

The Planning Board for the Town of Derry held a public meeting on Wednesday, August 05, 2020, at 7:00 p.m. The meeting was broadcast from the Derry Municipal Center, 14 Manning Street, Third Floor meeting room.

Members physically present: John O'Connor, Chairman; Lori Davison, Vice Chair; Mark Connors, Secretary Pro-Temp; Richard Tripp, Town Council Liaison; Jim MacEachern, Member

Members digitally present: Mark Grabowski

Absent: Dave Granese, Randy Chase, David McPherson

Also present: George Sioras, Planning Director, Elizabeth Robidoux, Planning & Economic Development Assistant, Mark L'Heureux, Engineering Coordinator (meeting room); Beverly Donovan, Economic Development Director (virtual)

Mr. O'Connor called the meeting to order at 7:01 p.m. The meeting began with a salute to the flag. Mr. O'Connor advised the listening public that because some members of the Board are not physically attending the meeting due to health or other reasons, they are participating via Zoom. Others are physically present in the meeting room. Virtual attendance allowed, even though the Governor has lifted the 10 person per room maximum requirement. Mr. O'Connor provided the appropriate links for members of the public to join the meeting virtually via a MAC, PC, or by phone.

Mr. O'Connor introduced members of the Board and staff.

Escrow

None.

Minutes

The Board reviewed the minutes of the July 15, 2020 meeting.

Motion by Connors, seconded by MacEachern to approve the minutes of the July 15, 2020, meeting as written.

Connors, Davison, Tripp, MacEachern, and O'Connor voted in favor. The motion passed with Grabowski abstained.

Correspondence

FY 2023-2032 Ten Year Transportation Improvement Plan

Mr. O'Connor advised the Board is in receipt of a letter from Southern New Hampshire Planning Commission with regard to the ten-year transportation plan. SNHPC is requesting proposed projects be forwarded to them as well as any revisions to projects currently listed on the plan. Any new projects will be vetted, referred to State committee and the State process, and then voted upon. The consensus of several members was that the continuation of the rail trail should be included as a place holder in the ten-year plan.

Mr. O'Connor noted if Mr. McPherson is unable to attend the meeting this evening, he will appoint a Secretary Pro-Temp.

Other Business

Conceptual Discussion - Westbrook Farm – 45 and 49 South Main Street

Mr. Sioras advised tonight will be the first time the Board is seeing a conceptual plan for the newly created West Running Brook District. The property is 45 and 49 South Main Street, owned by the Siragusa family. Many of the Board members will know the property which has the yellow farmhouse with the field, just south of the Fairways. The regulations in the new zone require an applicant to come before the Board for a conceptual discussion, which does not require a vote, just input and feedback. Gerry and Marc Siragusa will present their concept. With them is Jeff Speck of Speck & Associates and Paul Chisholm of Keach Nordstrom Associates, the engineer on the project.

Gerry Siragusa, 49 South Main Street, advised his family owned and operated Circle of Friends for over 38 years; they recently closed this June. Members of the community reached out when they closed, and his family appreciates the comments. They hope they have made a positive impact on the community and that this project, if approved, will as well. The farmhouse is the oldest house in Derry, constructed in 1720 – this is at 49 South Main Street. They acquired 45 South Main Street which was constructed in 1820. He understands the history and character of the area and has tried to keep that with the renovations and expansion they have done over the years to both buildings. They hope to include the history and colonial aspect in this project. Through the years, he has done high end building development; most recently in southern Maine and on Lake Winnepesaukee. His son Marc will be the lead on this project. When they closed the school, they had many discussions about what to do with the property.

Gerry Siragusa advised they hired Jeff Speck of Speck and Associates as the plan consultant. They looked at Mr. Speck's past projects which were very unique and creative. The thought was to bring something that was more of a destination. They have also partnered with Keach Nordstrom Associates; that firm is very familiar with Derry's regulations.

Marc Siragusa said he felt it was important for the public to see this community-based design. They are trying to form an identity within Derry. He provided the following overview of the project.

