

**Board Present:** Alan Putnam – Chair, Bill Rescsanski, Alissa Bascom, Keith Weed, Stacy Hassett, Richard Carter, Patty Chaffee

**Alternate:** Lenny Ostasiewski

**Public Present:** Sharon Francis, Victor St. Pierre, Jason Lopez, David Streeter, Alex Manaster, Lorri Boynton, Philip Turner, Shawna Jammis, Albert St. Pierre, Tamara Golden

Alan Putnam called the meeting to order at 7:00pm.

### **Approval of minutes of November 21, 2023**

Motion by Ms. Bascom to approve the meeting minutes of November 21, 2023, seconded by Mr. Carter. 6-0-1, motion approved [P. Chaffee abstaining].

### **Applications:**

1. **2023-SDFP-004: 689 River Road LLC & Chinburg Properties (Owners) Jason Lopez of Keach-Nordstrom Associates Inc. (Agents):** request final review for a 20-lot subdivision; the property is identified as Map 207 Lot 002 and is located at 689 River Rd in the Mixed Use (E) Zoning District.

The Board reopened this hearing.

Jason Lopez, Keach-Nordstrom Associates, Inc., stated that the State driveway application was submitted, and comments were received. There is an access point on the newly created five-acre lot and an existing access point at the southerly point of the lot. There is also a U-shaped driveway for the two remaining office buildings, leading to two more curb cuts. Each property is allowed one access point, or up to three if certain criteria are met. In discussion with the District engineer, the proposal is to eliminate both curb cuts for the U-shaped driveway, leading to only three curb cuts for the property. There is a large existing tree that will likely need to be removed for sight lines. There is an existing utility pole that also causes some issues with sight lines and there is a consideration to move it back a bit. Alternatively, the access point could be moved at an increased cost for the road and drainage. There is a requested waiver for flexibility to work with DOT on the location of this driveway point.

Ms. Bascom expressed concern regarding the access to the back parking lot for the two, currently unoccupied building. Currently, the only way to access them is across a right of way in the school's driveway. Loss of both access points would allow for only access from the right of way. Mr. Lopez explained that the proposal is to reconfigure the parking lot to allow for access from a different point on the lot.

Ms. Bascom suggested conditioning approval of this plan contingent on creation of driveways between the two buildings, in order to access the back parking lot outside of the right of way. Mr. Lopez explained that, if the Town does not take over the road, the only access DOT will allow is across a private easement into the back parking lot.

In response to a question, Mr. Lopez explained that the road is designed to be 20' wide with shoulders.

Ms. Emerson stated that she received a copy of an environmental report from a third party. It noted that there is a low risk of contamination on the site from releases of hazardous wastes and/or oil.

A representative for the builder, explained that the company receives approvals and then builds spec houses based on the market in the area. The houses in the proposed development are proposed to be smaller, Energy Star approved homes. Pricing of the homes has not yet been determined, but the smaller homes are expected to be approximately \$300,000. The homes range between 2-4 bedrooms. These will be fee simple lots, as part of a Homeowner's Association. The HOA will take care of the road until the time the Town takes it over, hopefully. The HOA after that time will exist in a very limited capacity.

Ms. Chaffee asked if the subdivision map needs to show where septic systems would be located. Ms. Emerson stated that 28 test pits have been completed for the 20 lots and information has been submitted.

The Board discussed the requested waivers. The subdivision regulations deal with frontage and require 200' of frontage, but a waiver from 200' to 80' of frontage for each lot was submitted. Ms. Bascom stated that she believes the proposal for smaller lots will benefit the community in the short and long term.

In response to a question from Mr. Carter, it was noted that local workers will likely be used.

Mr. St. Pierre expressed concern regarding the right of way along Route 12A, as it is only 32.5'. He is also concerned regarding the 6" water line from the intersection up to the existing houses in this area. This is not a loop system, and it may be difficult to add additional houses onto the line.

