

PLANNING BOARD  
TOWN OF PETERBOROUGH, NH

Minutes of October 9, 2017

**Members Present:** Chair Ivy Vann, Alan Zeller, Bob Holt and Rich Clark

**Staff Present:** Peter Throop, Director and Laura Norton, Administrative Assistant, Office of Community Development

Chair Vann called the meeting to order at 6:30 p.m. and introduced the members and staff. “We have two things on our agenda tonight” she said adding “the first of which is a Preliminary Consultation from the Library but let’s start with the Minutes.”

**Minutes:**

A motion was made/seconded (Zeller/Hanlon) to approve the Minutes of September 11, 2017 as written with all in favor.

**Preliminary Consultation** – Design Review regarding redevelopment of the Peterborough Town Library located at 2 Concord Street, Parcel No. U017-139-000 and U017-141-000.

Chair Vann told the audience “this is a non-binding design review. It is just a conversation to talk about what is coming up and to think about issues the Board may have.”

Library Director Corinne Chronopoulos gave a brief history of the timeline from the creation of the Library’s Master Plan in 2004 to the present. She noted the collaborative efforts of the volunteers, the 1833 Society, the Library Board of Trustees, the Building Committee and the many advisors who participated in the first feasibility study and fundraising to the preliminary design they were unfolding tonight.

As Ms. Chronopoulos introduced Steven Gerrard, AIA of Ann Beha Architects (Boston, MA) she noted “we are lucky to have them.” She told the members the schematic design had been completed with input from the Heritage Commission and the Board of Selectmen. “We look forward to any feedback and have been encouraged to enter the public budgeting process as we are at final design” she said.

Ms. Chronopoulos reviewed the design pointing out the building’s accessibility and the natural light, good sight lines and safety factors of the highly flexible floor plan. “It is able to change with the community and it is low maintenance” she said. She noted meeting spaces of different sizes both during the day and after hours and their goal to be the center of literacy and learning while supporting the Town’s economic development. “A hub for community engagement” she said.

Mr. Gerrard re-introduced himself as a Principal with Ann Beha Architects located in Boston, Massachusetts. He told the members he and associate Tom Hoteling had been working on the project since the end of last year. He also noted the uniqueness of the location of the Library (on the river) and its significance as a historical building. Mr. Gerrard briefly reviewed the construction plan for the Library which included the current existing conditions, site grading and utility plans (drainage, grade level issues on the eastern (river) side of the lot), demolition plans (removal of the additions and redesign of the original building), restoration (recreating a quiet reading room and community and library spaces than may be used together or separately), site layout (north and south) and landscaping of the building and the parking lot.

Mr. Gerrard pointed out the historic entrance and (back) river side of the building would be landscaped by Richard Burck Associates, LLC (Landscape Designer Sig Sandzen working with Richard “Skip” Burck and Tim Mackey) and Civil Engineer from Hayner/Swanson Inc. (Senior Project Engineer Earle Blatchford) “were working together to think about how to design the land that is there (outdoor functions and quiet/reflection time) and take advantage of such a beautiful site.” Mr. Blatchford interjected “Sig’s firm has already done a lot with layout issues, design at the developmental level and construction documents.”

Chair Vann asked “any questions? remarks?” Mr. Clark asked how they planned to heat the building. Mr. Gerrard replied “forced air systems for heating and cooling.” Noting the large amount of glass being used Mr. Clark asked ‘is that going to be energy efficient?’ Mr. Gerrard agreed “there is a lot of glass in certain parts of the design, it will be high efficiency glass in those areas.” He went on to say “it is a tradeoff to gain daylight and river views but there will be an air barrier and the

building is designed to be insulated beyond code.” With a smile Mr. Clark replied “I just don’t want to see an oil or bio-mass truck there every day. It is a lovely building, I am just looking out for the taxpayers.” Mr. Gerrard concluded “glass has come a long way with lots of new developments. The technology is quite good these days.”

Regarding the renovation of the original building Mr. Zeller asked “wouldn’t it be less expensive to take it down and build a new one that looks just like it?” Chair Vann interjected “that decision has already been made, that is not in our purview.” Mr. Gerrard added “the existing building is of good quality. It is made of good material and was fire proof in its day, there is value in the building separate for its historical value.”

