

Town of Plaistow, NH
Office of the Planning Board
145 Main Street, Plaistow, NH



PLANNING BOARD MINUTES
May 19, 2021

Call to Order: The meeting was called to order at 6:30 PM

Chair T. Alberti read the following COVID-19 statement:

The Plaistow Planning Board, due to the COVID-19/Coronavirus crisis and in accordance with Governor Sununu's Emergency Order #12 pursuant to Executive Order 2020-04, is authorized to meet electronically, and these reasons shall be reflected in the minutes. When there are public hearings scheduled, notice of this electronic meeting is sent to all abutters and published in the Eagle Tribune Newspaper.

The Plaistow Planning Board is utilizing the Zoom platform for this electronic meeting. All members of the Board have the ability to communicate contemporaneously during the meeting through the Zoom program, and the public has access to contemporaneously listen and, if necessary, participate in this meeting. The link to access this meeting was provided on the Town's website.

There is a "raise your hand" feature of the program that will allow attendees to participate in the discussion. There is also a Q&A box for the public to type questions during the meeting. The Public can also send emails with questions or concerns prior to the meeting to dvoss@plaistow.com. All emails received by 3:00PM on the day of the meeting will be read at that meeting. Please note: all questions and concerns typed into the Q & A box or sent via email will be read aloud to become part of the public record. The meeting will also be live on Plaistow Access Cable - Channel 17 and will be livestreaming on the Town's website.

1. ROLL CALL:

Tom Alberti, *Ch.* – Present at Town Hall
Tim Moore, *Vice Ch.* - Excused
Laurie Milette - Present at Town Hall
Karen Robinson - Present at Town Hall
Greg Taillon, *Selectman's Rep.* Absent
Bill Coye, *Selectman's Alt.* - Present at Town Hall
Maxann Dobson, Alternate – excused (non-voting)
John Cashell, *Planning Director* –Present at Town Hall (non-voting)

Also Present: Mark Pearson, Plaistow Town Manager (remote)
Charlie Zilch, SEC & Associated, Plaistow, NH
Bill Hall, Civil Design Consultants, Andover, MA (remote)

Ch. Alberti noted that in the absence of G. Taillon he would appoint B. Coyle as a voting member for the meeting.

2. REVIEW/APPROVAL OF MAY 5, 2021 MINUTES:

Draft minutes were included with the meeting materials. No corrections were made.

K. Robinson moved, second by L. Milette to approve the minutes from May 5, 2021 as presented

The motion to approve the minutes as issued passed 4-0-0.

3. PUBLIC HEARING:

Ch. Alberti opened the Public Hearing at 6:35 pm and read the notice into the record.

PB 21-06: The completeness of an application from J&R Realty Trust, Jeffrey Raymond, TR for a commercial site plan that proposes to raze the existing residential structure and construct a 2-story, 1,120 SF office building on the existing footprint. The plan further proposes a 1-1/2 story, 3,400 SF, 4-unit trade business building; related drainage; landscaping; lighting; and parking. The property is located at 190 Plaistow Road, Tax Map 44, Lot 2, in the C3 (formerly C1) zoning district. The applicant is the property owner of record. If the application is found to be complete, the Planning Board may immediately conduct the public hearing.

C. Zilch to speak to the application on behalf of J & R Realty Trust of Haverhill, MA. He noted the lot is 1.1 acres in size with frontage on Route 125 and Old County Road. There is no wetland on the site. He noted the intent of the application is to convert the site from residential to commercial, to raze the existing building and create an office building in the existing foot print and to add a 4-unit trade business building. The trade building would support businesses as defined by Plaistow Zoning Ordinance Article 2 Section 220-2. He said the plan as designed would allow each business to have up to four employees, perhaps 2 in the office and two in the trade building and adequate parking space to allow maneuvering and storage for all. The site has 28 parking spaces and space for some equipment behind the building. Site access will remain the two existing points, the main access on Route 125 with in and exit and other on Old Colony as exit only. C. Zilch also addressed the grading and drainage plan with a series of catch basins that direct the storm water flow to an infiltration trenches with good soils for drainage and an emergency outflow if needed.

L Milette moved, B. Coye seconded to accept the application for 190 Plaistow Road, Tax Map 44, lot 2, for a 2-story, 1,120 SF office building on the existing footprint and a 1-1/2 story, 3,400SF, 4-unit trade business building; related parking drainage lighting and landscaping, as complete.

The motion to approve the application passed 4-0-0.

Discussion: Ch. Alberti noted the original plan was for a contractor's storage and sales purposes and asked about the trade business building would be equally subdivided and if the office building is in support of the trade businesses. C. Zilch said the trade building units are roughly equal and the office space is intended to support those businesses. Ch. Alberti asked about the owner's J&R Gutters usage of the space and was told it could be office space only since the operational use is not allowed in the C3 Zone.

K. Robinson said the commercial bays appear to be a warehouse which is not allowed in C3. C. Zilch noted that it is meant as storage not warehousing, that the businesses would bring in their materials and stock and then bring them to their job site. There was a discussion of the differences between warehousing and storage. He cited other businesses in Plaistow with one owner who rents out space. There was further discussion of the intent of the C3 Zone. C. Zilch noted that the Building Inspector P. Blanchette had ruled it is a permitted use in the C3 Zoning District.