45 South Main Street is located near the set of lights at West Running Brook School and The Fairways which has about 850 apartments. To the left, heading south on Route 28, is a tree line which is the lot line between 45 and 49 South Main Street. There is an historic house at 49 South Main Street which is the site of the former preschool. The land between the two properties is open. The tree line denotes the property lines around both properties. The ultimate goal would be to combine the two lots. There is a stone wall on the property that is believed to date back to the original 1719 Nutfield settlement. They would re-utilize the stones from that wall.

When they first looked at the project, they started with the principles of mixed use and reviewed the most recently updated Master Plan and its goals. The intent is to create a space for people to enjoy. They also reviewed the Parks and Recreation Assessment recently completed by UNH, as well as the Davis Demographic report created for the school district. They looked at six primary goals of the Master Plan: destination, economic activity, the Exit 4A gateway, a place to live for a diverse demographic; health and wellness, energy and plans for resilience. They feel the project espouses the top 12 recommendations of the Master Plan to include: a pedestrian and bike network; older adults; young adults; a cultural district; heritage tourism; climate change adaptation and resiliency plans; community gatherings and affordable housing. For the housing component, they plan to offer a mix of market rate and affordable housing. “Affordable Housing” can be a misleading term; Mr. Siragusa said he would address their definition of the term later in the presentation.

As they began to plan, they looked at the zoning in West Running Brook district. There is historic character in the corridor with a mix of uses that make it very different from other areas of town. They want to work with the existing topography. The land has a gradual slope and they have created a village out of it with pedestrian ways and bike paths. They really want to create a regional destination in Derry’s historic commercial corridor for travelers and Derry residents to experience food and beverage, events, festivals, and parks and recreation in a village that features historic characteristics from the 1719 Nutfield settlement. They feel their business plan goals align with those of the Master Plan.

Derry needs a destination. People currently enjoy events on their property at 49 South Main Street. There is history there as this is the oldest home in Derry. Richard Holmes, the former Town Historian, is confident the first white potato in North America was planted on this land as this land was the site of the Common Field in the 1700s. The property just south of this was likely the site of a former sawmill. West Running Brook borders the land to the south; the Brook has been noted frequently in the poems of Robert Frost. With this project, they would like to provide the farm to table experience people are looking for, which will also support local business. The project promotes walkability and connectivity. There is good existing infrastructure, schools, parks and recreation in the area. By creating a village, they can connect to the existing network, expand on it and create a destination on this side of town.

There are some challenges. Parking is one. With higher density on the lot – which is a more efficient way to develop the land – they need more parking. They will also need parking for events. They are beginning discussions for a private/public partnership with the School District to utilize parking at the two schools for some events. There is cross walk access at those locations. They expect at least 1000 people monthly each month and have a three concert series planned for next summer. For those events, there would be between 500 and 1000 people on site. The project will increase the amount of property tax owed each year, although they hope to be able to take advantage of some of the tax incentive programs the town offers. The other challenge is the weather in New England. Weather impacts snow removal and the ability to hold outdoor community events. Although the location of Exit 4A does not impact them, it will have an impact on their ability to attract tenants as the traffic counts will be almost double at there. Because of that the higher credit retail clients will look to locate near Exit 4A. This makes it difficult to justify charging market rate, which would help their higher construction costs; it also impacts the ability of businesses to be successful.

Mr. O'Connor remarked that in January of 2020, the Fairways announced they will be converting all of their units to market rate housing. Mr. Siragusa advised they did discuss the project with the management at the Fairways, so they are aware of the plan. The Fairways had an impact on the school system and taxes of the town. He looks at the Fairways as an asset for their project. The residents at the Fairways will help support the commercial uses in the Westbrook project as the Fairways residents can walk over and enjoy their property and the retail offerings.

There is a connection to Alexander Carr Park and the bike trails from the rear of 49 South Main Street. They would like to enhance that natural connection. The existing home is currently host to private events and they would like to convert the interior to a restaurant or use it for private events. The existing property has the former school; attached to that is a townhome that was constructed for family members. That area is currently rented.

Jeff Speck of Speck & Associates presented. He provided a synopsis of his background, past and current projects. His focus is making things more walkable and he is familiar with Derry and this site in particular as he has traveled through the area for years.

