

City of Keene
New Hampshire

PLANNING BOARD
MEETING MINUTES

Monday, November 22, 2021

6:30 PM

**Council Chambers,
City Hall**

Members Present:

Pamela Russell Slack, Chair
David Orgaz, Vice Chair
Mayor George S. Hansel
Councilor Michael Remy
Andrew Weglinski
Roberta Mastrogiovanni
Harold Farrington, Alternate

Staff Present:

Rhett Lamb, Community Development
Director/Assistant City Manager
Mari Brunner, Planner

Members Not Present:

Gail Somers
Tammy Adams, Alternate
Emily Lavigne-Bernier

I) Roll Call

Chair Russell Slack called the meeting to order at 6:30 PM and roll call was taken.

II) Minutes of Previous Meeting – October 25, 2021

A motion was made by Mayor George Hansel to approve the October 25, 2021 meeting minutes. The motion was seconded Councilor Michael Remy and was unanimously approved.

III) Public Hearing

(1)SPR-16-14, Modification 7 – Site Plan Review – Mint Carwash Site Modifications, 433 & 435 Winchester St – Applicant and owner MOC76 Realty Co. LLC proposes to modify the Mint Carwash site located at 435 Winchester St (TMP #115-029-00), 433 Winchester St (TMP #115-030-000), and 0 Wetmore St (TMP #115- 031-000) by reconfiguring the parking and reducing the width of the Wetmore St curb cut for the former Ocean Harvest Restaurant. A waiver is requested from Sec. 20.14.3.D of the Land Use Code to allow for parking with vacuum stations in front of the building. These combined parcels are 1.33 acres in size and are located in the Industrial, Commerce, and High Density Districts.

A. Board Determination of Completeness

Planner Mari Brunner stated the applicant requests exemptions from providing a traffic report, drainage report, soils report, and architectural elevations. Staff recommend that the Board grant the requested exemptions and accept the application as complete.

A motion was made by Mayor George Hansel to accept this Application as complete. The motion was seconded by Councilor Michael Remy and was unanimously approved.

B. Public Hearing

Mr. Jim Phippard addressed the Board on behalf of the applicant. He indicated this proposal is to modify a curb cut on Wetmore Street and to move parking spaces that are currently next to the car wash adjacent to where the Ocean Harvest Restaurant used to be located. Mr. Phippard noted there are three tracts of land to this property; one where the car wash is located, one where the restaurant was located and the third is where the parking lot for the restaurant was located. All three lots are located in different zones. The car wash is in the industrial zone, the restaurant is in the commerce zone and the restaurant parking is in the high density zone. All three lots are currently non-conforming lots.

Mr. Phippard stated the request before the Board is to reduce the width of the curb cut. All three tracts are under the same ownership and will be merged to form one single property, but that one single property will lie in the three above mentioned zones. The pavement is being reduced, and the green space is being increased on the west end of the lot. The area will also be excavated to provide for compensatory flood storage. There is a connecting driveway being introduced between the two lots to improve on site circulation.

Mr. Phippard noted there is a waiver request to locate parking at the front of the property. Mr. Phippard reviewed the waiver criteria:

a) Strict conformity will pose an unnecessary hardship to the applicant and the waiver will not be contrary to the spirit and intent of these regulations; Mr. Phippard felt the spirit and intent of the regulations is to address safety for the public using the site, and the relocation of the vacuum spaces will improve circulation onsite. The hardship to the applicant is that they will be stuck with the use that currently exists and conflicts that occur on site.

b) Specific circumstances relative to the site plan, or conditions of the land in such site plan, indicate that the waiver will properly carry out the spirit and intent of the regulations. Mr. Phippard stated as indicated previously the change would improve traffic safety.

c) In granting a waiver, the Planning Board may require any mitigation that is reasonable and necessary to ensure that the spirit and intent of the standard being waived will be preserved, and to ensure that no increase in adverse impacts associated with granting the waiver will occur. Mr. Phippard stated the applicant would be reproducing the screening and plantings that were installed to block the vacuums. Three new trees are being planted along Wetmore Street.

There are other changes that were approved administratively, including relocation of a dumpster, moving parking spaces from the northerly location to the easterly portion of the site.

This concluded Mr. Phippard's comments.

Councilor Remy asked for explanation of the on-site circulation. Mr. Phippard explained these are two-way driveways that are wide enough to allow for rubbish trucks to turnaround. The existing two-way curb cut on Winchester Street does not change. At the present time, cars are backing up all the way to Winchester Street. There are upgrades being made to the carwash equipment to make the process go faster on site. Employees currently enter at the curb cut on Wetmore Street and public have been trying to access the site through Wetmore Street to get ahead of the line. The Wetmore Street access will still continue only for employees.

