

**PLANNING BOARD
MARCH 8, 2011 AT 7:30 PM
TOWN HALL, 41 SOUTH MAIN STREET**

In attendance:

Members: Bill Dietrich (Acting Chair), Charles Faulkner, Joan Garipay, Jim Hornig, Kate Connolly (Selectmen's Representative)

Alternate: Iain Sim

Staff: Vicki Smith, Jonathan Edwards

Others: See attached sheet

1. MINUTES FEBRUARY 8 AND 22, 2011

Review of the February 8, 2011 minutes was postponed. The minutes of February 22, 2011 were approved as amended.

The Board agreed to include lists of waiver requests into the text of the minutes.

2. CONTINUATION OF PUBLIC HEARING ON PROPOSED ZONING AMENDMENTS FOR TOWN MEETING 2011

It was moved by SIM, seconded by FAULKNER, to continue the Public Hearing on the zoning amendment to March 22, 2011. THE BOARD VOTED UNANIMOUSLY IN FAVOR OF THE MOTION.

3. 11-07 SUBMISSION OF APPLICATION FOR SITE PLAN REVIEW BY DARTMOUTH COLLEGE FOR RENOVATIONS AND ADDITIONS TO THE HANOVER INN, LOCATED AT 2 SOUTH MAIN STREET, TAX MAP 34, LOT 120, 4 SOUTH MAIN STREET, TAX MAP 34, LOT 121, IN THE "D-1" ZONING DISTRICT, AND 4 EAST WHEELOCK STREET, TAX MAP 34, LOT 17, IN THE "I" ZONING DISTRICT.

DIETRICH read the Notice of Public Hearing.

The application was presented by: Tim McNamara, Paul Olsen, and Ellen Arnold of the Dartmouth College Real Estate Office, Gary Johnson and Stephanie Greenfield of Cambridge Seven Associates, Inc., Steve Pernaw of Stephen G. Pernaw & Co., Inc., Alan Saucier of Saucier + Flynn, Kevin Kelly of Metric Construction, Rod Finley of Pathways Consulting, LLC, and Connie Lane (legal consultant).

McNamara mentioned staff's concern for an existing portico, which is partially located in the Town right-of-way. He said the portico has been in this location since 1894. The current application does not include any expansion of the existing structure.

McNamara presented a power point presentation of the project goals: (1) To enhance the guest experience, (2) To increase the guestroom count, (3) To centralize the conference room facilities, (4) To transform the restaurants and enliven the restaurant experience, (5) To improve the Hanover Inn (Inn)/Hopkins Center (HOP) connections, and (6) To correct existing infrastructure deficiencies. McNamara said the project involves providing physical connectivity between three parcels - the Inn, the Lang Bldg, and the Zahm Courtyard area of the HOP parcel. The College is seeking a Building Code Appeal from the ZBA relative to a property line party wall (solid wall) requirement. The appeal proposes substituting mechanical means (fire doors, etc.) and cross easements to allow doors to function in place of a solid wall.

Changes of Use: McNamara presented a slide of proposed changes of use including: a decrease in commercial & office/retail space, a decrease in function/meeting space, an increase in hotel support area, an increase in guestroom space, and an increase in restaurant seating. He said the combined floor area of the Inn & Lang Bldg will increase 11,963 sf to a total of 113,474 sf. Some basement area space will be expanded to increase parking spaces from 18 to 28. McNamara said 13,000-14,000 sf will actually be constructed.

Floor Plans: Johnson presented the proposed floor plans and explained how the buildings will function. The Inn lobby will decrease in size. The Hayward Lounge, office, and the Simon Peirce area will be combined to create a new restaurant, accessible by the Inn interior and the street. The Daniel Webster Room will become a pre-function space and will connect to a lower level pre-function space via a new grand staircase. Zins will become a breakfast room/tavern. The kitchens will be completely renovated. The 4th & 5th floors will be converted to more guestrooms. A portion of the lower level will be converted to parking spaces; the remainder will be repositioned to be far more efficient and convenient for the hotel to operate. A new function room will be inserted into the Zahm Courtyard. A second function room will be inserted on the terrace. A secondary lobby will be created at the lower level of the Zahm Courtyard. The Lang Bldg, lower level, will remain as retail space off of Main St. The 2nd & 3rd floors will be converted to new hotel guestrooms. A ramp system and stair will connect the two spaces. An emergency egress stair will be constructed at the end of guestroom corridor. The Wheelock Room will be converted to five new guestrooms. Johnson said the buildings will be completely code compliant including the addition of several new elevators.

