

**DRAFT
Minutes
Hartford Planning Commission
February 5, 2024**

**THIS MEETING WAS CONDUCTED IN COMPLIANCE WITH
THE VERMONT OPEN MEETING LAW
IN PERSON WITH ELECTRONIC PARTICIPATION AVAILABLE**

Present: Bruce Riddle, Vice Chair, Toby Dayman, Dillon Bianchi, John Heath, Colin Butler, Kim Souza, Selectboard Liaison, and Jo-Ann Ells, Zoning Administrator

Absent: Dylan Kreis

Administrative Matters

Bruce Riddle read the hybrid meeting script, took a roll call, explained the Hearing process, asked people to sign in, reviewed the Interested Party Rule, and administered the oath.

1. Public Comment

None.

2. Sketch Plan Review- Redevelopment of Brookside Nursing Home

Property owners Tim Sidore and Mike Davidson, and Jim Wasser of Studio Nexus were present.

Bruce Riddle stated that the Planning Commission would not be taking public comment at this time. He noted that the Commission had received a memo from Jo-Ann Ells dated January 24, 2024 regarding density.

Jim Wasser and Tim Sidore gave an overview of the proposed redevelopment. Of note was the intention to apply for an Affordable Housing Development and restrict access from Brookside Drive to emergency vehicles.

Tim Sidore commented that the redevelopment would result in less traffic than the nursing home.

John Heath suggested considering different sized units to create more diversity.

Toby Dayman suggested the applicant eliminate or reduce the parking spaces adjacent to Brookside Drive.

Colin Butler stated that he wants to see housing developed in town, but expressed concern with the size of the units.

Jo-Ann Ells noted that the applicant needs to submit information justifying their request for a density bonus. It was noted that a floor plan would be helpful.

Dillon Bianchi stated that he was concerned with the size of the units and noted that families have a difficult time finding housing.

Colin Butler stated that he'd like to see workforce housing provided.

Bruce Riddle stated that he would prefer fewer than 39 units and for some larger units to be included. He invited the applicant to come back to the Commission with additional information regarding how the project meets the criteria for a Planned Development and justification for a density bonus.

Colin Butler noted that the lack of public transit nearby was a concern.

Tim Sidore offered that they are looking at providing a shared car program.

Public Hearing

1. Application #23-23 by Black Rock Investment LLC (owner/applicant) for Site Development Plan Approval under section 260-45 of the Hartford Zoning Regulations for a 48 dwelling units in a Multi-Unit Building, proposed lot 45-0243-000, Sykes Mountain Avenue and Hickory Ridge, White River Junction, in a R1-M zoning district. (Continued from December 4, 2023)

2. Application #23-25 by Black Rock Investment LLC (owner/applicant) for Site Development Plan Approval under section 260-45 of the Hartford Zoning Regulations for 192 dwelling units in four Multi-Unit Buildings, proposed lot 45-0162-000, Sykes Mountain Avenue and Hickory Ridge, White River Junction, in a proposed Planned Development. (Continued from December 4, 2023)

The Planning Commission decided to review applications #23-23 and #23-25 at the same time.

Earle Simpson, Dennis Marquise, Kevin Worden, Paul Simon, Adam Wagnor, Evan Haugh, Irwin Perret Jr., and Irwin Perret Sr. were present.

Dennis Marquise noted that they have engaged a new surveyor and are working on the realignment of Sykes Mountain Avenue and Hickory Ridge including making Hickory Ridge a dead end.

Kevin Worden reviewed overall master plan sheet L1.0. He noted that the realignment of the road would require approval from the Selectboard.

Paul Simon reviewed the proposed landscaping and amenities on sheet L1.0. He noted that they are working on a revised photometric plan. He added that they are working on landscaping and urban forest maintenance plans which they would like to submit for approval before the first Certificate of Occupancy is requested. In response to concerns voiced from a neighbor about lighting, he assured the Commission that the lights would meet the requirements of section 260-31 E of the Zoning Regulations.

Dennis Marquise stated that they met with Advance Transit and a shelter would be provided at the bus stop. He added that with regard to energy efficiency, lighting fixtures will be LED, EV charging stations will be provided, and heat pumps and solar panels will be installed on the rooftops.

Dennis Marquise noted that the trail system outside of the immediate development will be open to the public during daylight hours.

Evan Haugh stated that three additional traffic counts had been done and were reflective of the previous count. He added that the volume of traffic anticipated to be generated is half of what would warrant a left turn lane.

The Commission reviewed the revised elevation plans including colors and rooftop apparatus.

Dennis Marquise noted that a maintenance shed would be provided in one of the proposed garage bays and the detention pond on the corner of Sykes and Hickory will be installed with the first building.

The Commission reviewed revised renderings of the project.

Dillon Bianchi requested that the applicant provide a rendering from Sykes Mountain Avenue looking directly at the project.

Colin Butler expressed his concern with the lack of affordable units in the larger project. He asked how it would be guaranteed that there would be affordable units in the smaller project. Jo-Ann Ells noted that this would be in the Findings of Fact/a condition of the permit.

Irwin Perret Jr. noted that an Act 250 jurisdictional opinion requires the construction of the affordable units by 2029.

Bruce Riddle asked where delivery vehicles such as UPS/Fed Ex would park. Kevin Worden pointed to an available area on the plan for the 192 units.

It was noted that a school bus stop needed to be reviewed.

The Commission asked that the applicant ensure that the buried propane tanks do not interfere with the open space east of the gazebo.

4. 02-05-24

Bruce Riddle asked for public comment.

Noting concerns with someone falling down the steep embankment. Peter DeCoff requested that the applicant install a fence along the back of his property. He added that he has a well and wanted to know if construction would affect it. He commented that he appreciates and supports the project.

Colin Butler moved to continue the applications to April 15, 2024. Dillon Bianchi seconded, and the motion passed unanimously.

Administrative matters continued

3. Minutes

Colin Butler moved to approve the minutes of December 18, 2023. John Heath seconded, and the motion passed unanimously.

4. Administrative Permits

It was noted that an administrative permit was issued for the Upper Valley Haven to operate a temporary Food Shelf at 608 North Main Street. Colin Butler expressed concern that this use was not discussed when The Haven was before the Commission in December for their application for an Emergency Shelter.

5. Act 250 Applications

None.

6. Town Plan Steering Committee update

No report.

7. Regional Planning Commission update

No report.

8. Climate Action Plan update

No report.

9. Availability for the next Public Hearing

All Commissioners anticipated being available for the March 11, 2024 Hearing.

Adjournment

5. 02-05-24

At 7:55 p.m., Colin Butler moved to adjourn. Toby Dayman seconded, and the Hearing was adjourned.

Respectively Submitted,

Toby Dayman, Clerk

Planning Commission Terms

John Heath 03-22-24

Toby Dayman 06-28-24

Colin Butler 07-12-24

Bruce Riddle 02-07-25

Dillon Bianchi 09-05-25

Dylan Kreis 6-26-26

John Reid 02-05-27