Councilor Remy stated the turn out visibility to the left is difficult. Mr. Phippard stated removal of the large pine trees would improve this visibility,

Planner Mari Brunner addressed staff comments next. Ms. Brunner noted she has included all the changes that have been approved administratively in the Staff Report. The overall impervious surface is being reduce on site from 28,609 sf to 26,599 sf and this is because the existing parking lot is being removed and turned into compensatory flood storage area. Ms. Brunner noted this application will require a Flood Permit and the application is aware of that. She added the Drainage and Storm water Management standard has been met.

With respect to Sediment & Erosion Control, Ms. Brunner stated the application is proposing to install perimeter controls including silt fencing and stabilizing any disturbed area over winter, and hence this standard appears to be met.

With respect to Snow Storage, the applicant is showing snow storage where some of the flood compensatory area is located. Staff recommend that the snow storage areas be removed from this area and a note added to the plan that any excess snow be removed from the site.

Landscaping – Applicant is proposing to replicate the plantings that are currently in front of the existing vacuum station; 15 shrubs, including 12 Casino gold juniper plants which have a mature height 3 ft. and three RP purple pavement rose plants which have a mature height 2.5 ft. In addition, one Snow drift flowering crabapple tree as well as two additional trees that were proposed today, but staff is not aware what type of trees these are, are proposed along Winchester Street.

Screening – The dumpster that was approved administratively will have a six foot tall vinyl fencing around it.

Lighting – The applicant has submitted a photometric plan to show the lighting meets the Board's standards. They are proposing to install two 15 ft. pole-mounted lights with full cut-off LED lights; this standard appears to be met.

No changes to sewer or water.

Traffic & Access Management – Once merged, this site will have three curb cuts and the Wetmore Street curb cut will be narrowed bringing it more in compliance with the city’s standard for commercial curb cuts.

Filling & Excavation - The Applicant has noted this site is entirely within the floodplain and is aware that a Floodplain Development Permit will be required. They are adding compensatory flood storage area to offset the filling of the former restaurant basement. This standard appears to be met.

There are no Surface Waters & Wetlands or Hazardous or Toxic Materials on site.

Noise – The location chosen for the vacuum station is the furthest point from the residential district and hence staff feels this is a good location from a noise perspective.

Architecture & Visual Appearance – This is where the waiver is requested for location of the parking spaces at the front of the site and the applicant has already addressed the waiver criteria. This concluded staff comments.

The Chair asked for public comment next.

Mr. Chris Drakiotes of 8 Wetmore Street addressed the Board and referred to where his property is located and stated what is being proposed is a big improvement to what was being proposed in the past. He stated his only concern was on the curb cuts on Wetmore Street where drivers exit and have had some close calls in the past. He asked for a speed bump to slow cars down.

Mr. Phippard stated the applicant had no objection to speed bumps.

With no further comment, Chair Russell Slack closed the public hearing.

C. Board Discussion and Action

A motion was made by Mayor George Hansel that the Planning Board grant a waiver from Section 20.14.3.D of the Land Development Code to allow for five parking spaces with vacuum stations in front of the building; and Approve SPR-16-14 Modification #7 for modifications to the Wetmore Street curb cut and site, as presented in the plan set identified as “Proposed Two Bay Car Wash, 435 Winchester St. Keene, NH” prepared by Brickstone Land Use Consultants at a scale of 1 inch = 20 feet on September 19, 2014 and last revised on October 29, 2021 with the following conditions prior to signature by Planning Board Chair:

1. Submittal of revised plans to show the following:
 - A. Removal of snow storage from compensatory flood storage areas.
 - B. Addition of a note on the site plan which states that the owner is responsible for removing any excess snow from the site.
 - C. The addition of speed bumps on the curb cuts on Wetmore Street.
2. Owner’s signature appears on the plan.

The motion was seconded by Councilor Michael Remy.

Councilor Remy asked whether any additional information was needed to be added regarding the new trees that were added. Ms. Brunner stated this could be added as part of the motion but questioned whether these two trees are similar to what is shown on the plan. Mr. Phippard stated they would be 3” caliper deciduous trees – they would be Cleveland Pears or Pin Oaks (common street trees in the city).

Councilor Remy withdrew his second and the Mayor made the following amended motion: An amended motion was made by Mayor George Hansel that the Planning Board grant a waiver from Section 20.14.3.D of the Land Development Code to allow for five parking spaces with vacuum stations in front of the building; and Approve SPR-16-14 Modification #7 for modifications to the Wetmore Street curb cut and site, as presented in the plan set identified as “Proposed Two Bay Car Wash, 435 Winchester St. Keene, NH” prepared by Brickstone Land Use Consultants at a scale of 1 inch = 20 feet on September 19, 2014 and last revised on October 29, 2021 with the following conditions prior to signature by Planning Board Chair:

1. Submittal of revised plans to show the following:
 - A. Removal of snow storage from compensatory flood storage areas.
 - B. Addition of a note on the site plan which states that the owner is responsible for removing any excess snow from the site.
 - C. The addition of speed bumps on the curb cuts on Wetmore Street.
 - D. The addition of three, 3” caliper deciduous trees along Wetmore Street
2. Owner’s signature appears on the plan.

