

**Minutes
Hartford Planning Commission
August 3, 2020**

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

Present: Bruce Riddle, John Reid, Toby Dayman, Dillon Bianchi, Dave Sherman, Dennis Brown, Robin Adair Logan Lori Hirshfield, Director of Planning and Development and Jo-Ann Ells, Zoning Administrator

Absent: Kim Souza, Selectboard Liaison

Administrative Matters

Bruce Riddle read a script as required to hold a remote Public Hearing.

1. Addition 186 South Main Street (River Roost)

Mark Babson and Jon Criswell were present.

Jon Criswell gave an overview of materials that we submitted to the Commission prior to the Hearing including existing and proposed site plans and a document outlining parking requirements. He noted that Grow-pro is leaving the building and River Roost will use the space for production. He added that this frees up 6 parking spaces. He noted that he and Mark Babson had met with Resource Systems Group to discuss preparation of a traffic and parking study. Lori Hirshfield noted that the study would help the Commission make an informed decision. She noted that Smith and Vansant had done an excellent job coming up with additional on-site parking spaces.

John Reid asked if the study would anticipate parking needs post COVID-19. Lori Hirshfield responded that the study would need to evaluate the long term.

John Reid asked if the Town anticipated increasing the number of parking spaces in the municipal lot. Lori Hirshfield said that the Town hopes to add 50 parking spaces next construction season, but it is not guaranteed.

Other Commissioners expressed their opinion that a study would be helpful.

Dave Sherman noted that he was concerned with the heavy reliance on municipal parking.

It was noted that more information was needed to evaluate the feasibility proposed loading area.

Mike Davidson expressed his support for the project.

2. 08-03-20

Public Hearing

Bruce Riddle read a script as required to hold a remote Public Hearing, explained the Hearing process and took a roll call, opened the Hearing and administered the oath.

1. Application #20-10 by Quechee Gorge Friendship Inn, Inc. (owner/applicant) for an amendment to an approved Planned Development Master Plan, lots 13-0033-000 and 13-0034-000, Woodstock Road, Quechee.

Roger Shepard participated via telephone.

Jo-Ann Ells reviewed the application.

Toby Dayman asked how many rooms would be converted to extended stay. Roger Shepard stated that he anticipated a portion of the rooms in the main hotel would be converted, but he did not have an exact number.

Dennis Brown commented that this could change the atmosphere of the hotel.

There was no public comment.

John Reid noted a typo in Finding #3.

John Reid moved to close the Public Hearing. Robin Adair Logan seconded, and the Hearing was closed.

John Reid moved to approve the application with the correction as noted. Robin Adair Logan seconded, and the motion passed unanimously.

2. Application #20-11 by Execusuite, LLC (owner/applicant) for Site Development Plan Approval under section 260-45 of the Hartford Zoning Regulations for the addition of a ballet studio and two apartments, lot 46-0008-000, 87 Maple Street, White River Junction, in a CB-2 zoning district.

3. Application #20-12 by Execusuite, LLC (owner/applicant) for Site Development Plan Approval under section 260-45 of the Hartford Zoning Regulations for a restaurant and nine apartments, lot 46-0007-000, 101 Maple Street, White River Junction, in a CB-2 zoning district.

Bruce Riddle opened application #20-11 and #20-12.

Mike Davidson and Tim Sidore participated via video conferencing and Adam Morse participated via telephone.

Tim Sidore noted that they wanted to add a ballet studio and two apartments at 87 Maple Street and a restaurant and nine apartments at 101 Maple Street.

Adam Morse reviewed the site plan.

3. 08-03-20

Bruce Riddle questioned the adequacy of parking. Adam Morse reviewed the parking chart he submitted with the applications.

Tim stated that parking was adequate given the mixed uses and ability to control parking as the property owners. He added that while not in the immediate downtown there is public parking and public transportation. Adam Morse added that bike racks would be provided.

John Reid expressed concern with the amount of parking that will be needed for the ballet school and the possibility for vehicular congestion behind 87 Maple Street.

Tim Sidore explained that the ballet studio generally has one instructor with no parent participation although in the past up to 3 parents participated. He noted that as property owners they will dictate where parking will be for the ballet studio and can request that parents park off site.

