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Town Planner's Project Review
Wednesday, November 14, 2018

- IX. **18 Main Street Parking Lot.** 18 Main Street and 12 Cowell Drive. Site plan for proposed 40-space parking lot to be built behind existing 4-unit building. Primary access would be through a separate lot with a single family house fronting on Cowell Drive. Toomerfs, LLC c/o Peter Murphy, property owner. Mike Sievert, MJS Engineering, engineer. Robbi Woodburn, landscape architect. 18 Main Street - Map 4, Lot 55 – Church Hill District. 12 Cowell Drive – Map 4, Lot 38-5 – Residence A District.
- If the variance is granted the prior evening, on November 13, I recommend acceptance as complete and setting a public hearing for December 12 and scheduling a site walk. If the variance is not granted, then the application should be reviewed on a preliminary basis.

Please note the following:

- 1) Acceptance. The application is complete but the applicant needs a variance. It will be heard the prior evening. I will email the Planning Board Wednesday morning and let you know the results of the ZBA review. If the variance is approved, the application can be accepted as complete. If it is denied, then the project can be discussed as a preliminary application and the applicant will submit a modified design that does not require a variance.
- 2) Variance. The parking lot will serve people who do not live at 18 Main Street so it is a principal use not only an accessory use. A parking lot (surface parking in the Table of Uses) as a principal use is allowed by conditional use in the Church Hill zone but not in the Residence A zone. Primary access to the site would come through another lot on Cowell Drive, which is zoned RA. RA does not allow parking as a principal use so a variance is needed.
- 3) Site walk. I recommend that the board schedule a site walk.
- 4) Meeting on site. The TRG scheduled a meeting on site Tuesday, November 13, at 11:00 am. The TRG discussed the parking lot on November 6. TRG members thought it would be helpful to look at the access issues on both Cowell Drive and Main Street. Members of the public are welcome to attend.
- 5) Conditional use. A parking lot as a principal use is allowed in the Church Hill zone by conditional use. The applicant addressed the 8 criteria in the application.

- 6) HDC. The parking lot on the main lot is subject to review by the Historic District Commission. The application will be presented to the HDC on December 6.
- 7) Parking lot. There are currently 5 paved parking spaces and 12 gravel spaces on the 18 Main Street lot. There will be a total of 43 parking spaces. The drive aisle is 24 feet and the spaces are 9 feet x 18 feet. The lot will serve both residents of 18 Main Street (thereby functioning as an accessory use) and residents of other properties owned by Pete Murphy, particularly the Red Tower across Main Street (thereby functioning as a principal use).
- 8) Cowell Drive access. The TRG discussed possible challenges with the layout of the access as proposed at Cowell Drive. Creating a circular driveway in front of the house is a possibility. The Planning Board will need to deliberate creating an access in the Residence A zone that would serve a parking lot that is a principal use located outside of the Residence A. We will see at the ZBA hearing and the Planning Board hearing if there are particular concerns from residents of the Cowell Drive neighborhood. While it is preferable to avoid creating a parking access within a single-family neighborhood, this access would function much better than the existing or an expanded access on Main Street. The site is tighter, Main Street is narrow, the sight distance is fair, and Church Hill is the heart of the Historic District.
- 9) Cowell Drive parking. The TRG discussed possible reconfigurations to the driveway and parking areas on the Cowell Drive lot. (The Residence A zone does not allow parking in front of a building except within a driveway, so any parking in front would need to be within a driveway.)
- 10) Circulation. We will need to determine the optimal access into and through the site. The TRG discussed a possible one-way driveway. Two-way access at Cowell Drive with an exit only (right turn only?) at Main Street is a possibility.
- 11) Fire Department. John Powers, Deputy Chief, did not see any significant concern at this point. He noted that this plan would improve access into the site.
- 12) Police Department. Chief Kurz stated in his memo to the Planning Board:
- 13) The proposed parking lot would provide UNH students parking for a fee. The daily trips from this type of clientele would be minimal as there is no parking at UNH that would be closer. This greatly enhances the situation from the Police Department's perspective.
- 14) The entrance/exit to Cowell Drive is the preferable location. While using the Main Street entrance/exit would not create an adverse decision from the Police Department, Cowell Drive offers minimal traffic congestion, good sight distance and stays out of the residential neighborhood section.
- 15) Parking for employees of businesses owned by Mr. Murphy in the downtown area could also free limited available business permits sold by the Town.

- 16) Snow removal. Proposed snow storage locations are shown on the plan with a cross hatch. April Talon cautioned about piles of snow situated along the driveway leading to water running down the driveway in between.
- 17) Stormwater management. The stormwater will be treated on sight. Mike Sievert says the runoff will be slightly reduced from the current level. Mike and April Talon will review the design. April questioned how much runoff would reach the forebay.
- 18) Lighting. There will be two new pole lights, one new light on the 18 Main Street building, and one new light on the building on Cowell. There is one existing light on the 18 Main Street building. The light example shown in the plans is probably not adequate. Lights must be shielded and this style of light causes glare.
- 19) St. George's Church. St. George's Church is a direct abutter on the east. Michael Bradley, Rector of St. George's is also a member of the TRG and chair of the HDC. The building is about 5 feet from the lot line and would be about 10 feet from the parking lot. There are windows on the westerly side of the building. The TRG discussed whether there should be fencing there to screen the view and buffer noise from the parking lot. Reverend Bradley questioned whether that would be needed as this wing is not used often in the evening. He noted that pedestrian connections between the two properties should be looked at.
- 20) Landscaping/screening. Fortunately, the parking lot will be situated in the rear of the building, which is the better location for the lot as it will be less visible from the street. The landscaping regulations are significantly reduced for parking areas situated behind buildings. The parking lot should be screened from any adjacent residences, even the Cowell Drive property owned by the applicant (included on the plans). A six foot high fence is probably the best way to screen the lot to the side(s).
- 21) Dumpster. There is a pad for a dumpster. There should also be fencing around the dumpster, a recycling area, and a program for recycling.
- 22) Permeable pavement. Mike Sievert said the soils here are okay. There is probably some ledge. He noted at the TRG meeting challenges with some other sites and did not think it would be appropriate here. April Talon did not think it appropriate to push for permeable pavement at this site.
- 23) Downtown parking. At the suggestion of Town staff, the applicant said he is open to considering allocating a limited number of spaces for parking for visitors or businesses downtown. He could install meters for this purpose.
- 24) Charging station. The applicant said he is open to looking at adding a charging station for electrical vehicles.
- 25) Bicycle storage. Two racks are shown beyond the parking lot. It would be best to relocate them close to the building. The applicant should also present a plan for covered and/or interior bicycle storage. This lot will serve residents at the Red Tower across the street. It would be beneficial if the applicant could also install a bicycle rack at the Red Tower if there is not one now. Site plan review is not needed to add a rack

there. The regulations require bike storage for 1/3 the number of residents for a project or 1/3 the number of parking spaces required for the project, whichever is greater. We should discuss what the optimal number of spaces are. A waiver would be needed to reduce the number.

An old picture of 18 Main Street