In the theory of walkability, it has been found that people need a reason to walk, a safe walk, a comfortable walk and the walk needs to be interesting. Otherwise, people will use their vehicle. Mr. Speck reviewed the history of the planning field and how the focus of planning has changed over time. Mixed use takes uses one would find spread out over a community or downtown and focuses it in a smaller area. With regard to a safe walk, there is data that supports narrow streets enhance walkability and traffic calming. For a comfortable walk, there needs to be good spatial definition with clear edges. Common vacation destinations often have narrower streets, smaller spaces and are shaped like a room. For a walk to be interesting, there needs to be variety, but also consistency. For example, homes with gables that face the street can have different colors and architecture.

Mr. O'Connor commented he has heard that people are leaving places that are dense or congested because they fear the density with the onset of COVID-19. ADA parking is also a consideration when one is discussing narrower streets. Mr. Speck advised the project will

comply with ADA requirements. They are supplying ground floor flats and elevators to reach the upper floors. With respect to COVID, the data suggests that overcrowding, not density of housing is the issue. That being said, he agrees the people are fleeing the cities, looking for a more rural environment. This project has a village feel. People are talking about the 15 minute neighborhood where they don't need to get into a car for their daily needs. The urban impulse will not go away, but there will be a pause due to the pandemic.

Mr. Speck explained the site has a 50 foot rolling drop from the north to the south. They looked at different strategies to organize the site. The goal was to have a block structure on site. They will apply for a business tax incentive which will indirectly affect the businesses locating here. They did not want to put a parking lot on Route 28. There are streets that move through the site that are surrounded by buildings. The buildings shape the public space; sunlight is on the gables that face the streets. The roofs are north/south facing and oriented to allow for solar panels. The intent is to have the character of the building be different from each other.

One item open for discussion is the location of parking along Route 28. This is not required for the project to work but it could have a traffic calming effect on Route 28. In order for this to work, the Town would need to acquire that portion of the right of way from NH DOT. Currently, the Town owns the road north of the Fairways. If the Town does acquire the road in that location, they could add parallel parking and have the ability to narrow the lane width.

Mr. Speck went on to describe the overall project in more detail. The parking lot currently serving 45 South Main Street will be maintained and they will create head in parking on the street, lined by trees and stone walls. He recommends removing the stone wall between the two properties and using those stones to reinforce the stone wall running along the frontage. 45 South Main Street will be renovated, and a new addition constructed with a cupola. This would be for office use. To the rear, the concept shows a white building, which would also be office. Across the parking lot the concept shows a 4 story building which is planned for attainable/affordable housing; Mr. Siragusa will speak to that later. They want to be able to provide a full range of rents to include market rate. They are planning to add a single family residence which is shown as the yellow two story building located in front of the white building. There is an additional ask for this project which has to do with the reduction in the wetland buffer for a small pocketed, man-made wetland located in the vicinity of the planned white building.

The central parking lot is located behind the residential structures fronting Route 28, the residential structures fronting one side of the pedestrian way and behind the proposed retail/commercial buildings. This creates a green area behind what they are calling Main Street. This is a good place for a tot lot. Residents will have the ability to park under the residential units. Along the frontage of Route 28, the intent is to construct six, two-family homes, with access to the rear. These are intended to be two and three story units, which will be the size of a small home. These could be condos, or rentals. That has not yet been decided. They all have front doors and walkways facing Route 28. Behind is the parking lot and the backs of the rowhouses. The rowhouses are intended to be single family residences. The rowhouses face the pedestrian street, which is designed to be a minimum of 20 feet wide, which will accept vehicular access and is wide enough to accommodate a fire truck. The pedestrian muse can be

blocked off with bollards. The area is shown on the conceptual plan as the striped area. On one side of the muse the intent is to construct three apartment buildings – in the concept, they look like nine townhomes. Each building would have six dwelling units to be served by elevators. For some of the dwelling units, entry is at grade. There will be ample parking provided behind the units. One of the parking lot exits goes under an archway in a building located at the terminus of Main Street.

