

St. George Planning Board Minutes

July 26, 2022

7PM at Town Office and via Zoom

The Planning Board meeting was called to order at 7:00pm.

Planning Board Members present were Chair Anne Cox, Alison Briggs, Mary K. Hewlett and Michael B. Jordan. Also present: Town Manager Richard Erb, CEO Terry Brackett, Jason Merriam from Merriam Architects, Mike Sabatini from Landmark Corporation Surveyors & Engineers, Shasta Minery, Kristen Falla, and Mike Felton from the St. George Municipal School Unit.

Present via Zoom: Marshall Cole from Gartley and Dorsky and Bill Lane from Gartley and Dorsky.

Quorum:

Allison Briggs was elevated to voting status, establishing a quorum.

Conflicts of Interest:

No conflicts of interest were noted.

Adjustments to the agenda:

Findings of fact for the Thalheimer application was added to the agenda.

Review of the Minutes:

A motion was made by Hewlett to approve the July 12, 2022 minutes as corrected, seconded by Briggs. By a 4-0 vote, the motion carried.

Findings of Fact: Thalheimer Application

A motion was made by Jordan, seconded by Chair Cox to approve the Findings of Fact and Conclusions of Law and authorize them on behalf of the Planning Board. By a 4-0 vote, the motion carried.

Public Comments:

No public comments were made.

Commercial Building Permit: Michael Raney

Chair Cox

Our first application is for a pier with a seasonal ramp for Michael Raney, I believe someone is here from Gartley and Dorsky to speak to this.

Gartley and Dorsky

Michael Raney and Kaitlin Weatherly are proposing to build a five foot by 15-foot-long aluminum pier with a 45-foot-long aluminum gangway and a 12-foot by 20-foot temporary float on Rackliff Island.

Chair Cox

We have an application with DEP permits and an Army Corps of Engineers permit. Typically, before we accept an application as complete for a pier, we schedule a site visit, so I think we'll need to do that, and then have the hearing as soon as possible. Terry, is the earliest we could schedule this August 11th?

Terry Brackett

You are correct.

Briggs

I will attend. Is there any question about the best time to do a site visit in terms of the tide?

Chair Cox

It is mainly to look at the site, and mostly what we are concerned about is the vegetation on shore, so in this case, I don't think it matters. We can schedule this for Thursday, August 11th at five o'clock. Given our scheduling, we would then be able to have a public hearing on August 23. That would be our next meeting at seven o'clock. If you could put a buoy where the float would be, that would be helpful so we know the extent of the pier and where the float would be.

Gartley and Dorsky

I will look into that.

St. George Municipal School Unit – Construction of CTE Makerspace Project

Jason Merriam of Merriam Architects

I'm Jason Merriam, from Merriam Architects, Project Engineer. I don't know how familiar you are with the school site down next to the soccer field down below. They placed a concrete slab there a year ago, a 30-foot by 60-foot slab, and that is where this building will be constructed. It's basically a traditional farm style building for CTE classes for the pre-K through eighth grade community. It consists of a main shop area, as well as a reception space. It works with the existing slope of the site and is built into the side of the hill.

The second floor is designed for Makerspace classrooms: CNC machines, 3d printers, etc. The idea programmatically is that some of the younger kids would start on the second floor and work their way down to the first floor where there is woodworking and welding. It is really designed to be very flexible for any number of future programs. It's a wood frame structure with a metal roof, a nice shop, close to school, with its own open spaces, flexible for future programming for pre-K through eighth grade technical educations.

Mike Felton

On the programmatic side, it's obviously geared for pre-K through eighth. Like Jason was saying, the shop area would work for carpentry. The upstairs area is for expanding our existing Makerspace initiative with 3d printers, laser cutters, CNC routers, robotics, and sewing machines, and then there's classroom gallery space as well. So, while it's currently for pre-K through eighth grade, it's also going to be used in partnership with the Midcoast School of Technology. A pre-K through 12th grade program is what we're working to develop, and it will also be open to the larger community through open shop times, and for adult education courses, which Midcoast will offer right in this building. We want to focus on workforce training programs wherever possible and create partnerships with businesses so they can use this space to scale up and prototype the work that they're doing, so it's ultimately going to be a community space.

