

**Approved
Minutes
Hartford Planning Commission
April 17, 2023**

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

Present: John Reid, Chair, (01-11-24), Bruce Riddle, Vice Chair, (02-07-25), Toby Dayman (06-28-24), Dillon Bianchi (09-05-25), John Heath (03-22-24), Colin Butler (07-12-24), Kim Souza, Selectboard Liaison, and Jo-Ann Ells, Zoning Administrator

Absent: None

Administrative Matters

John Reid read the Hybrid Meeting Script and took a roll call. He explained that the first item on the administrative agenda was a “Sketch Plan Review” and that the purpose was to give the developer an opportunity to receive feedback from the Planning Commission on a potential development. He noted it was not customary for the Planning Commission to include an open forum discussion and comments from interested persons and the general public were reserved for the Public Hearing.

1. Sketch Plan Review by Black Rock Investments, LLC for a residential development on Sykes Mountain Avenue and Hickory Ridge.

Earl Simpson introduced himself and gave an overview of projects he has been a part of in the Upper Valley for the past 40 years including permitting for the Sykes Mountain Avenue and Hickory Ridge site which was not constructed. He noted that he was teaming up with the Perret family who will bring the experience and financial depth to see the (amended) project to fruition.

Irwin Perret Jr. introduced himself and shared that his family had been in the development business for 70 years, have been coming to the upper valley for 30 years, and understand the need for housing.

Nik Fiore of Engineering Ventures introduced himself and gave a general overview of a site plan.

Adam Wagner of Market Square Architect gave an overview of the site and proposed architecture.

Bruce Riddle shared the following comments:

- A wall/landscaping should be considered to block headlights from abutting

2. 04-17-22

properties

- A sidewalk and bike path need to be included on the access road
- Applicant should consider relocating the existing house

John Reid suggested:

- The parking for the upper level be located behind the buildings and if this is not possible, providing adequate screening on the west side of the lot.
- Providing adequate room for outdoor recreation
- Providing more 2-bedroom units

Toby Dayman noted:

- The long, tall buildings will be visible and will create an image for WRJ, so the choice of exterior materials needs to be good
- The applicant should consider breaking up the fenestration and including a jog in the structures to break it up
- Recreational amenities, including trails, will be important
- Landscaping will be crucial

John Heath recommended the application:

- Meet high energy performance standards
- Meet ADA requirements
- Include information about traffic congestion
- Consider materials exterior that are not galvanized metal

Colin Butler suggested:

- The applicant considers including affordable, work force housing
- A natural buffer be provided on all sides of the development
- The applicant provide a visual analysis of the development including the view from several vantage points
- Galvanized metals are not used for the exterior, the buildings do not mimic the architecture of what has been recently approved, and the design is something that “says Vermont”
- Removing the gatehouse from the main entrance

Public Hearing

John Reid opened the Public Hearing, read the Hybrid Meeting Script, took a roll call, asked attendees to sign in, explained the Hearing process, Interested Party Rule, and administered the oath.

1. Application #23-01 by Catamount Self Storage, LLC (owner/applicant) for Site

3. 04-17-22

Development Plan Approval under section 260-45 of the Hartford Zoning Regulations for a self-storage facility, lot 08-0090-000, Route 14, White River Junction, in an IC zoning district. (Continued from March 13, 2023)

Nick Tsouknakis, Jeff Goodrich, and Skip Nalette were present.

Dillon Bianchi recused himself.

John Reid asked the applicant to give an overview of the materials submitted since the meeting in March.

Jeff Goodrich noted that the following had been submitted as outlined in Jo-Ann Ells' memo of April 4, 2023:

- Revised Plans
- Self-Storage Perspective/Elevation
- RV Storage Perspective/Elevation
- Photometric and Light Specifications and Details
- Electrical, Lighting and Cameras Brochure
- Existing Conditions Worksheet
- Proposed Conditions Worksheet

He explained that a Turning Movement Plan for a Tractor Trailer was not provided as the applicant is not proposing tractor trailer access.

John Reid asked if two parking spaces were adequate. Jeff Goodrich explained that the parking spaces would be used for people accessing the kiosk, not the rental units, and therefore would be adequate.

Toby Dayman confirmed the facility would be accessible 24/7 and the storage units would not be heated.

Toby Dayman suggested that the row of junipers on the northwest side of the lot be extended to the capped rebar.

John Heath asked about the color of the facility. Nick Tsouknakis stated that he was considering a shade of blue.

Colin Butler asked if there was any new information regarding stormwater.

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Jeff Goodrich stated that the stormwater design meets state regulations and water will be directed to existing facilities. He reviewed a plan showing the developed lot to the west.

