-sac on Taft Street.**

VOTING: 4 ayes; motion carried.

5. OTHER PLANNING COMMISSION ITEMS

Letters re: open space

The Planning Commission discussed the letters and felt a meeting with the Board of Trustees to further discuss whether the section on open space in the Village Plan is meeting the needs of the community. There was agreement open space as part of a development plan is likely out of consideration once the application process has begun. It was noted the issue may not be lack of open space in the village because there is the 15% requirement for developments and there are parks and school fields. The issue may be objection to changing a piece of property from its current condition.

6. ADJOURNMENT

MOTION by Mark Thibeault, SECOND by Dan Kerin, to adjourn the meeting.

VOTING: 4 ayes; motion carried.

The meeting was adjourned at 9:15 p.m.

RScty: M.E.Riordan