

**SOMERSWORTH SITE REVIEW TECHNICAL COMMITTEE
MEETING MINUTES
October 11, 2023**

MEMBERS PRESENT: George Kramlinger, John Sunderland, Jeff Gallant, Michelle Mears, Paul Robidas, Mike Hoage, and Michael Bobinsky

EXCUSED MEMBERS:

STAFF PRESENT: Dana Crossley, Planning Technician
Anna Stockman, Planning Secretary

The meeting was called to order at 10:00am.

- 1) Approval of Minutes: Sunderland MOVED to approve the minutes from the October 4th meeting.
The MOTION is SECONDED by Gallant.
The MOTION CARRIED 6-0-0.

2) **OLD BUSINESS**

- a. Any old business that may come before the Committee – No old business.

3) **NEW BUSINESS**

- a. **Lett Realty Group, LLC is seeking a conditional use permit and site plan approval for Motor Vehicle Repair Garage/Station use on a property located at 40 Main Street in the Business (B) District, Assessor's Map 11 Lot 204, SITE#17-2023, CUP#06-2023.**

Chris Rice of **TF Moran** was in attendance to represent the application. He stated the structure on the subject property is currently vacant and was a former flooring business. He said the structure is 1,300 SF and is located on a small lot. He referenced a previous meeting with Planning staff and noted the recommendation he received to apply for a Conditional Use Permit (CUP) and a Change of Use plan for a Motor Vehicle Repair Garage. He noted several improvements that have recently been made to the site, including the removal of excess pavement onsite, replacement of the garage doors, replacement of windows, painting in the building's interior, planting of a tree to provide shade to the lot, and the addition of an ADA-accessible striped space. He stated the tenant the property owner formerly had in mind has since moved on and that overall, the property has received a lot of interest from prospective tenants, including seven auto repair business owners. He said the interior and exterior of the building is already set up for an auto repair shop. He said the applicant has a few waiver requests, including stormwater retention, and providing a separate landscape plan, light plan, and colored architectural plans.

Gallant asked whether any consideration has been given to installing a retaining wall on the south side of the property. He noted a retaining wall would allow for more space for parking, as that may be an issue at the site. He suggested adding additional landscaping to the property. He noted structural cracks he has observed on the south side of the building that should be addressed.

Rice stated a retaining wall has been considered and noted the expense associated with the project. He said they do not currently have a tenant lined up and they plan to lease the building.

Robidas asked for clarification on whether the site is zoned for an auto repair use.

Mears clarified the property is located in the Form Based Code Overlay. She noted the application went for conceptual review by the Planning Board to gain their input on the proposed use.

Robidas noted his concern about the property's proposed use and the City's effort to transform and clean up the downtown. He stated if the property is not zoned for that use, he will not vote in favor of the change of use. He said he is concerned about parked vehicles along the roadside.

Kramlinger stated access to the site appears to be good and he noted the site's close proximity to a fire hydrant. He stated it is a standard requirement by the Fire Department that once a use is decided upon, building plans need to be reviewed and stamped by a certified Fire Protection Engineer licensed in New Hampshire. He stated their review may drive certain measures for fire suppression, alarm systems, life safety, and fire prevention.

Bobinsky asked whether the applicant has considered the concerns raised by Robidas, including limited space on the lot for parking.

Rice stated the parking area may be tight but vehicles can be maneuvered onsite. He said between seven-to-nine cars can be parked in the lot.

Bobinsky asked whether the applicant has considered adding a condition regarding where cars would be permitted to park onsite. He stated he would recommend that vehicles do not park in front of bay doors. He asked whether they have considered proposing curb cuts.

Rice stated they have not considered any parking conditions nor have they proposed curb cuts.

Bobinsky asked whether the site's oil and grease separator is functional.

Rice stated he will find that out.

Hoage stated to update their application for water billing. He said if there is no change to water billing, he doesn't have any additional comments. He noted to ensure the water meter is running and there is a backflow.

Crossley reminded the applicant that is part of the CO process.

Sunderland asked the applicant about the property owner's site security plan and stated it would behoove the owner to put up surveillance cameras to monitor vehicles in the lot. He noted there have been issues with cars that have been broken into in the City.

Crossley asked whether there is pavement surrounding the building on all four sides, and she asked whether the applicant has a plan to install a planter box.

