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**VILLAGE OF ESSEX JUNCTION  
PLANNING COMMISSION  
MINUTES OF MEETING  
May 1, 2008**

**MEMBERS PRESENT:** Mark Thibeault (Chairman); Dan Kerin, Andrew Boutin, Liza Kilcoyne. (Diane Clemens was absent.)

**ADMINISTRATION:** Jeff Arango, Developer Director.

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**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 audience.

**2. ADDITIONS/AMENDMENTS TO AGENDA**

None.

**3. MINUTES**

*April 17, 2008*

**MOTION by Dan Kerin, SECOND by Liza Kilcoyne, to approve the 4/17/08 minutes as written. 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.

Site plan amendment for reconfiguration of on-site parking at 3 Maple Street and closure of one access drive at 4 Park Street in the Village Center District by Jody Carriere with Lamoureux & Dickinson, agent for LI Maple Street Properties, LLC, owners

Jody Carriere appeared on behalf of the application.

STAFF REPORT

Jeff Arango explained the proposal involves two properties: a strip of land along the railroad tracks (4 Park Street) owned by Central Vermont Railway and 3 Maple Street with a building on the western side of the property (Stevens Square). The owner of the Lincoln Inn leases the property from the railroad. There are two curb cuts, one into the strip of land owned by the railroad and one for 3 Maple Street. The proposal is to close the access to 4 Park Street to deter cut-through traffic. The 21 parking spaces at 3 Maple Street will be reduced by 11 spaces with the closing of the curb cut. There is no minimum parking requirement in the VC District and there is available public parking in the downtown area. The property at 4 Park Street will lose 12 parking spaces. Freeman maple trees will be planted on a curbed island at 3 Maple Street and on Maple Street. The trees are not on the Village's approved plantings list, but the applicant's landscape architect and the tree warden recommends the trees. Regarding the access from Maple Street, staff suggests the access to the Lincoln Inn from Maple Street be preserved through an easement for potential connection in the future. Staff also noted the applicant indicated there is a slight possibility the proposal as presented could change and the amendment will not be executed.

#### APPLICANT COMMENTS

Jody Carriere reviewed the curbed islands with trees at 3 Maple Street. There will be pavers on the island rather than grass for maintenance purposes. Traffic circulation through 3 Maple Street will be two-way traffic flow. There was discussion of the parking layout. Liza Kilcoyne asked if the easement will allow parking on the other side of the planted island. Ms. Carriere noted there is room for some angled and parallel parking spaces. Mark Thibeault suggested the history of the parking for the two sites be researched, recalling the parking for 4 Park Street included both on-site and off-site parking. Chairman Thibeault expressed concern that the Planning Commission was only reviewing a portion of the site plan and should see the entire site plan, including parking for the Lincoln Inn. There is a lack of parking in the downtown area. The proposal eliminates 23 parking spaces, but there may be a way to recapture some parking on the two properties. Liza Kilcoyne felt implementing traffic calming by trying to slow or stop through traffic on the site is the right direction to take. Jeff Arango pointed out 20 public parking spaces will be added to Park Street with the downtown improvement project being done by the Village, and there are over 100 parking spaces within a block of the subject properties that are empty on any given night. Mark Thibeault reiterated more parking could be recouped and the Planning Commission should be looking at the entire project to see how the parking and circulation will work.

Dave Crawford, Village Manager, stated there is urgency in settling the matter relative to the downtown improvement project because the Village's plans are bid out and the project is ready to begin. The proposal is part of the project though the property owner could decide he does not want the proposed amendment to occur. The work in the village right-of-way can occur regardless of the decision by the property owner because the Village holds outstanding easements and agreements that the work will be done.

Liza Kilcoyne observed Stevens Square (3 Maple Street) is mainly a daytime use building and the Lincoln Inn is mostly a night time use so parking spaces will likely be available. Closing the curb cut deters cars speeding through the parking lot to the Maple Street. The island with trees helps beautify the large expanse of parking area and helps organize the space as well as slow traffic speeds. Ms. Kilcoyne agreed the parking layout could be better organized. Mark Thibeault stated the island means more loss of parking spaces. The site plan for the entire parcel (Stevens Square, Lincoln Inn, Greer's Laundromat) should be reviewed by the Planning Commission, stressed Mr. Thibeault. Dave Crawford pointed out the application before the Planning Commission reflects the portion of the applicant's property involved in the village downtown improvement project.