Chair Vann asked about the roofing material (original roof was slate) with Mr. Gerrard noting the two different types of roofing materials they planned to use (asphalt shingles and a PVC roof membrane). Mr. Holt asked about the flood plain and if its location had any impact on design. Both Mr. Gerrard and Mr. Blatchford noted challenges in the grade of the back lower level. As he pointed out a retaining wall for extra protection Mr. Gerrard told the members “none of the current or proposed building is in the flood plain but some of the parking lot is in the 100-year flood plain.” Mr. Blatchford briefly reviewed the drainage and stormwater plans (catch basins, infiltration basins, curbing the entire perimeter and best management practices) and told the members “we are actually decreasing the impervious surface by 700 square feet. “This treatment plan is much more than what currently exists” he said.

Out of curiosity Mr. Hanlon asked “are your architectural drawings done too?” Mr. Gerrard replied the first set had been submitted this week for review.

Mr. Sandzen gave a review of the landscape plan that included street and river terrace designs, trees, shrubs and buffer spaces as well as plants screening in the northwest and southeast corners of the lot. He pointed out a lawn border that would double as a snow storage area and noted the grade split which would be illuminated and railed to the street. He described the terrace as an area for comfort, reflection and multipurpose meetings with inlaid stone benches in the retaining wall. “We’ll frame the entrance with trees” said Mr. Sandzen with Mr. Gerrard adding “all the mechanicals will go in the back portion of the Keyes Sage House with underground connections into the main building, I think you will be quite pleased with it.” Mr. Sandzen pointed how they intended to screen the light pole fixtures and electric transformers as well.

Library Board of Trustees member Ron Bowman introduced himself and asked about the mature trees that surrounded the former Fairpoint building along the river. Mr. Sandzen noted a limited amount of trees would be taken out. Mr. Bowman replied “good, we have an abutter across the river (in Summer Street) who had some concerns.”

Mr. Hanlon interjected “are you looking for any waivers from the regulations?” Mr. Gerrard noted the current building was nonconforming with parking encroaching the setback as well as a setback issue with the boundary to the right (the existing lot) “is in the Groundwater Protection Overlay Zone and Shoreland Conservation Zone and will require a Conditional Use Permit.” When Mr. Clark asked about the total amount of impervious coverage Mr. Gerrard noted the current impervious coverage was 32,890 square feet “and the proposed is 32,185 square feet so there will be less impervious surface” he said.

From the audience Francie Von Mertens introduced herself and asked about the existing trees along the shoreline. “They are bank stabilizers” she said and asked “will there be an inventory of the existing trees and how many are staying?” Mr. Sandzen replied “most of the trees along the river front will be kept.” Ms. Von Mertens the asked “what about the trees on the river side of the wall?” Mr. Gerrard interjected “those trees are not on the Library’s property.” “Who owns them?” asked Ms. Von Mertens. Mr. Throop noted “usually the land is owned by a land owner and the water is owned by the state.”

Ms. Von Mertens reiterated her concern for bank stabilization and the amount of trees that may be taken down (within the confines of the law) may lead to bank destabilization. Mr. Blatchford reiterated “the intent of our work is on the inside site of the retaining wall.” It was noted a survey by Meriden Land Services had been completed and they would be consulted. It was also suggested the Conservation Commission and DES be involved.

Mr. Clark asked what the building was going to be made of. Mr. Gerrard replied “wood and steel (steel with metal stud wall systems) with a brick façade and glass with a masonry glaze.” Mr. Zeller asked if the Main Street portico entrance would be active with Ms. Chronopoulos noting that entrance had been re-opened in 2014. She also noted they would be losing 5 parking spaces (38 to 33 spaces on site) but that “we have plenty of parking except during an event (and) we have negotiated with the All Saint’s Church to use their parking lot or overflow parking during events. We have also asked staff to use the municipal lots.”