Rice stated the owner would install a raised planter with perennials.

Crossley stated there would be a condition that the site's landscaping be kept in good condition. She said she would anticipate that if the application is granted site plan and conditional use permit approval, the Planning Board would likely discuss the number of cars permitted on site.

Robidas noted the potential for parking overflow on the lot.

Mears stated the Planning Board may have concerns about the use, as the use differs from what was proposed during conceptual review. She stated it would be beneficial to know where snow storage will take place on the site.

Rice stated snow storage will be located in one corner of the lot. He stated the tenant would wheel out their trash to the road for roadside pickup.

Mears stated that all lighting onsite will need to be downlit and shielded. She referenced a fence that the applicant had discussed previously with Planning staff. She referenced the building's appearance and asked whether the tenant has considered installing an awning with signage on it.

Rice stated the property owner is not proposing a fence at this time. He said the property owner may speak with abutters regarding an agreement. He said there is an existing signage panel that they plan to use and noted there are no plans for a new awning.

Bobinsky stated he would recommend to the applicant to place restrictions on parking onsite. He noted the proposed use will likely be challenged by the Planning Board. He noted his past observation of the high number of vehicles in the lot

Robidas noted the challenge of enforcing parking restrictions at sites.

Mears stated parking would be a Code Compliance issue.

Rice stated he understands the concerns of SRTC members. He noted the owner's perspective is to utilize the original use of the property as a Motor Vehicle Repair Garage.

b. PJ Land Development, LLC is seeking site plan approval to construct a car wash on a property located at 459 High Street in the Residential/Commercial (RC) District, Assessor's Map 40 Lot 60, SITE#13-2023.

Andrew Platt of **Bohler Engineering** was in attendance to represent the application. He provided an overview of the proposal. He stated the car wash will have a single entrance on High Street. He noted the planned parking on the site. He said utilities will connect to High Street for gas, water, and sewer. He said landscaping onsite will be standard with trees and shrubs throughout.

Gallant asked for clarification on navigation in the car wash. He noted he likes the colorful appearance of the building.

Platt stated the car wash will be two-ways so cars can maneuver to a location to utilize vacuums.

Robidas stated he does not have any comments.

Kramlinger stated he would to see turn radius calculations for a fire apparatus and ambulance to ensure they can navigate the site. He said building plans must be stamped and reviewed by a certified Fire Protection Engineering licensed in the State of New Hampshire. He said prior to the building opening, a walkthrough should be scheduled to show where the safety and electrical shutoffs are in the event of an emergency. He asked about the mechanism type within the car wash.

Platt responded a track mechanism will be used within the car wash.

Bobinsky thanked the applicant for the traffic study included within the application. He noted he is still in the process of reviewing the consultant's recommendations but so far, the study indicates no adverse traffic impact. He stated he may have a few questions about storm drainage data.

Mears stated the Planning Office has sent the drainage report and traffic study to Horsley Witten for third party review.

Bobinsky noted the requirement of sanitary sewer review to determine chemicals and agents proposed to be used in the cleaning process. He also noted the requirement to verify the level of pollutant load into the City's system, and referenced an associated form the applicant will need to complete. He asked whether there is any water that will be recycled.

Platt stated that fifty-to-sixty percent of water used by the car wash will be recycled.

Bobinsky stated there is a water and sewer impact connection fee based on use. He asked whether the applicant is familiar with the types of chemicals that will be used by the car wash.

Platt stated he will get that information.

Mears stated the City will need a list of the chemicals the car wash proposes to use.

Robidas asked how the chemical use is enforced.

Bobinsky stated that City will work with a chemist to draw samples from the car wash. If the limit is exceeded, the applicant would be fined. He said there would also be a pre-treatment plan that would be put in place.

Hoage stated the applicant will need to provide sewer impact fees. He noted to ensure there is a trench inspection prior to the backfill of utilities. He noted the water easement located on the property and asked whether that could be depicted on all pages of the plans.

Platt responded yes.

Sunderland made the recommendation to form a plan for video surveillance onsite, and for the security of any machine that accepts bills on the property. He referenced occurrences in which deposit machines have been dismantled and torn apart. He asked about the applicant's plan for runoff from the car wash during the winter.

Platt responded there will be standard snow removal by plow. He noted there will be minimal runoff from cars exiting the car wash as they will pass through dryers in the building prior to their exit.