Lighting Plan: Johnson presented the proposed lighting plan. Exterior lighting includes simple downlighting at the new restaurant entry, downlighting through the porches surrounding the function room, downlights at the canopy entry, emergency lights at the emergency stair, and step lighting and low level lights will be provided with low cut-off and no visibility of light source. Existing downlights in the porte-cochere and front entry are not changing.

Elevations: Johnson presented the elevations and rendering illustrations. He noted three existing dormers on the Lang Bldg and said the proposal is to add two more so that each guestroom will have a window.

Site/Utility Plan: Finley presented the site/utility plan which includes sliplining the stormwater and sanitary kitchen line that run under the HOP and draining the Zahm Courtyard to an existing drainage pipe under the HOP and out the south side of the building. There will be no modifications to the portico with the exception of some concrete sidewalks, resetting some curbing, and repaving.

Construction Staging: Finley said of construction staging, the plan is to move the bus stop and fence in an existing lawn area for staging. Two oaks on the lawn will be removed and replaced. The site will have two 20' gated entrances; one in front of a temporary construction access road leading from Wheelock Street to the Zahm Courtyard and the other leading to an upper level. Edwards suggested limiting access to right turns only, in and out of the site. Kelly said it would not be an issue if that is imposed. Finley said a crane, to be parked on Wheelock, will lift construction materials from the trucks they are delivered on to the new additions. The pedestrian walkway adjacent to the crane will have a protective canopy overhead. McNamara offered to research under what conditions it is okay to lift steel over a sidewalk. DIETRICH questioned the depth of the new foundation. Finley said they will be drilling down 15'. McNamara said the College would like to fast-track the foundation and utility work and will be seeking separate permitting for those phases. GARIPAY asked if the applicant is confident they will not find any surprises as they begin digging. McNamara said yes, they have done a number of borings and excavation in the Zahm Courtyard area. There will be no blasting or ledge removal as a part of this project.

Construction Parking: McNamara said construction workers, excluding supervisory personnel, will park in Lebanon and be shuttled to the site. The supervisors will park at other College facilities and walk to the site. Occasionally a vehicle may be parked in the lay-down space by the crane.

Landscaping Plan: Saucier presented the landscaping plan which includes:

- replacing two trees (one is scheduled to be taken down in the near future; the new trees will be yellow woods of roughly 4"-5" caliber and about 20'-22' in height),
- preserving other trees,
- sidewalk repairs along Main St and Wheelock St,
- removing plantings on the east side of the dining terrace to make way for an egress stair,
- reconfiguring, improving, and repaving the ramp to the parking garage,
- a new concrete walk and granite accents,
- protecting the existing perennials in the garden,
- moving the Zahm Memorial forward to the lower conference center & Inn entrance,
- moving an existing stair forward and southerly to insert a handicap ramp,
- replacing the large promenade walkway between the wall & the upper yard space,
- providing construction fencing around the WWI Memorial fountain and sculpture and the Vietnam Memorial, and
- replacing the terrace bluestone and groundcover plantings.

Saucier said there will be no work along the west side of the porte-cochere. The WWII roster and various plaques (bicentennial, Hopkins, some of the class plaques) will remain. Lighting to the grand stair leading up to the HOP will remain as is. Some of the benches will be put

back; some will be reused elsewhere on campus. McNamara said the bike racks will be relocated to the east end of the grassed area for the duration of construction.

Traffic Assessment: Pernaw presented the traffic impact assessment, summarizing data collection, tools to evaluate intersections, future projections, technical analyses, and recommendations relative to traffic operations, capacity and safety.