Mike Sabatini Landmark Corporation Surveyors & Engineers

My name is Mike Sabatini. Let's go over the application and letter that ran through the site plan requirements and the written statement of requirements, including the attachments, the soils map, septic design, deed and architectural plans, and the site plan detail sheet that Jason went

over. There's an overall location map of the 25-acre parcel, and it shows the setbacks; 20-foot side setbacks, 25-foot front setbacks. It also has the resource protection from the marsh.

Chair Cox

Asked for clarification as to where the retaining wall will be located and was advised by Jason Merriman that he will bring her a 3D model in the future.

Mike Sabatini

This is a pedestrian walkway, going to the upper level for the younger kids, and down into the shop for the older kids. During the daytime, there is very little vehicle access down here. There is handicap access and a large turn around available for emergency vehicles and large school buses as well as temporary parking in case a teacher needs to drop something off, etc.

Jason Merriam

An elevator is not required for the building. By having an upper and lower parking area a disabled individual could access both floors.

Briggs

Asked if the location is uphill from the soccer field and received confirmation that it is, and that the area will be lit.

Hewlett

Requested information regarding the distance between the building and the parking area and asked about additional parking as the plans are to use the space for the community, including the elderly and was advised there is no area for additional parking available, being an accessory building and not a standalone building.

Chair Cox

Asked about the drainage ditches and how they relate.

Mike Sabatini

If any of you have been down there recently, or even in the past year, there's almost a constant erosion problem with the lane and the problem is, the water coming from this parking lot would go across the road, take gravel with it, and then come down this ditch line causing erosion.

Sabatini continued with a detailed explanation of how the drainage issues were resolved and an explanation regarding which areas will be paved and landscaped. He also provided information regarding the exterior plumbing and explained how three phase power was provided to the building. Photometric lights will be installed which will turn on the outdoor lights at dusk.

According to Sabatini, there is no additional burden on water, sewer or any other utility services. No adverse impact for shoreland zoning or floodplains.

Hewlett

Sought clarification regarding the path to the school and whether it can handle the Engine Four town firetruck and after discussing the size of the vehicles, it was determined that it could be accommodated but that the fire chief should be consulted regarding water sources.

Chair Cox

Determined a site visit is required and scheduled it for Thursday, August 11 at 5:45; the abutters must be notified, and this will be added to the agenda for a public hearing as well on August 23 at seven o'clock.

Chair Cox

The slab is obviously there and that will give us a good sense of it. Any other detail that would help us see it such as how far out the pull up might be and where the little bump out to the slab is, would be helpful.

Jordan

Asked a question about the lot coverage data. The information presented shows the existing coverage is 34,000 square feet and the proposed change adding 2470 square feet, the square footage of the footprint of the building. The 30 foot by 60 foot concrete slab is not included in the 2470 number and Jordan mentioned one problem with the town's form is that it refers to building coverage when it should refer to lot coverage which is buildings and other unvegetated space.

Terry Brackett

Asked what the building is made from and was advised it is going to be largely wood frame with C&C metal roof and cedar shake siding. Brackett mentioned that the slab was not intended for this type of building.

Jason Merriam

Randy Scamper was involved in designing the site initially and it was for a different use at that time, but we met with all the people who put the concrete in and the earthwork and the basin. We met there several times and Randy Scamper wasn't convinced at first but then after he looked at it in more detail, he's okay with it.

Terry Brackett

If Randy is convinced and you guys put your reputation on the line, I guess I'm okay with it but the other thing that I'm concerned about is there is no insulation.

Jason Merriam

We didn't pour the slab, but I was told that there is two-inch rigid insulation underneath it. It was a concern, and we would not be going forward with this if we weren't confident that it's adequate.

Briggs

What is the heat source going to be?