Crossley asked about the applicant's plans for revising access to the accessways to the neighboring lot. She referenced the applicant's proposal to use concrete curbs and stated they will need to seek a waiver from installing granite curbing. She noted in the past, the Planning Board has not been favorable to waiving the requirement of the granite curbing. She further noted that honey locust trees are not prohibited but may be discouraged during Planning Board review. She asked whether there will be a buffer between the commercial development and the residential property. She stated the Planning Board may favor a buffer between the commercial and residential area.

Platt stated all existing cuts will be maintained. He said he would need to see the plan to respond to the buffer question.

Crossley stated the applicant will need to seek a bike rack waiver unless they are planning on providing one. She stated the applicant could be granted a reduction in parking if the applicant were to install a bus stop.

Platt noted the proposing to install 41 parking spaces exceeds the parking requirement.

Crossley asked whether they are proposing any EV charging stations, which is a requirement. She noted the applicant could seek a waiver if they do not wish to install EV charging stations. She asked whether landscaping could be added around the freestanding sign. She stated the lighting plan should be adjusted as it

currently exceeds the threshold for trespass. She noted the applicant is proposing to cut into the sidewalk. She asked if details about the sidewalk reconstruction could be provided. She further asked about the difference between a vacuum and a vacuum boom.

Mears noted the requirement of a hazardous materials list as well as information on the anticipated noise level of the vacuums. She requested that snow storage areas be identified on the plans.

Gallant asked about the plan on cleaning up around the vacuums and noted the Planning Board will likely want to know how they plan on snow removal following storms.

Bobinsky pointed out there will be a couple of trenches and utility connections, including one to water and another to natural gas. He stated each of the connections will require a trench or street permit, which are administered by Public Works. He noted the requirement of a traffic detail plan.

Kramlinger asked whether the site would need a trench across High Street. He noted it may be practical to add a fire hydrant on the side of the street closest to the proposed car wash. He stated EV charging station fires require 5,000 gallons to be extinguished. He stated he is seeking feedback from Public Works and Water staff on the feasibility of a new fire hydrant.

Bobinsky and Hoage confirmed the installation of a fire hydrant as part of the trench process would be a reasonable condition.

Hoage noted that a Clow Eddy, open left would be the desired type of fire hydrant on High Street.

Kramlinger stated his preference to locate the fire hydrant as close to High Street as possible, or in the parking lot of the car wash.

James Burdin of the Office of Business Development from the **City of Dover** was in attendance to speak on the proposal. Burdin referenced a letter submitted to the City of Somersworth regarding the proposed project's proximity to Willand Pond, a drinking water supply for the City of Dover, and the potential for contamination. Within the letter, a list of requests of materials for the applicant to provide or address was provided, including an analysis of contaminants that may result from the proposed use, preparation of a hydrogeologic study to investigate the anticipated impacts of the proposed development on an existing or future water supply, and preparation of an environmental protection plan or other visual and narrative information that identifies design elements and/or operating procedures that would prevent release of contaminants.

Kramlinger asked Burdin about whether PFAS are in standard chemicals used in a car wash.

Burdin stated they are frequently used. He referenced an application for a different car wash and noted some of the chemical safety provided included information about PFAS. He stated is unsure whether the use of PFAS is a standard in car wash detergents. He referenced PFAS that were detected at the former National Guard Readiness Site in Somersworth. He said he would refer to a project geologist or chemist for more information.

Bobinsky asked for clarification on the items Burdin is requesting of the applicant on behalf of the Office of Business Development.

Burdin clarified the Office would like to be informed about the anticipated impacts and they have an interest in third-party review of those items.

Bobinsky and Mears noted the City typically does not provide expert testimony on contaminants.

Bobinsky stated in addition to the third party review the City already seeks as part of their review, Public Works and Water departments will have comprehensive discussions regarding chemicals and potential contaminants.

Burdin stated he would be happy to set up a meeting to discuss the application.

Mears stated all comments will be gathered and sent to the applicant.

Andy thanked the Committee for their feedback.

MOTION: Robidas MOVED to ADJOURN.

The MOTION was SECONDED by Kramlinger.

The MOTION CARRIED 6-0-0.

The meeting was adjourned at 11:12am.

Respectfully submitted,

Anna Stockman
Planning Secretary