It was noted the jersey barriers currently in place technically are in violation of the existing site plan, but if the amendment is approved then the plan will be in compliance. There was further discussion of the relationship between the downtown improvement project and the site plan amendment before the Planning Commission. Dave Crawford stated amending the village project makes the proposal for a change in parking configuration for the Lincoln Inn vanish. The village project is underway so a determination on the proposal is needed (though a month delay on this section is workable). Liza Kilcoyne suggested to allow the village project to proceed the Planning Commission could look at the proposal for the reconfigured curb cut and the work to be done along Maple Street then look at the entire parking scheme later. Dan Kerin suggested the application be tabled until the requested information on the entire site is received. The Planning Commission should not change the review process because the Village is involved. Dave Crawford pointed out the Village has the choice to not involve the Lincoln Inn property and continue with the downtown improvement project with the curb cut as presently configured. It is not known when the Lincoln Inn property owner will decide if the proposal will be carried out or not. Jeff Arango explained the reason only a portion of the site plan is being isolated and the entire parking layout is not presented is because there is no minimum parking requirement for the VC District and there is parking in excess of the requirement on the Lincoln Inn property. The property owner is comfortable with the parking spaces being removed per the proposal. Mark Thibeault felt the Planning Commission should be current on all the existing uses on the property, the parking requirements for the uses, and the parking layout. The site plan for the entire parcel should be reviewed. Jeff Arango stated parking numbers are based on square footage. The property owner is the best judge of the number of parking spaces needed for the uses on the property. Liza Kilcoyne reiterated the Planning Commission could take action on the proposal to move the curb cut and the work along Maple Street to allow the village project to move forward and then look at the parking layout. Jeff Arango noted the Village holds permanent easements for the trees and the curb cut closure so the downtown project can proceed regardless of the decision by the applicant. Dave Crawford explained the linkage is the curb cut location and the configuration inside the parking lot. The applicant needs to decide where he wants the curb cut. The Board of Trustees has been discussing the development and vitality of the downtown area and the subject property is an important component. Mark Thibeault interjected the interior parking layout could influence where the curb cut is located. Liza Kilcoyne agreed

maximizing parking in the lot needs to be looked at and that will determine where the curb cut should be located. Dave Crawford clarified the downtown project is negotiated and ready to go. There is work on private property and that is the amendment before the Planning Commission. It is acceptable to table the application if the Planning Commission wants additional information. The Village has alternate plans that can be implemented if necessary.

Dan Kerin stated the jersey barriers that are in place are in violation of the approved site plan and should be removed. Allowing a flow of traffic from both sides of the Lincoln Inn property reduces the number of cars cutting across lanes on Park Street. Also, emergency vehicles need to be able to access the property from multiple sides.

#### PUBLIC COMMENT

There were no comments from the public.

**MOTION by Dan Kerin, SECOND by Liza Kilcoyne, to close the public portion of the application by LI Maple Street Properties, LLC (Lincoln Inn) to close a curb cut and reconfigure parking and landscaping at 3 Maple Street and 4 Park Street.**

**VOTING: 4 ayes; motion carried.**

#### DELIBERATION/DECISION

Site Plan Amendment, Close Curb Cut and Reconfigure Parking and Landscaping, 3 Maple Street & 4 Park Street, LI Maple Street Properties, LLC (Lincoln Inn)

**MOTION by Liza Kilcoyne, SECOND by Dan Kerin, to table action on the site plan amendment by LI Maple Street Properties, LLC pending further information (i.e. site plan showing all existing uses on the properties and parking requirement/layout). VOTING: 4 ayes; motion carried.**

#### 5. OTHER PLANNING COMMISSION ITEMS

##### Code Amendments

Jeff Arango reported he submitted the National Flood Insurance regulations to the state for review. Changes pertaining to sign lighting, curb cuts, and setbacks are drafted. Information on historic buildings was previously provided to the Planning Commission. Storm water regulations will take a significant amount of time to review. There was brief discussion of visiting buildings on the list of historic buildings in the village to verify inclusion on the list.

#### 6. ADJOURNMENT

**MOTION by Dan Kerin, SECOND by Andrew Boutin, to adjourn the meeting.**  
**VOTING: 4 ayes; motion carried.**

The meeting was adjourned at 8:50 p.m.

*RScty: M.E.Riordan*