Jason Merriam

We are going with electric heat pumps. It allows for the most flexibility. They are very efficient and mechanical engineers recommended them for this use. We also have some other systems; we have a full ventilation system for the building that goes along well with heat pumps and there are also some sawdust filtration systems as well. I don't think we would have been talking about heat pumps five years ago.

Briggs

Asked about AC and was advised that there will be AC

Hewlett

Asked about solar panels and was advised that they are not feasible with a barn like building with a steep pitch roof. Ground mounted solar panels are a possibility.

10 Cold Storage Road

Erb

I can give you an update on where we've been and where we are, if that will help. Many of you were here when the project was first conceived, and the original idea was that there would be a \$2.6 million bond which the town put up. I think fairly quickly we found out that it was inadequate funding, so the next plan was obtaining grant money from the federal government through the EDA, and we believe that we had a very good chance at receiving that funding, a very good application that unfortunately was refused. Last year, we were denied but the message to the town was, you ought to reapply and advised there were some things for the town to address but that it was a good project. We did so and when we put in the application towards the end of last year, we waited and eventually got the good news in June, that we were funded this time around. It may have been a blessing in disguise because the first time we applied for the project; it was a 50/50 grant. This was a different pool of money. And we were encouraged by the Maine representative to the EDA to go for a different pool of money. He has not steered us wrong so far and we took his advice and the funding we did receive was 80/20. And that may be our saving grace, knowing where construction costs have gone. So that's where we are. The project has been approved by the DEP and by the federal government and the Army Corps of Engineers. Those were approved and I have been told that those are still valid. We have a building permit from the town of St. George that was issued on March 26, 2019. And as you probably all know, those expire after two years, and the ordinance does not allow for an extension. I'm here today to talk to you about that and refresh your memory. This project will almost double the usable space in that area. It connects the existing town landing to the 10 Cold Storage property that we purchased a few years ago. It would improve the vehicle circulation. It will allow for the reconstruction of boat ramps, and the addition of floats, a picnic area, and new lighting, making that space so much friendlier. I'm sure most of you have tried to navigate in that

area. It's tough right now. So, we're looking forward to seeing more parking. There are a lot of good things that will come out of this, I'm sure.

Chair Cox

Are there any changes from what was approved in 2019?

Erb

No.

Hewlett

Any thought on electrical vehicle charging stations?

Erb

I could talk with the Harbor Committee about that. They are not going to change the plan but are looking at what options might be added later. We are still concerned with the budget, even though we have more money available than we had reason to hope for. We're all still nervous just because of the past experiences with this and knowing what's happening in the real world right now. So, they are putting together lists of things that we might want to ask for as alternates.

Hewlett

I think there is state money available.

Chair Cox

They are not asking for any changes to the 2019 application. It is not an extension but a new permit, that would be valid for two years.

Jordan

The extension provision states you must get started on it within two years, and then you can have another year to finish.

Hewlett made a motion to accept the application as complete as presented, seconded by Briggs. By a 4-0 vote, the motion was accepted.

Jordan made a motion that the application be approved based on the findings of facts and conclusions of law, seconded by Hewlett. By a 4-0 vote, the motion was accepted.

Erb

I'll be very happy to tell the Harbor Committee on Thursday that we don't have a problem with this. Just so you know, the one thing that is going to be a challenge is the timeframe that the EDA put on us because they require construction to start within six months of the approval, and the approval was June 7th. I'm not overly concerned about getting the documents out because

there is so little change to what was there before but am concerned about the availability of the contractors. There is a mechanism for contracts to extend and I'm sure that they must be dealing with that everywhere.

Briggs

By Winter, the contractors will have less work.

Erb

We'd prefer to have them working down there in cold weather to be honest, because it's going to be so much easier per my experiences with sea walls in Kennebunk and we did those in the middle of winter and that's the time to do them.

Adjourn

Brown made a motion to adjourn the meeting at 8:27pm, seconded by Hewlett. By a 4-0 vote, the motion was approved.

Respectfully submitted,

Tammy Taylor
Recording Secretary