The proposed Main Street has its entrance off Route 28 and is the current entrance to the house and former school. The home and school building will remain with some renovation; a pub and restaurant facility will be added. Across from the existing home is the first of a series of retail spaces which are planned to be one and one half stories tall with a mezzanine. They are hoping to be able to provide a farm to table experience. The shops will have a terraces to the front. The school will receive a façade upgrade. In the school area facing the home, they hope to have a small pub. An arcade will be created to the front to shape the space. The rendering of this area also shows the building with the vehicular arch to the far right.

Mr. MacEachern asked how people will get to the parking lot behind the apartments. Mr. Speck explained they can use a vehicle to access the parking lot, crossing the pedestrian muse; bollards, if used, would be placed further into the muse area.

Mr. Speck described the proposed last phase of development which will depend upon the rest of the project. The blue arch of buildings can be apartments, a boutique hotel, or it could be half of each, with function space placed on the ground level. The street in front of those buildings is designed to be closed off and a stage can be located there as well. The house can be reimagined as an upscale tasting menu pub and a mid level restaurant. They know that they will need to work out the plan details with Fire Prevention and the Department of Public Works. Work still remains to be done on the architectural aspects of each building. Keach Nordstrom Associates (KNA) has been involved in the process. They opened up the proposed inner parking area and access ways based on comments from KNA to make sure the fire trucks can navigate the space. They want to make sure the project is walkable and safe; he feels they have done that here.

Parking on site could be reduced because they plan to utilize shared parking; office and retail space can be occupied by residents etc. Mr. Speck noted it has been a pleasure to work within the confines of this ordinance, which is very prescient and allows them to do this type of development.

Mr. O'Connor stated this is a lot for the Board to absorb. He does have several questions such as who would be responsible for plowing the streets – are they intended to be public or private? They will be private streets. It was noted snow storage areas will be part of the plan. Mr. Connors asked with regard to the apartments/hotel depicted in the last development phase. Is the project viable without it? How many apartments are they planning there and what is the total number of apartments on the site? Mr. Speck said they will have two family to the front, single family behind that, apartments in the far end and then apartments and a hotel to the far corner. The red building in the foreground is also intended to be apartments. Mr. Connors advised he has spoken with Mr. Siragusa with regard to bike trail connections. Are any connections planned with the Fairways to the local bike paths? Have there been discussions with management there?

Mr. Speck said there are three pedestrian connections shown on the concept site plan. One on each side of the parking lot behind the blue arch building, and one behind the white building. The closer points lead to parking lots at the Fairways; it did not make a lot of sense to have streets connecting to a parking lot.

Mr. Tripp found the concept plan interesting. He is wondering if the PowerPoint can be made available later for the Board members. He asked for more of an explanation of the area near the existing home. Mr. Speck said that was what they were calling Phase I: the renovation of the existing home and school. They may add an addition to the 1820 house. The next phase would be the interconnection in the middle, the homes fronting Route 28 and the muse area which would create uninterrupted community. Phase III would be the event area to the rear. Mr. Tripp asked if development has to be mixed use in the West Running Brook zone. It does. Mr. Tripp said traffic calming will have a lot to do with control in the development. He likes the idea of parking on Route 28; if that does not happen, will it impact the development? Mr. Speck said it will benefit the development, but the project does not rely on it. There is a promenade behind the stone wall.

Mr. O'Connor asked how much greenspace was available on the plan as they are calling it a village. Mr. Speck said they are calling it a village, but that term is not tied to Derry's zoning. There are no gates or restricted access. No area is off limits. Mr. O'Connor noted the plan did not marry in Humphrey Road which leads to the Don Ball Park. Maybe they would like to align that? Mr. Speck said they were working with the existing driveway. Generally, the idea of staggering the exits helps to lower the speeds with good sight distance, which they have. They would prefer not to have a left turn or right turn only. Mr. Connors noted the main entrance shows a crosswalk – will there be any traffic lights contemplated with this project? There will not. Mr. Speck indicated people will cross at the crosswalks.

Mr. Siragusa said the Fairways has not seen this exact plan, but there is a wedge of land owned by the Fairways just north of 45 South Main Street. The goal is to add sidewalks on Route 28 to promote walkability.

