



Town of Lebanon
PLANNING AND ZONING COMMISSION
Regular Meeting
Monday, January 22, 2024
7:00 p.m.

Town Hall Downstairs Conference Room
579 Exeter Road

MINUTES

Members Present: Wayne Budney (Chair), Robin Chesmer (Secretary), Thomas Benoit, Alan Miller, Todd Pannone, Keith Sczurek, Karl Weinsteiger, Julie Chalifoux (Alternate), Ethan Stearns (Alternate)

Members absent: Tom Dunham (Alternate)

Also present: Philip Chester (Town Planner), Catherine McCall (Secretary)

I. CALL TO ORDER

The meeting was called to order by Chairman Wayne Budney at 7:00 p.m.

The Pledge of Allegiance was recited.

II. PUBLIC HEARING

- a. PZ-23-25: Town of Lebanon, 22 Imogene Lane, Assessors Map 236, Lot 10. Application for special permit for 16-units of age-restricted affordable senior housing under Zoning Sec. 4.11b.1).

Mr. Chesmer recused himself as a member of the Board of Selectman. Mr. Budney appointed Mr. Stearns a voting member and read the Public Hearing legal notice.

Architect William Brewster spoke on behalf of the application. He and Brandon Handfield P.E. were employed by the Board of Selectmen to develop the design for affordable senior housing units to be located on Imogene Lane adjacent to the Senior Center. They worked with a study group made up of First Selectman Kevin Cwikla, Selectman Robin Chesmer, Senior Center Director Darcy Battye, Commission on Aging member Liz Shilosky, Economic Development Commission Chair Jim Russo, and Town Planner Philip Chester.

Mr. Brewster noted that soils limited the project development to 16 housing units, and it was determined that four (4) one story buildings was the most appropriate residential building form. He described the proposed building design, layout of the apartments, 33 parking spaces, and proposed rain gardens to manage water runoff.

Mr. Chester stated that planning for senior housing has been ongoing for 30 years and is identified in the Commission's 2000, 2010, and 2020 Plan of Conservation and Development as a housing need. He noted that residents age 55 and older now represent 35% of the population and are anticipated to grow in the coming decades.

Mr. Weinstein asked about the use of the Senior Center well for the project and why there is no backup well. Mr. Chester noted that the town is trying to keep project costs low as an incentive to obtain a developer and that using the existing well was thought to be cost effective, but that this may change as more is learned.

Kevin Cwikla, First Selectman spoke to say that many hours have been put into the planning of this project. He would like older residents to be able to remain in town and believes this proposal fits the needs of the community.

Mr. Miller asked what was considered affordable. Mr. Chester stated that housing units can be deemed low income (those earning 80% of median household income for the area), very low income (50% of median household income), and extremely low income (30% of median household income), with the rents based on the number of persons in the household. He does not have specific rents for these numbers.

Darcy Battye, Director of the Senior Center, is very much in support of the project and submitted a letter to that effect dated 1/19/23. She often receives calls asking where seniors might get housing in the area.

Liz Shilosky, Chairman of the Commission on Aging, spoke to note the Commission's support for the proposal.

Mr. Budney noted that he is enthusiastic about the project.

Mr. Weinstein asked what the parking lot would be made of and was told it would be pavement.

Mr. Miller asked how many other affordable senior units are in town now. Mr. Chester stated there are 24 units at Stone Ridge Estates but explained that they are in jeopardy of remaining affordable housing in the future. He noted that with the current proposal, the town would own the land and would have added control to keep the housing units affordable.

Dr. Joanne Phillips, Old Colchester Road, member of the Commission on Aging, noted that she enthusiastically supports this project.

The Public Hearing closed at 7:25 pm.

III. OLD BUSINESS

- a. PZ-23-25: Town of Lebanon, 22 Imogene Lane, Assessors Map 236, Lot 10. Application for special permit for 16-units of age-restricted affordable senior housing under Zoning Sec. 4.11b.1).

Mr. Benoit noted that he is only sorry that there are not more units proposed. Other Commission members spoke in support of the project.

Motion made by Mr. Miller and seconded by Mr. Benoit to approve PZ-23-25 as presented. Motion carried unanimously.

Mr. Chesmer rejoined the Commission.

IV. NEW BUSINESS

- a. Design Review Application: 59 West Town Street, Assessors Map 235, Lot 19. Roof mounted solar panels.

Mr. Miller asked what problems approving this might create later if other properties in the district wished to add solar panels to their homes in view of public roads. He voiced concern with the six (6) panels proposed on the south facing side of the house dormer along West Town Street. Mr. Chesmer agreed and, while recognizing that the homeowner has done excellent work restoring the home, feels the panels on the south side will be visible from the road and Town Green and would take away from the Village character.

Motion made by Mr. Miller and seconded by Mr. Sczurek to deny the application to place six (6) solar panels that will be visible from the public road as they are not in conformance with the Village Green District Design Review Standards. Motion carried unanimously.

- b. Pre-Application Discussion: Town of Lebanon Board of Education, 891 Exeter Road. Internally illuminated school signs. Nicole McGillicuddy and Sarah Haynes were present.

No action was taken.

V. MEETING MINUTES

- a. December 18, 2023

Motion made by Mr. Pannone and seconded by Mr. Weinstein to approve the December 18, 2023 meeting minutes with the addition that Mr. Chesmer had also welcomed Mr. Miller to the Commission, in addition to Mr. Sczurek and Mr. Dunham. Motion carried unanimously.

VI. TOWN PLANNER REPORT

Mr. Chester noted that the Commission should expect an application from Grand Lake Hotel to expand parking at the facility. Commissioners asked about adherence to the Scenic Road Ordinance relative to tree removal.

VII. EXECUTIVE SESSION - None.

VIII. ADJOURNMENT

Motion made by Mr. Miller and seconded by Mr. Weinstein to adjourn the meeting at 8:44 p.m. Motion carried unanimously.

Minutes respectfully submitted,
Catherine McCall, Secretary