L. Milette asked about the commercial vehicles and whether the owner was planning to park his there, and about the two portable storage containers on the plan. She noted the Board was trying to get away from having everything outside to improve the look of the area. Ch. Alberti asked if the portable storage containers are to be used by the tenants or the landowner and C. Zilch said limitations could be put on them to be used by the trade business renters only. He also said the portable storage containers were to prevent any type of outside storage at all and outside storage could be restricted entirely. Ch. Alberti asked about dumpsters or trash and was informed a dumpster would be located behind the storage containers.

Landscaping buffers were discussed. C. Zilch noted the plantings along 125 are not meant as a buffer but to soften the exposure. Ch. Alberti asked J. Cashell for his thoughts on the Town's attempt to increase the esthetic value of the C3 Zone. J. Cashell spoke to the attempt to improve the Route 125 area and noted the storage units don't lend any esthetic value of the property and they should be well-hidden. He suggested if more storage is needed, make the building larger. Ch. Alberti said that large rusting containers were exactly what the ordinances were trying to prevent. He noted this plan seems almost exactly the same as the industrial build plan that had been presented before, and asked if the storage containers were necessary and if they could be removed from the plan. C. Zilch noted he would not be looking for an approval this night, but would like to continue at the end of this session and go back with the Board's concerns and see what can be done to make the site more amenable to the C3 Zone, but noted the other industrial looking sites just around this one.

Ch. Alberti asked about the rip rap pad/apron on sheet 4 that needs to be addressed. He also expressed concerns about the ability to go left out of the exit onto Old County Road, and the potential sight lines and traffic coming off 125 and whether the exit might be made right turn only. He also noted that Old County Road is 25 mph and has no truck limitations and should be kept in mind.

Ch. Alberti asked if there was any consideration for changes of use that would allow a less impervious surface. C. Zilch said that if trade vehicles were going to be parked in the bays it is better to have ample room for turning and straightening. He also said there is additional commercial vehicle parking on the west side of the building and noted restrictions could be placed on that. B. Coyle noted the size of a truck would be limited by the size of the bays and if there was storage in them. Ch. Alberti asked further about what type and size of truck would be parked that would not be using the bays.

J. Cashell asked about the landscaping on the right of way on Plaistow Road. C. Zilch said it would be all grass as the infiltration trench stone needs to remain exposed and identified the other landscaping features. J. Cashell noted that in some landscaping plans the State would allow a mixture of shrubs and grass which would help create a landscape buffer for the front. He noted that the curb cut driveway onto Old County Road may not be needed, and that it is so close to the busy intersection that a left turn could be nearly blind and create traffic issues. He also noted that adding more impervious surface on the site but is concerned that asphalt millings in front of the bays would create greater runoff issues and the drainage would need to be adjusted.

There was a discussion of improving the aesthetic value of the properties along Route 125, especially as redevelopment happens, and beautifying the area one lot at a time. Ch. Alberti said he is motivated to standardize and beautify the Commercial Zones and invited suggestions and ideas for helping this process.

J. Cashell noted the 190 Plaistow Road plan under discussion had so much metal on it and asked if the owner would consider making some adjustments to give it some architectural appeal.

Ch. Alberti noted that no one from the public was participating in the hearing. He noted that the applicant is not requesting approval and continued the application's public hearing to June 16, 2021.

Ch. Alberti closed the public hearing at 7:22pm

5. COMMUNICATIONS, UPDATES, FYI'S AND OTHER BUSINESS:

Ch. Alberti noted the next meeting will be a workshop and he wants to continue the discussion of the Master Plan and conduct a review of the Board's Policies and Procedures. He said he is open to agenda additions at any time. J. Cashell noted that there are so many items in the Master Plan the only way to constructively deal with it is to continue to review and create action items and see them through. He noted how important T. Moore is to the process of keeping the Board involved in moving the Plan forward. Ch. Alberti said that T. Moore will continue as the CIP chair.

Ch. Alberti asked the Board to consider how it would work to continue the improvement process for the Town. J. Cashell noted that better looking building designs will improve the value of the developer's property and help the Town's overall aesthetic appeal. Ch. Alberti asked if the Board can require specific types of designs; J. Cashell suggested working with the developers to create better looking plans, landscaping, lighting, etc. There was also a discussion of signage and the C3 requirements.

Ch. Alberti reported he had attending the OSI training and had stumped Mr. Buckley with a question about development in abutting communities across state lines and the hand the Town was dealt from Massachusetts at the Rte. 125 border. J. Cashell referenced the Massachusetts Route 3 Exit 36 that services the Pheasant Lane Mall and that 10 years ago the two State DOTs tried to come up with a plan to improve it and nothing has been done. He said he is a commissioner on the Merrimac Valley Planning Commission and asks about improvement plans for the interchange problems and there are none. He said the best way to approach this is for the regional planning agency is to start interacting with the Merrimac Valley planning agency and bring the two states together.

Ch. Alberti asked if the BOS had discussed the RPC dues again; B. Coye said it hasn't been put on the agenda yet but hopes it will be soon. Ch. Alberti asked about the Canterbury Forest property; B. Coye said told it is still sidelined, but that the Rose Ave. property will go to auction in June.

There was discussion about ethics, remaining open minded and conducting the Town's business appropriately.

6. ADJOURNMENT

There was no additional business before the Board and the meeting was adjourned at 7:48 PM.

Respectfully Submitted,
Charlene A. Glorieux
Minute Taker