

A regular meeting of the Bath Planning Board was called on October 1, 2019 for the purpose of conducting regular business.

MEMBERS PRESENT

Bob Oxton, Chair
James Hopkinson, Vice Chair
Cal Stilphen
Russell Martin
John Sunderland
Greg Johnson

MEMBERS ABSENT

Andy Omo

STAFF PRESENT

Ben Averill, City Planner
Karly Perry, Recording Secretary

Mr. Oxton called the meeting to order in the third-floor Council Chambers at 6:00 p.m. on Tuesday, October 1, 2019.

Minutes September 3, 2019, meeting minutes

MR. SUNDERLAND MOVED, SECONDED BY MR. JOHNSON TO ACCEPT THE MINUTES OF SEPTEMBER 3, 2019 AS PRESENTED.

UNANIMOUS APPROVAL**Old Business**

None

New Business**Item 1**

Public Hearing – Request for Contract Rezoning with Site Plan Amendment – 36 High Street (Map 45, Lot 20); Jennifer Greene, applicant

Mr. Averill reviewed the request, noting that the previous site plan was approved in 2014. The applicant is requesting an amendment to add a walk-in cooler to the exterior of the property. Contract rezoning is required due to the nature of the structure. Mr. Averill went on to note that the previous site plan is included in the Board's packet.

Holly Snowdoin, Co-Owner of the business reviewed the current setup with walk-in cooler inside the kitchen. Relocating the cooler to the rear of the property would allow more kitchen space which would also allow for a faster turnaround for diners. Ms. Snowdoin further noted that the freezer will be at the rear of the building and not visible from the entrance or street.

Mr. Stilphen clarified that the cooler is classified as a structure.

Mr. Martin asked that the applicant has reviewed the amendment with the State, whom the applicant confirmed was very excited about the change.

Mr. Oxton opened the floor to public comment.

Shannon Giggey, of Frisbee Lane, expressed concern that the original site plan (which included a flower bed) was no longer in place and presented pictures to the Board of drainage issues on her property which abuts the applicant. Ms. Giggey went on to question whether the applicant had a plan in place to address the water put out by the freezer, further noting concerns regarding the property line and whether the freezer may in fact be placed on her property.

Ms. Snowdoin rebutted that the cooler will be 3 feet off of the current building, stressing that while she did not have the measurements with her, she has confirmed that the cooler will not be off of the property.

Shawn Schutt, Co-Owner, noted that the walk-in currently located in the kitchen drains into a 5 gallon bucket which is emptied weekly. He further reviewed the layout of the new freezer, to which the compressor will be located above the unit, which itself will be on a concrete pad and could be drained in a similar fashion or be allowed to run down the hill naturally to the road. Mr. Schutt went on to explain the logistics of the cooler which can be dismantled and conceded that he was willing to work with whatever solution the Board seemed fit for drainage.

Mr. Stilphen asked for an approximation on the water put out by the unit (approximately 5-7 gallons/weekly during peak summer humidity).

Mr. Oxton closed the public comment session.

Mr. Martin confirmed with Ms. Giggey that the photos were taken recently (July 2019).

Mr. Johnson confirmed that the property is on City water/sewer, which it is.

Mr. Oxton asked Ms. Snowdoin if she was aware of these drainage issues previously.

Ms. Snowdoin stated that this was the first she had heard of any issues with the abutter.

Mr. Sunderland expressed concern with the Board applying sewage or other drainage conditions to the plan, noting that the City staff had reviewed the plan without concern. Mr. Sunderland further expressed his confidence in Public Works' review of the project, stating that any drainage issues or deviations from the plan would be a discussion for the Codes Office.

MR. SUNDERLAND MOVED, SECONDED BY MR. MARTIN, TO APPROVE THE REQUEST FOR CONTRACT REZONING WITH SITE PLAN AMENDMENT AS PROPOSED.

UNANIMOUS APPROVAL

Item 2

Request for Historic District Approval – 37 Oak Street (Map 26, Lot 206), Martin Lakeman, applicant.

Mr. Averill reviewed the request as the applicant is proposing to remove the existing garage and replace with a new garage. Mr. Averill noted that the applicant's revised cover letter was handed out to the Board just before the meeting started.

Martin Lakeman, applicant, introduced himself and presented paint samples for the garage, as well as the house.

Mr. Oxton opened the floor to public comment. Seeing none, Mr. Oxton closed the public comment session.

Mr. Johnson confirmed that there will be stairs on the outside of the building.

Mr. Lakeman confirmed that due to fire codes there will be a set of stairs outside, not visible from the street.

Mr. Averill clarified that while he appreciated the applicant sharing his paint colors with the Board, the choice is entirely his to make.