Tim Sidore noted that at this time he did not have a tenant for the restaurant.

John Reid expressed concern with the lack of specific facts for the ballet studio and undetermined future uses at 87 Maple Street and number of open questions.

Toby Dayman asked questions about the site plan. It was agreed that a retaining wall was needed by the 1:1 slope by the dumpster.

Toby Dayman noted that the lighting in the back of 87 Maple Street is dim. Jo-Ann Ells stated that addressing this was included as a condition in the Findings.

Toby Dayman expressed concern with the applicant's request for 24/7 hours of operation for the restaurant. Tim Sidore suggested 8AM-7PM seven days a week.

Toby Dayman asked if the applicants had any plans to merge apartments into larger units if tenants requested. Tim Sidore stated that the apartments will not increase in size.

Toby Dayman commented that there is too much unknown about parking. Tim Sidore stated that as the landlord he can make it work. Mike Davidson reiterated the response.

Robin Adair Logan stated that she did not want to see concerns with parking prevent housing being developed.

Dave Sherman questioned the lack of a designated loading area. Mike Davidson commented that this was common in a downtown.

Dave Sherman noted that traffic flow is tight, but he was willing to allow it so the building could be used. He noted he was concerned with the request for reduced parking. Mike Davidson stated that parking can be managed, and residents are likely only to be there at night.

Dennis Brown suggested exploring access to Pine Street.

4. 08-03-20

Dennis Brown stated he was concerned with the rough surface of the exit drive and snow falling from the roof. Tim Sidore noted that the drive will be paved, and snow guards will be installed.

Bruce Riddle asked if there was any public comment.

Eric Bunge expressed his support for the project and asked that it not be denied due to parking concerns.

David Briggs expressed his support for the project.

Bruce Riddle suggested that the application be continued to the next hearing so the applicants could provide more information about parking.

Jo-Ann Ells noted that information about parking was included in her July 27, 2020 memo to the Commission.

John Reid stated that three was too much up in the air to make a decision.

Tim Sidore requested that the Commission approve the ballet studio and two apartments at 87 Maple Street and continue the application for the restaurant and nine apartments at 101 Maple Street.

Robin Adair Logan supported the request.

It was agreed that 3 stacked parking spaces would be eliminated.

Jo-Ann Ells explained that required parking is as follows:

| | |
|----------------------|-----------|
| Total parking spaces | 26 |
| ES Fitness | 2 |
| Standard Tattoo | 2 |
| Royal Nutrition | 4 |
| Local Provisions | 8 |
| <u>Apartments</u> | <u>2*</u> |
| Total | 18 |

And that this left 8 parking spaces for the ballet studio.

*The Planning Commission agreed to reduce the requirement to 1:1

John Reid moved to close the Public Hearing on application #20-11. Dennis Brown seconded, and the Public Hearing was closed.

Jo-Ann Ells reviewed changes to the Findings of Fact as discussed.

John Reid moved to approve the application with the noted changes. Dave Sherman seconded, and the motion passed unanimously.

Toby Dayman stated that a parking study would clear up uncertainty.

Mike Davidson asked if they could do their own study. Toby Dayman stated that he would prefer a professional study.

John Reid moved to continue application #20-12 to September 14, 2020 and noted that the applicants need to have the parking study submitted to Jo-Ann Ells by August 21, 2020. Toby Dayman seconded, and the motion passed unanimously.

Administrative Matters Continued

1. Minutes

Dave Sherman moved to approve the minutes of July 13, 2020. John Reid noted one correction. Toby Dayman seconded, and the motion passed unanimously.

2. Administrative Permits

Bruce Riddle reported on the following administrative permits:

- Maxfield- Press box
- Quechee Gorge- Art Center “Made in Vermont. Designed in Vermont”

3. Availability for the next Public Hearing

All Commissioners anticipated being available for the September 14th Hearing.

4. Public comment

None

Adjournment

At 8:25 p.m. John Reid moved to close the Hearing. Toby Dayman seconded, and the Hearing was adjourned.

Respectively Submitted,

Toby Dayman, Clerk