Motion by Mr. Rescsanski to waive the 200' road frontage requirement in Section 4.6.5., seconded by Ms. Bascom.

7-0-0, motion approved.

Mr. Lopez explained that the next waiver is from the requirement that a dead end or cul-de-sac street shall not exceed 1,000' in length. Engineer. The road extends approximately 1,350', to the end of the cul-de-sac. The site is limited on the number of curb cuts per the DOT. There is an issue with the grading on other portions of the site. In order to make the road 1,000', the lots would need to be pulled down the site and the grading would require guardrails along the highway without any tree line. A longer road allows for the vegetated buffer to remain. The request is for up to 1,500', in order to work this through with DOT. The applicant believes the request meets the spirit and intent of the ordinance.

Ms. Emerson noted that the Fire Chief reviewed the plans and is agreeable with the cul-de-sac size and was happy to see the fire hydrant at the end. It is unclear why the 1,000' requirement was put into the ordinance.

There was discussion regarding the proposed plan and safety along the State road.

Motion by Ms. Bascom to approve the 1,000' dead end/cul-de-sac waiver, not to exceed 1,500' in accordance with DOT approval, seconded by Mr. Carter.

6-1-0, motion approved.

There was discussion regarding the waiver from the lot sizes. For this subdivision, the average lot size with the inclusion of the open space would be 0.76 acres. There was discussion regarding using lot size averaging for this proposal. This allows for smaller lot sizes while preserving open space in perpetuity.

Motion by Ms. Bascom to accept the application for lot size averaging as presented, per Section 8.5.11, seconded by Ms. Chaffee.

7-0-0, motion approved.

The applicant team explained that the parent parcel is allowed three curb cuts from DOT. If this subdivision is approved, it will create a new road. This would allow private preserved access to the back lot in the deed. This will occur regardless of whether or not the Town takes over the road.

There was discussion regarding traffic, especially school bus traffic, and safety along the State road into this new development. There was discussion regarding having the Town engineers check the proposed drainage of the site.

Motion by Ms. Bascom to approve the 20-lot subdivision for 689 River Road LLC & Chinburg Properties, with the following conditions:

1. The Charlestown Water Department review the plans to see if the amount of water usage for the proposed development will or will not interfere with existing water users.
2. The State shall approve the driveway permit, alteration of terrain, and subdivision plan.

Seconded by Ms. Chaffee.

7-0-0, motion approved.

#### **New Business:**

1. Historical District Commission Ordinance Presentation

Representatives from the Historical District Commission presented a draft ordinance regarding appropriateness of alterations for historical buildings in Town. There is a benefit to this ordinance in order to apply for certain grant funding for preservation of historical properties in Town. It was noted that it will be up to the Town to enforce granting a building permit based on a Certificate of Appropriateness. The Board agreed to hear this item at its next meeting for a requisite public hearing.

2. Sign Ordinance Amendment Proposal for Town Vote

The Board agreed to hear this item again at its December 19<sup>th</sup> meeting. Sharon Francis stated that she read the proposed ordinance and has a number of questions. She asked if the changes are for advertising signs. Ms. Emerson stated that the section regarding signs for businesses has not been changed. Banners are allowed only as temporary signs. Political signs are regulated by the Attorney General's Office.

3. ADU Control – Does the Board want to propose adding controls to the Zoning Ordinance for Town vote this year?

The Board discussed potentially adding controls to the Zoning Ordinance. The Board agreed not to move this item forward for Town Meeting at this time.

#### **Administration:**

None at this time.

#### **Continued Business:**

None at this time.

**Communications:** None at this time.

**a) Board – Master Plan Discussion**

**b) Public Participation:**

Motion by Mr. Weed to adjourn at 10:00pm, seconded by Mr. Carter.  
7-0-0, motion approved. Meeting adjourned.

Respectfully submitted,

Kristan Patenaude  
Recording Secretary