Mr. Tripp commented on the difference between the bike loop and the Rail Trail. Mr. Sioras explained they are all part of a network. The bike trail system, called the inner loop, connects West Running Brook School to Derry Village School, goes across the rotary at the sidewalk, follows East Broadway past Chen's Restaurant to Hood and Grinnell Schools. Southbound, the loop goes from the Fairways across to Alexander Carr Park, across Birch Street at Nortonville to the Derry Rail Trail on the former railroad bed.

Mr. O'Connor advised that a member of the public who had joined the meeting virtually had indicated they would like to speak. He reminded those in attendance and watching the meeting, that conceptual discussion with the Board was a non-binding discussion between the Board and applicant. There will be opportunities in the future for the public to weigh in on the project.

Mr. Siragusa commented there are walking paths around the site. They would like to block off the pedestrian muse area to host events such as the Farmer's Market or Derry After Dark;

blocking off the area would ensure pedestrian safety. Mr. MacEachern said he wanted to make sure he understood the access to the parking lots. It was explained that vehicles can enter the site at either 45 or 49 South Main Street, with available access to the parking lot behind the two family structures and the row houses. Vehicles can also go around the apartments and access the parking lot there, with available access behind the proposed event center. There is safe traffic circulation available.

Mr. Gerry Siragusa advised when they spoke with Planning staff early on, they were urged to retain the existing home if at all possible; that was the start of the creation of Main Street. Paul Chisholm can speak further on the development of the plan. The roadway lines up better if they keep the existing access off South Main Street. They really pushed to save the house. Mr. O'Connor thought one of the access points lined up with Humphrey Road.

Mr. Gerry Siragusa said in keeping with the larger vision, retaining the home with its 6 foot fireplaces would allow them to work with hospitality businesses and save the home. Main Street, in its proposed location helps to make all of that work. Mr. Speck added a scheme that brings the road in from Humphrey makes it less celebratory of the homes on the main street.

Mr. Grabowski asked for more information about the tax incentive mentioned during the presentation. Mr. Siragusa explained that as of April of this year, the town is offering an incentive to commercial applicants that allows up to a 50% tax exemption for up to ten years on the newly improved portion of a property. Mr. Siragusa said if they don't receive the exemption, the market will determine if the project is viable or not. It is hard to profitably build commercial developments and not charge market rate. The purpose of the exemption is to help developers and businesses with their bottom line and to make it all viable. Mr. Sioras inquired as to the projected timeline for buildout. Mr. Siragusa believed it would be five to seven years. They did have a hospitality group very interested, but then COVID hit and that was put on hold. They are speaking with other tenants. The market will dictate the construction phases.

The current plan is for 35,000 square feet of food and beverage uses; 26,000 square feet of office space, and 94 units of apartments (40 of which are in the large building to the rear). The townhomes and rowhouses are 14 units of residential total. They are planning for a 77-room hotel at 39,000 square feet, and event space at 7,000 square feet. This would equal 107,000 square feet of commercial uses and 94,000 square feet of residential use. The hotel numbers could be reduced. He would like to point out that from the house, the logging business at 92 Rockingham Road is very visible. It can be seen from the back terrace; the gas station and storage facility are also visible. During the summer when the trees are fully leafed out it is not as bad, but during the other seasons those uses are visible. The hotel/event center was located in such way as to block those views.

Mr. MacEachern asked with regard to the 94 units. Mr. Siragusa said they intend to have one and two bedroom units between 750 and 850 square feet each; there will be no studios. They have spoken with New Hampshire Housing and Finance Authority and Regional Economic Development Center which has its own housing division now. This is the type of unit people are looking for. The rowhomes and single family dwellings will have two or more bedrooms and between 1000 and 1500 square feet. It sounds small but the floor plans use the space effectively.

Mr. MacEachern noted this zone restricts housing to one and two bedroom units. Mr. Siragusa added the event center could be reduced to 5,000 square feet, but they want to be able to fit between 500 and 1000 people. The commercial square foot size is considerable, with a commercial to residential ratio of 1:14.

Mr. O'Connor asked what would happen if they could not secure a hotel tenant – would that space be converted to apartments? Mr. Siragusa said that is one of the latter phases for development. The North Square which encompasses the 1820 house could be expanded and utilized in the near term, given the uncertainty of hospitality. They really think hospitality is the best fit for the school and house given their position in the project, the character inside the house and the ability to open up the school. It will be a focal point of the project.