MR. HOPKINSON MOVED, SECONDED BY MR. STILPHEN, TO APPROVE THE REQUEST FOR HISTORIC DISTRICT APPROVAL AS SUBMITTED.

UNANIMOUS APPROVAL

Item 3

Pre-Approval Workshop – Site Plan and Historic District Approval – 26 and 38 Centre Street (Map 27, Lot 99 & 109); Chester Bartels 26C, LLC.

Mr. Averill reviewed the request by the applicant to discuss proposals for both 26 and 38 Centre Street. Mr. Averill stated that the applicant will show a Power Point presentation to review the proposal.

Chester Bartels introduced himself noting that he is a Principal for Clockwork Design with contacts in the Bath area, and began his presentation, reviewing a project proposal for a boutique hotel at 38 and 26 Centre Street.

Mr. Bartels went on to outline the boutique experience, noting that he has been working with Historical Consultant Robin Hayes for suggestions on maintaining the building façade. He is also working with a traffic consultant, as well as Main Street Bath to gain insight on the area.

The project will connect the two current buildings. The first floor will remain in its current state with businesses as they are today. The 2nd floor will begin the boutique hotel and wellness experience. The applicant noted that due to the early stage of the presentation, surveying of the property has not been completely, and many of the utility concerns have not yet been addressed.

Mr. Bartels went on to review the projected footprint, which will add square footage to the existing retail area, allowing more businesses or the expansion of current businesses. The applicant noted that this will close the alley, creating a better pedestrian experience. He then continued to review a potential site plan including green space.

The applicant added that the project is looking to take advantage of historic tax credits, which would entail maintaining rigid historical standards.

Mr. Bartels continued to review the 72 hotel rooms projected, noting that the 3rd floor was previously a Masonic Temple and the plan is to preserve and celebrate the architecture. 38 Centre Street would remain 5 stories with 26 Centre Street being expanded to 5 stories as well. The façade of the building will be broken up to appear as 3 different buildings rather than one large mass. The applicant further reviewed building improvements, noting that the existing architecture and cornice work would be preserved, while colors would be edited for a cleaner appearance. Canvas canopies would be upgraded to a more sturdy metal material.

Mr. Bartels went on to discuss the traffic analysis, whose determinations addressed parking, but noted that accident incidents were minimal and visibility at the site presented no issues.

Mr. Johnson asked if the potential for development to the east of the site was a concern.

Mr. Bartels responded that sprinklers may need to be added in the hotel rooms.

Mr. Oxton asked if the applicant had considered the parking situation.

Mr. Bartels acknowledged that parking is a major concern, as well as cars moving around the City. Valet parking was discussed, as well as timing considerations.

Mr. Oxton added that most spaces are private lots where employees of BIW pay rent, which could be problematic.

Mr. Bartels noted that ideally all parking spaces along Centre Street would be closed off, but stated that he does not want to impact current businesses and their deliveries. Ideally, there would be 3-4 spaces for check-in.

Mr. Averill noted that Mr. Bartels will be sitting down with the Planning Department to discuss these issues, noting that City Council is currently discussing ordinance changes to loading zones.

Mr. Sunderland suggested the applicant work closely with current business owners to collaborate and gain information, noting that there is potential for after-hours parking, as well as vacant buildings which may offer some solution.

Mr. Bartels agreed that he was hoping to gain insight at his meeting with Main Street Bath.

Mr. Sunderland reviewed obvious concerns regarding parking, water and sewer, then complimented the applicant on his design.

Mr. Martin asked if there was a definition to "boutique hotel".

Mr. Bartels explained that the boutique hotel was more so a slang term, or concept. The hotel will target a different clientele seeking a more authentic, hand crafted experience.

Mr. Stilphen asked what the approximate staffing would be (20-30 people).

The applicant concluded by asking if he had the support of the Board in moving forward.

Mr. Sunderland suggested that the applicant had received a good sense of the Board's stance, noting that with the exception of parking, the Board had shown no concerns on the scope of the project. Mr. Sunderland reiterated that the applicant would benefit from conversing with current business owners, noting that the City Staff also provide excellent support in identifying infrastructure issues in order to create a successful plan.

Mr. Oxton asked if there was a goal start date.

Mr. Bartels noted that the project would be moving forward as quickly as practicable; noting that the build time would be 12-18 months.

Mr. Stilphen expressed his excitement for the project and its ability to transition the city forward.

Other Business None

MR. HOPKINS MOVED TO ADJOURN, SECONDED BY MR. JOHNSON.

UNANIMOUS APPROVAL

MEETING ADJOURNED AT 7:15 PM.