Mr. Zeller asked about the plan to use their parking lot to stage heavy equipment and materials for the Main Street Bridge reconstruction project. Ms. Chronopoulos explained that due to delays in the Main Street Bridge project “that is not going to be possible.” She went on to explain they planned to bond their project in May (after the Town Meeting vote) and begin construction. “The bridge is not scheduled now to start until the winter of 2019” she said. “What are you asking for?” asked Mr. Clark. Ms. Chronopoulos replied “3 million dollars, we are fundraising 5.5 million. It is a public/private partnership.”

### **Zoning Subcommittee Update:**

Chair Vann began by reminding the members and audience of the two public workshops to be held October 16, 2017 and November 27, 2017. “It will be an exercise in how we think about how spaces are organized (use, intensity and density)” she said adding “we put these together because this spring the Congress for the New Urbanism released templates that include descriptions of buildings and places typically found in New England and allow you to use them to go to a form-based code.” (New Urbanism is a planning and development approach based on the principles of how cities and towns had been built for the last several centuries: walkable blocks and streets, housing and shopping in close proximity, and accessible public spaces). It was noted these designs can be applied to all scales of development in the full range of places including rural Main Streets, booming suburban areas, urban neighborhoods, and dense city centers.

Chair Vann introduced (from the Congress for New Urbanism) *Transect Zones* for Peterborough, identifying four transect zones including *T-3 Village Edge* (matching neighborhoods similar to Hunter Farm Road, Old Street Road, Pine ridge and Mountain View Terrace with smaller lots typically under a half acre); *T-4 Residential* (residential zones allowing home-based businesses by right, also with smaller lots a minimum of 50 feet frontage and connected to town water and sewer); *T-4 Village Main Street* (mixed-use zone with home-based businesses permitted and no minimum lot size or frontage but town water and sewer are required) and *T-5 Main Street* (matching the existing Downtown with no minimum lot size or frontage). When asked, Ms. Vann noted “We are leaving the Rural Zone out of it completely.” A brief discussion about the zones followed with Ms. Vann noting “we identified places willing to see growth with water and sewer. They exist, we acknowledge that and if there is an empty lot, this shows you how to fill it.” She briefly reviewed building styles (duplexes, layered cake) with parking in the rear. “Forms are house sized not lot or block sized” she said. She also reviewed the Transect Zones as ultimately replacing the Traditional Neighborhood Overlay District 1 and II, West Peterborough, Family and General Residence Districts. “These are good matches for us” she said.

Chair Vann concluded by noting the exercises on October 16th and November 20th will involve identifying the Transect Zones by tracing them over pre-existing town maps. “The goal is to identify where they belong” she said with Mr. Throop adding “it will be a rudimentary discussion and is part of the goal of what a form-based code is.” (A form-based code is a land development regulation that fosters predictable built results and a high-quality public realm by using physical *form* (rather than separation of uses) as the organizing principle for the code. It is a regulation, not a guideline, adopted into city, town, or county law).

Mr. Holt noted the Transect Zones would replace TNOD I and TNOD II Overlay Districts as well as the Family, General Residence and West Peterborough Zoning Districts. Chair Vann added “we are not doing anything with the Healthcare or Rural Districts this year.” She noted an open invitation to the Open Space Committee, the Master Plan Steering Committee and Board of Selectmen had been sent inviting and encouraging their participation. “We have done a lot of work on keeping development close to town. “This workshop is designed to help people understand this is what we are doing. We want more of the things we like and less of what we don’t, that has been our story for the four years” she said.

Mr. Throop noted form-based code had been introduced in parts of Keene “and they have been working on it in one neighborhood for more than three years. It is not understood well.” Given that, Mr. Throop told the members they had a backup plan to improve TNOD I and TNOD II by combining them into a new ordinance “so we will be ready in case we need it.”

“The Groundwater Protection Overlay Zone needs fixing too” said Chair Vann adding “but I am cautiously optimistic, we have done so much already and we are at about 85% with form-based code.” She agreed with Mr. Throop when he said they had addressed much of the pushback (including an accurate map and providing forms for form-based code).

**Next Meeting:**

November 13, 2017

The meeting adjourned at 7:20 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Laura Norton

Administrative Assistant