The rowhouse district could be part of the second or third phase of development; it could take place earlier. The goal is to have a diverse mix of housing at all levels. Diverse housing is a specific goal in the recently updated Master Plan. The proposed brew building may become an event area – it would help with the parking and allow them to not count on the large building to the rear for events. Once this area becomes a true destination, they can relocate events to the rear of the property. With regard to a hotel, there is not a true draw for this area yet. Events and festivals create the draw.

Mr. Siragusa outlined the economic benefit to the town as a result of this development once the project is fully built. There will be additional connectivity. The project creates a draw to this part of town. People will make it a point to visit the places along the way. There will be connectivity to the bike network, Robert Frost Farm, East Derry Tavern, Pinkerton, Beaver Lake, etc. The infrastructure is there. People can actually walk across town; the potential is there but we need to enhance and bring to light the opportunities. This project will do that.

There is an existing Opportunity Zone; these lots are in that zone. This gives some incentive for businesses to invest in this district. Joe Minicozzi of Urban3 is a consultant who analyzes the economic health of towns and the effect of land use on the economics. His metric is the value per acre is equal to the total assessed value divided by the total acreage. When Mr. Siragusa ran that equation using Derry's total assessed value of just under 3.1 billion, the value per acre was \$98,976 which included 49 and 45 South Main Street. The existing Siragusa property has a value per acre of \$173,811, which is double the value of the average lot in town. If the same calculation is run for the proposed 9 acre Westbrook development, the value per acre becomes \$4,583,333. The value per acre in Westbrook will be 46 times more valuable than other parcels in Derry. The project, even with a tax exemption, will generate tax dollars for the town.

With regard to school impacts, they utilized the data provided by the recent Davis Demographic report generated for the Derry School District. The townhomes will generate approximately 6 students; the rowhouses 5 students and the apartments 6 students for a total of 17 new students in the district.

Mr. Siragusa summarized by stating the project will create connectivity, create a new brand, generate tax revenues in excess of \$500,000 per year, add 200 plus new jobs, provide diverse housing, an innovative and sustainable economy, provide a new community meeting place,

unlock value in an underutilized area and meet the live, work, play goals of the State of New Hampshire.

Beverly Donovan, Economic Development Director, noted this is the first project the Board is reviewing in the West Running Brook district. The first time she saw this plan, she was a bit overwhelmed, but once it was explained in detail, she saw the connections to the goals of the Master Plan. The project makes sense. With regard to the tax exemption, the Town Council adopted the incentive, called the Commercial/Industrial Tax Exemption, so that Town Council could meet its goals and the goals of the Master Plan by creating new commercial space that benefits the community, while paying attention to historic, cultural, community and economic aspects. Town Council has authority over the exemption and the credit is on improved portions of the property. Applications would be made to the Town Council. There have, to date, been no applications submitted.

Mr. Connors recalled the district requires that the commercial portions be constructed prior to the residential portions and it seems the community is looking for tax dollars, not housing.

Mr. Siragusa advised the original plan had been to convert the home and school building to a hospitality use, which could have been handled as a change in use; that is now on hold. They are looking at options that would be easier. They would like one or two restaurants, a brew pub and an event hall. They do have interest, but there is some uncertainty right now until a vaccine is readily available for COVID-19. They have tenants interested in the north end of the project and will now publicly market the project. They were hesitant to do that before the Board had a chance to see the project. His parents live on site but still pay a commercial rate for the property taxes. On average, a student will cost the town \$15,000 per year. This project has minimal impact on the schools and they will be repurposing existing buildings to commercial use, and adding apartments. The apartments drive the commercial use and the walkability principles. People will be able to get locally sourced goods such as seafood, meat and other proteins, as well as market items, right near their homes.

Mark L'Heureux noted Route 28 is a state-owned road heading north. The town takes over the right of way at the Superintendent of School's office. He is not sure the town is interested in assuming responsibility to plow more roads in town. Parallel parking makes that all the more difficult because it is hard to get people to move their cars during a snowstorm. Mr. Siragusa said he understands the state maintains the road, but the town can take it over. The state has provided a rough cost ~~to maintain that section of roadway~~ for road maintenance at \$25,000 per mile of roadway. That includes capital improvements for road maintenance and repaving, etc. He feels based on the numbers, the increase in tax revenue will pay for the increase in expense. Walkability creates greater value for the residents. They are hoping there is an opportunity to at least discuss it with the town.

