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Town Planner's Review
Wednesday, May 26, 2021

VIII. **Alpha Tau Omega Fraternity – Amendment to Plans.** 18 Garrison Avenue. Amendment for proposed changes to approved site plan and conditional uses for a fraternity. Richmond Property Group, c/o Sarah Layton, property owner. Bruce Scamman, Emanuel Engineering. Isaac Schlosser, Krittenbrink Architecture. Map 2, Lot 12-12. Central Business District.

➤ I recommend that the board discuss the project and set a public hearing for June 9.

Please note the following:

- 1) **Site plan.** A site plan and conditional use for the ATO fraternity was approved on May 13, 2020. An amendment to the original project was approved on September 9, 2020. The notice of decision for that amendment is included in the packet. This application is for a second amendment. If this amendment is approved I will provide a new notice of decision (just updated from the prior one; most of those conditions will still apply) and the prior one will be null and void.
- 2) **Changes.** The changes from the prior approved amended site plan are listed on the application form. The number of occupants remains at 41 plus the house director.
- 3) **Amendment.** An amendment involves a public hearing with notices to abutters.
- 4) **Conditional Uses.** The Planning Board approved several conditional uses in the original application: a) to establish a fraternity; b) for building height to exceed 30 feet; and c) for construction within the 75 foot wetland buffer – driveways, utilities, fencing, retaining wall, sidewalks, building addition, and accessory structures. This amendment is not reviewed through the conditional use process since the proposed changes are not pertinent to the approval of a fraternity; the building height is now under 30 feet, and there will be no significant changes to the site having any impact on the wetland buffers.
- 5) **Plan sheets.** Sheet D6 Details is new in the current plan set. The landscaping plan is not included in the new plan set but will still apply (some minor adjustments may be needed with the revised site plan such as the removal of the full width front deck). The lighting plan (sheets E001 and E002) is not included in the new plan set but will remain the same.

- 6) TRG meeting. The Technical Review Group discussed the amended plan with the applicant on May 18. I will send notes of the meeting shortly. The Deputy Fire Chief said that the window wells were not needed for emergency egress. The applicant should clarify if they want to retain these.
- 7) Architecture. The main change from the prior design is that the second floor is removed. The scale and proportions of the prior design were very effective so the change is somewhat unfortunate but we understand the economic constraints. Some of the architectural modifications shown as precedent condition 1.g. will still apply. Here are some additional suggestions for the revised design: show a low foundation or a baseboard on the front façade underneath the clapboard front, make the center gable on the second floor narrower (as it is rather overscaled), make the cornerboards on the main block slightly wider. The colors of the building (not shown in black and white image) are black shutters, black window grilles, white trim, and off white or gray body.
- 8) Accessibility into the building. The accessibility code requires that at least 60% of the entrances into the building be accessible (i.e. that at least 2 entrances in most cases). The plans show only one accessible entrance. The architect is working on addressing this requirement. A ramp will likely be extended around the front to the front entrance.
- 9) Floor plans. The plans are revised to include bedrooms in the basement and on the second floor. The first floor will include the function spaces, one accessible bedroom, and the H.D. suite (house director?). Basement dwelling units are not allowed in multi-unit residences but basement bedrooms are allowed in fraternities.
- 10) Rear patio. The plans show the area behind the building as a stone infiltration area for drainage. This was shown as a patio in the prior plans. The applicant said this is not shown as a patio for cost savings but could be finished in the future. I think it very important that this have a suitable finish so that it is attractive and readily usable for the occupants upon completion.