Pernaw asked to speak to staff's concern about the 7:15-7:30 interval being higher than the peak hour. He said the peak hour is identified as the highest four consecutive 15-minute intervals. Though more cars pass through the Main St/Wheelock St intersection during the 7:15-7:30 interval, it is not considered the peak hour because the sum of four other intervals is higher. However, when analyzing capacity, as opposed to identifying the peak hour, traffic engineers look at the highest 15 minute period and multiply it by four.

Pernaw presented illustrations of 2010 Existing Traffic Volumes for the Main St/Wheelock St intersection on a peak hotel day (assuming all rooms are full). It depicted a total of 1,498 vehicles utilizing the intersection during the morning peak hour, 1,227 vehicles during the midday peak hour, and 1,817 vehicles during the evening peak hour. The traffic demand is heavier going eastbound on Wheelock in the morning and westbound on Wheelock in the evening. Illustrations of 2012 No-Build Traffic Volumes and 2022 No-Build Traffic Volumes were also provided. They show an intersection Level of Service E on a peak hotel day, during the morning peak hour, whether the proposed project is built or not. This means that although the proposed project will result in adding traffic to this intersection, it will not result in a significant change in overall traffic operations.

SIM asked how vehicle numbers were calculated in terms of hotel guests versus conference attendees. Pernaw said on a typical hotel day, the portico would see an additional 24 trips during the morning peak hour, an additional 50 trips at midday, and an additional 30 trips in the evening. Pernaw said he was conservative with his projections, assuming an afternoon turnover of the function rooms (morning attendees would leave at noon and another group would arrive for an afternoon session). A benefit of that is that the traffic demand is a little lower during the noon hour.

Edwards asked if Pernaw assumes every hotel guest and every conference attendee would utilize the valet parking. Pernaw said no, that would be highly unlikely. He assumes 10% of conference attendees will be hotel guests, 90% will be commuters - many of which could already be on campus. Edwards asked if going from a typical hotel day to maximum hotel day, the assumption is that 50% of conference attendees will walk to the venue. Pernaw said yes, it is assumed that half of the attendees will already be parked elsewhere on campus. Edwards said a larger conference may appeal to people from around the state or region which would result in fewer walk-ins. Pernaw said he expects a fair amount of those attendees to utilize the town garage. Edwards said those assumptions have a significant impact on the kind of congestion and traffic projections that then become the model. Pernaw said the assumptions having to do with trip generation are based on Institute of Transportation Engineers (ITE) rates of hotel use and the manual method for meeting room space. As a traffic engineer, he has to make reasonable projections on these patterns and develop future projections to run the analysis.

Pernaw presented his conclusions stating that the net impact on the signalized intersection, in terms of cars utilizing the intersection, is an anticipated increase of 1% on a typical day and 1½% - 2% on a peak day. He said that kind of variation (1-2%) already occurs on random days. SIM said the difference is that this project will create a situation where several cars come around and back up while trying to get into the valet parking area. That will have a major impact. Pernaw said the portico area needs as much stacking space as possible and the manpower to have a high turnover during peak days. Edwards asked whether it would be helpful to restrict left-hand turns into and out of the portico. Pernaw said it would be over-engineering to try to enforce something like that and it would magnify impacts elsewhere. He suggested people would not attempt left-hand turns into or out of the portico during peak hours. HORNIG asked whether the basic conclusion is not to worry. Pernaw said typically engineers would recommend adding lanes to an intersection such as this that has a .8 volume-to-capacity ratio. That is not an option here. The signal system is operating pretty close to optimal. He would recommend increasing staffing capacity of the portico.

GARIPAY asked how pedestrian crossings play into the scenario. Pernaw said pedestrians are afforded 26 seconds to cross this intersection, at which point traffic in all direction ceases. This gap in traffic hurts these numbers but the amount of pedestrians at this intersection necessitates the longer pedestrian crossing phase. SIM asked if the pedestrian cycle is overgenerous. Pernaw said no and explained the pedestrian cycle is based on the length of the crosswalk and walking speeds.

Edwards noted that one of the few recommendations by the engineer for the River Park project was signal optimization of the downtown Hanover signals. He said it sounds like there is not much more ability to optimize at least this set of signals. McNamara said the River Park project traffic analysis is also based on the assumption that 60% of their traffic comes from the north (Hanover & Norwich). There is a peer review being conducted of their traffic study to test the validity of that.