Mr. L'Heureux spoke to the phasing of the project. There will be challenges in that it can be difficult to approve a site with regard to the Department of Environmental Services Alteration of Terrain permit process. There are regulations that are complicated by the placement of the pipe systems and innovative infiltration. When phasing the project, the applicant needs to account for and perhaps develop the sub earth of the site and then phase the structures. They need to make

sure they can do all the site work and afford the capital. Mr. Siragusa said they do have two main squares and will have an easier time because of the existing infrastructure. They will rely on KNA to advise them on those issues.

Mr. MacEachern said this is a big project, and he is aware there is another project in the district coming before the Board in a few weeks. As a Board, they owe it to the citizens of the Town to look at this area as a whole. If there is anything to be done on Route 28, they need to be fair to both developers. He knows these are all conceptual discussions at this point. The Board needs to determine the overall impact to the town. This is an exciting plan and kind of what the Board was hoping for.

Mr. Siragusa commented the regulations state each project should be looked at separately. He agrees the district as a whole has a common mission.

Mr. O'Connor said he was concerned as to how this project will affect the project across the street, for example the proposed 1000 people attending events – how will this affect the neighborhood? It was a nice presentation, but this is a lot to absorb and he would request the Board receive a copy of the presentation. Mr. Connors confirmed with the Chairman the Board is not voting on anything tonight, just reviewing the concept. Mr. O'Connor felt the Heritage Commission should also take a look at this project. The project is very close to West Running Brook. Mr. Gerry Siragusa commented the land is not an historic site, it is just the oldest home in Derry.

Mr. MacEachern inquired as to when the Board will see a more detailed plan. Mr. Siragusa said they had an initial meeting with staff and then this meeting with the Board. The next step will be to design the site plan with their engineer over the next four to six weeks. They did not want to spend money on site design before obtaining Planning Board feedback.

Mr. Gerry Siragusa said they have turned interested parties away that wanted to utilize the existing building because they want to create a destination. They need to know if this plan creates traction so that they can move forward. Mr. MacEachern said each plan is individual. As the Board looks at the zone overall there will be certain things that are common to everyone. In this case, the conceptual discussions for this project and the one across the road will be back to back. Both projects will have impacts on traffic and the Board will expect traffic studies. The Board needs to know what that will do to Route 28, which leads to the concerns expressed by Mr. L'Heureux. They want to make sure the burden of shared features, such as a light, are spread over the projects so as not to burden any one developer.

Mr. Connors concurred that the Board should look at each project individually. Maybe the Board should be polled to see how each member feels about the concept. The applicant is looking for feedback on this project and he felt it was a thin line for the Board when they started to discuss multiple projects and potentially not giving a green light to one project so that they could look at another.

Ms. Davison agreed the Board should take each project on an individual basis, but the Board needs to look at how the projects impact the Town as a whole. To know that there are two

projects that will have great impact on the Town and not look at them holistically is to do a disservice to the community.

Mr. Sioras explained the process going forward. The Board is reviewing this conceptually this evening and will not make any formal decisions. The applicant can leave this evening and move forward to the design of the project. It appears tonight the Board seems to like the plan based on the zoning and it is possible this plan will come back before the Board a few times based on the technical aspects of the development, and the Board may hold site walks.

Mr. Gerry Siragusa asked if an informal poll of the Board could be taken to see what the members liked or did not like about the concept. Mr. Connors said he likes the concept. It is important to remember that it can't be all residential without any commercial – there needs to be a mix of development, phased appropriately. This appears to be phased correctly with a good mix. If it all happens as explained this evening, he will be happy.