John Reid asked for public comment.

Michael Lazar requested screening along the shared property line.

Michael Lazar requested that he be informed if the pipe referenced on a 2005 plan by Hathorn Surveys prepared for Peter Jasmin is discovered.

Michael Lazar requested that the applicant supply evidence that he has the right to connect to the existing catch basin in the 50' ROW, noting it is part of his infrastructure.

Michael Lazar submitted a page from his deed and stated that it outlines his right to install utilities in the 50' ROW.

John Heath commented that he was uncomfortable approving the application with the conflict regarding stormwater.

Jeff Goodrich stated that State standards were being met. He added that the 50' ROW should not be used for landscaping as requested by the abutter.

Colin Butler commented that he thought the requested landscaping was reasonable. Jeff Goodrich questioned the need to screen one self-storage facility from another.

Colin Butler stated that he was not prepared to vote given the conflicting information regarding the stormwater design and use of the infrastructure in the 50' ROW.

Jeff Goodrich stated that the post runoff is not being increased.

Several Commissioners questioned the Commission's role to adjudicate the right to use the infrastructure in the 50' ROW.

It was agreed that the Commission preferred to continue the application so that clear information on the stormwater design and the right to use the infrastructure in the 50'ROW could be submitted.

Michael Lazar noted he was out of town for the Commission's May 22nd Hearing and would be back on May 23rd.

Bruce Riddle moved to continue the Hearing to 6PM, May 24, 2023. He noted that the applicant needs to submit clear information regarding the design of the stormwater and their right to use the existing infrastructure in the 50' ROW to the Zoning Administrator by May 8, 2023. The motion was seconded and passed unanimously

5. 04-17-22

2. Application #23-02 by Chorro, LLC (owner/applicant) Site Development Plan Approval under section 260-45 to convert a single-unit dwelling to a two-unit dwelling, lot 45-0258-000, 261 South Main Street, White River Junction, in an CB zoning district

Dillon Bianchi rejoined the Commission.

Tim Sidore and Jim Wasser were present.

Jim Wasser gave an overview of the application.

John Reid commented that the question before the Commission was the request for a reduction in the number of required parking spaces.

Tim Sidore confirmed that parking spaces would be assigned.

It was agreed that stone or pavers should be added to the 3' wide area between the building and parallel parking spaces.

The Commission took a short break.

Jim Wasser commented that they hope to open up the front porch.

There was no public comment.

Dillon Bianchi commented that he supported the requested reduction in parking spaces.

Bruce Riddle moved to approve the application on the condition that stone or pavers be added to the 3' wide area between the building and parallel parking spaces. Dillon Bianchi seconded, and the motion passed unanimously.

Administrative Matters Continued

1. Elect officers

Colin Butler moved to retain the current officers (John Reid, Chair, Bruce Riddle, Vice Chair and Toby Dayman, Clerk). Dillon Bianchi seconded, and the motion passed unanimously.

2. Minutes March 13, 2023

Bruce Riddle moved to approve the minutes with one correction. Colin Butler seconded, and the motion passed unanimously.

3. Administrative Permits

Jo-Ann Ells reviewed the following projects that received administrative approval:

6. 04-17-22

- 27 North Main- Change from restaurant to retail
- Quechee Gorge Village- Tasting room for VT Spirits (46 seats)

4. Act 250 Applications

None

5. Town Plan Steering Committee update

Bruce Riddle noted that a successful meeting was held on April 13th.

6. Regional Planning Commission (RPC) update

Bruce Riddle shared that he attended a RPC meeting with Lori Hirshfield where the RPC was proposing criteria to be used by the RCP to make land use decisions and that their request to table to issue for further discussion was voted down 21-1.

Bruce Riddle noted that at the next RPC meeting they would be reviewing Town Plans from 8 towns. Colin Butler noted that the Commission should be looking at what other towns are doing and asked where the meeting would be noticed. Jo-Ann Ells stated that she would inquire.

7. Climate Action Plan update

No report.

8. Availability for the next Public Hearing

All Commissioners anticipated being available for the Public Hearings in May.

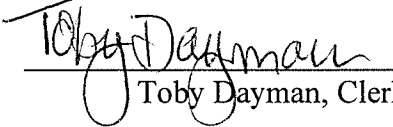
9. Public comment

Cathy Melocik expressed frustration at a Commissioner's categorization as some residents as "NIMBY's" at a recent Steering Committee meeting.

Adjournment

At 9:00 p.m., Bruce Riddle moved to adjourn. Colin Butler seconded, and the Hearing was adjourned.

Respectively Submitted,



Toby Dayman, Clerk