McNamara noted that the current presentation was only a brief overview of a large traffic assessment submittal. He asked the Board to forward questions about the traffic study to him for discussion at the next meeting. DIETRICH and SIM volunteered to review the traffic study. The Board will submit further comments to staff, to be forwarded to the applicant, as requested.

Parking Requirements: McNamara handed out copies of “Hanover Inn / Lang Building – Parking Requirement Calculations” packets which represent a change in the parking requirement calculations for this project. McNamara said the College has re-measured everything in terms of proposed use and come up with a parking requirement of 219 spaces for the Inn. Under existing conditions, the building has 18 spaces on site and 175 parking credits. This project will create an additional 10 spaces on site, which leaves a deficit of 16 parking spaces. Those spaces will be provided through a conversion of existing parking spaces in the downtown to parking credits. McNamara said the revised parking package has been provided to Judy Brotman, Zoning Administrator, for review. Olsen said the theory of parking credits is that they provide an accounting of grandfathered spaces. Dartmouth created excess parking spaces for the South Block project. Those extra spaces can now be converted to parking credits and transferred to another site. CONNOLLY said the only limitation is relative to distance.

McNamara said there are currently no physical parking spaces associated with the Lang Bldg. It has 47 parking credits. The proposed work at the Lang Bldg will reduce the parking requirement for that property to 36, leaving the Lang Bldg with 9 excess parking credits. McNamara said Brotman has already determined that the College is not able to transfer those credits to the Inn.

HORNIG asked how the College will accommodate parking for the additional conference room activities. McNamara reiterated that 10 new spaces will be added on site. Any overflow would be parked in the downtown or someplace else on campus. HORNIG asked whether the College considered offering off-site reception and shuttling guests back and forth. McNamara said no.

DIETRICH asked of overflow parking on Dartmouth Row. McNamara said the College requests permission from the Town to allow overflow parking in that area several times a year. They do not want to allow permanent parking along that side of the Green. Olsen advised that the new management at the Inn is working to improve the valet parking systems. He said improving the Inn/HOP connection could allow for use of the porte-cochere behind the HOP. McNamara said the College recognizes that that they must make the valet parking more responsive to events. They are exploring valet parking options including reconfiguring the curb on the east side of the portico, within the town right-of-way, to create additional space. McNamara said the Town has suggested implementing an expanded bus shelter/transit stop and reconfiguring parking across the street from the HOP to increase space count. The College has agreed to pay for a protected crosswalk in that area and a new metering system across the street. This will occur before this project begins. The existing bus stop will be temporarily relocated during construction. McNamara said AT runs on weekdays. The only transit stopping there on weekends is the Dartmouth Coach and VT Transit/Greyhound. The College is hoping to use some of these spaces for valet stacking on the weekends.

Barbara McIlroy questioned the option of stacking additional cars, as the current situation impedes with pedestrian travel. McNamara said the cars will be separated from pedestrians by a curb. The plan is to move the curb to the east and leave the pedestrian access the same. It should be easier for pedestrians, as cars will not be crossing their pathways.

DIETRICH suggested scheduling a site visit. The Board agreed to meet March 17, 2011 at 4:00 PM at the Hanover Inn lobby to conduct a site visit. The public hearing will then be continued to March 22, 2011 at 7:30 PM.

DIETRICH commented on the long list of notes submitted by staff. Edwards said staff is most worried by the impact of the convention use on the downtown parking supply. Staff is not convinced valet parking will work in sufficient depth to alleviate their concerns. Edwards said peak use of the existing structure is already a problem. HORNIG agreed, stating that he too is concerned about parking overflow and how it will be accommodated. HORNIG expressed interest in parking management policy changes to require conference attendees to utilize valet parking rather than feed meters. FAULKNER asked of the status of the Town's parking garage. Staff was asked to obtain information from the Parking Division and distribute it to the Board.

Edwards offered to look at occupancy limits, in terms of the uses proposed and room sizes. He suggested it may be necessary to limit scheduling of large conferences to one at a time, not allowing them at multiple campus sites simultaneously.

4. OTHER BUSINESS: None

5. ADJOURN: The meeting adjourned at 10:20 PM