Ms. Davison said she likes the plan and it looked like a good illustration of what they were thinking about aesthetically. She worries about how realistic it is. She wants to make sure it is not all residential. She is not sure what the Town will say about taking over Route 28. The district might be walkable, but there is no supermarket and people will need to use their cars. There needs to be adequate parking without creating a giant parking lot. Mr. Gerry Siragusa said one of the concepts they had discussed was using the school and the house for an event center; the rest of the land would have been a parking lot. They did not want that. Maybe they could have put residential right on the road as a buffer, but it could have an impact on the hospitality and event use. The town said to focus on commercial before focusing on residential, but they do need some residential to make it all work. They want to do the best they can and be creative. Ms. Davison commented this is a big project with moving parts.

Mr. O'Connor questioned holding events on the site now without available parking. If they use the school lot for parking, is the school receptive to that? Should the School District be here as part of the discussion? What if they say no and do not allow parking on their site? Mr. Siragusa said they have had early discussions with the School District and the events may grow over time. The partnership may evolve. They don't expect the town to open parking lots up to them for future events. It makes sense because it is walkable and drives economic growth. There is a secondary economic impact on the town when they hold large events. Other businesses in town benefit from the trickle effect. They can quantify that for the Board, if they want to see it.

Mr. Tripp said this is an interesting project and he is not sure what will happen across the street; he hopes the development is successful. The Board is not here to stop development, it is here to make sure the regulations are followed as well as any applicable RSA or Ordinance. He is not concerned the project will be all residential; he feels the applicant has planned ahead and is presenting a type of project that has not been seen in Derry before. They are making a substantial investment and he is sure they will work hard to make it successful. The Board's role is to make sure they follow the rules. As a Town Councilor, he always likes increased tax revenue. Density creates value which creates more taxes. He feels the taxes generated by the project will help the town and yes, he likes the project.

Mr. Grabowski noted Ms. Davison had already expressed many of his concerns. This project seems to meet the spirit of the district. The concentration may be mostly residential if the commercial development does not come fruition. He feels this is a long phased plan and agrees with Mr. Tripp that the Board is here to make sure the applicant adheres to the ordinances in place.

Mr. Siragusa stated the existing structures totaling 25,000 square feet would all be commercial uses. They would have been in construction for an additional 7,500 square feet of commercial space by next spring. They are not looking to bring in residential use before the commercial use. They are still in the planning stages and with the phasing wanted to bring in commercial first. It sounds like a common concern and he wanted to restate they are not looking to add residential use until some of the commercial is built. The phasing is structured to make sure of that. Mr. Gerry Siragusa said they don't want to bring in strip malls. They want to keep the history and are taking a unique local approach.

Mr. O'Connor said he would like time to absorb this and review the project based on the district to make sure it meets the intent of the zone and to see if they need to look at things like impact fees and how the project affects town services.

Mr. MacEachern said he found the project to be good and exciting, but like Mr. O'Connor will require more details. He understands how the bollard system works and wants to understand the other concepts to make sure emergency vehicles can get in and out of the areas and that the areas are safe. He would like more information on events and how people will get in and out of the site – where will people park for large events? It does not appear there is enough parking on site. How are the parking calculations being done? The concept does not have the details and there needs to be enough parking for the commercial spaces on non-event nights for those visitors. For instance, at the 1820 building, there does not seem to be enough proposed parking based on the concept. Those are things the Board will look at. He would like to understand the phasing plan. They may need to come back to the Board for each phase, as they may change over time. He would like to understand the affect the housing aspect will have versus the market rates and to also understand what they mean by “affordable housing”. The concept is great, and it appears they are meeting the spirit of the zone, but it is a complex plan.

Mr. O'Connor asked Mr. Sioras if the Board will be able to provide more insight as the project moves forward. Mr. Sioras said the applicant may opt to apply for Design Review which would be a public hearing at which the Board provides more insight on an engineered plan, but it would not be the formal decision. That will come after the Final Submittal review. The applicant will continue to work with staff, following the normal review procedure.

Mr. O'Connor advised the applicant they were free to move forward to the next phase of design.

Mr. Connors was elevated to Secretary Pro-Temp in the absence of Mr. McPherson.

There was no further business before the Board.

Motion by MacEachern, seconded by Davison to adjourn. The motion passed with all in favor and the meeting stood adjourned at 9:59 p.m.

Approved by: _____
Chairman/Vice Chairman

Secretary

Approval date: _____