The motion was seconded by Councilor Remy and was unanimously approved.

IV. Public Hearing

(2) SPR-897, Modification 1 & SWP-CUP-04-21 – Site Plan Review & Surface Water Protection Conditional Use Permit – U-Haul of South Keene – Applicant Fieldstone Land Consultants, on behalf of owner Amerco Real Estate Company, proposes to renovate two existing buildings, construct a 12,175 sf building, and install 28,900 sf of prefabricated storage units on the properties located at 472 Winchester St (TMP #115-020-00) and 0 Krif Rd (115-019-000). A Conditional Use Permit is requested to install pavement within the Surface Water Protection buffer. An exception to the City’s Street Access standards is requested to increase the width of an existing street access to be 45 ft. at the property line and 66 ft. at the curb line. These combined properties are 7.51 acres in size and are located in the Commerce Limited District.

A. Board Determination of Completeness

Ms. Brunner stated the Applicant requests an exemption from providing a Traffic Report. Staff recommends that the Board grant the requested exemption and accept the application as Complete.

A motion was made by Mayor George Hansel to recommend the Board accept Application SPR 897 as complete. The motion was seconded by Councilor Michael Remy and was unanimously approved.

B. Public Hearing

Mr. Jeff Vaine representing U-Haul Amerco Real Estate Company and Chad Branon of Fieldstone Consultants were the next two speakers. Mr. Branon with reference to a plan noted this property is located on 472 Winchester Street and 0 Krif Road. The 472 Winchester Street property is the former Clark Distributors site, comprised of 4.03 acres of land with 263 linear feet of frontage along Winchester Street. The property also has 445.91 feet of frontage on Krif Road. The other 0 Krif Road property is highlighted in pink on the plan. This property has 50 feet of frontage along Krif Road and consists 3.4 acres. The applicant's proposal is to merge both these lots and create one 7.5 acre lot. The site will then be developed in a U-Haul truck rental company as well as a self-storage facility.

Both properties are located in the Commerce zone bordered by Ash Swamp Brook to the south, Granite Glass, Douglas Company and Hamshaw Lumbar to the east, U-Save Car Rental to the north. The property currently has one curb cut onto Winchester Street and three on Krif Road.

There are two buildings currently on site. The first building is 30,490 square foot main building and a detached structure to the north that is 3,810 square feet in size. The topography on site is relatively mild. Drainage on the north drain into catch basins and eventually drain into closed drainage system on Krif Road. The rear portion of the site is currently undeveloped and is located in the 100 year flood plain and there are compensatory mitigation being proposed.

The redevelopment of the site would consist of lot merger as previously indicated and into a U-Haul truck rental company as well as a self-storage facility. The existing building to the north will be converted into a climate controlled self-storage building. The smaller 3,810 square foot building will be converted into a truck rental business, consisting of a showroom, a shop and a retail area.

To the east of the existing building, the applicant is proposing 12,175 square foot high bay building to store U-Boxes (U-Haul's mobile storage product). On the east of the building will be a loading dock to handle truck traffic. To the south of the existing buildings, the applicant is proposing a 28,400 square foot conventional self-storage facility. Around the perimeter of the buildings and the access isles would be paved for appropriate access. He noted the applicant is asking for an exception on the width of the access road on the western access point due to the turning of trucks leaving the loading docks – the trailing edge of the trucks need a larger width.

Mr. Branon stated when the applicant first started planning the design for this site, they met with the Fire Department. The Fire Department asked for an access along the northeast corner of the site, which is part of the proposal and the plan before the Board has been modified as it pertains to that access. He indicated the applicant recently met with the Conservation Commission and the Planning Board who asked whether this access point could be narrowed to reduce the impact to the surface water protection area located in that area. The applicant went back to the Fire Department who have agreed to a reduction in width for that access point on the northeast corner down to 22 feet. The display area has also been pulled out of the Surface Water Protection

area. There will be a display area along Winchester Street, truck parking would be along Krif Road on the northern portion of the site.

Based on comments received from engineering staff, there will be wheel stops installed along the northern display area.

Other site improvements would be expansion of parking; required number is 36 spaces but 42 spaces are being provided.

Stormwater is being handled on this project; all of the improvements will be captured and collected on site through a partial closed pavement system. Catch basins are being provided to the area to the south. All catch basins will have hoods which will help with filtering of debris. There will also be infiltration trenches installed to help storm water infiltrate into the native soils. This system has been designed to meet city standards and Alteration of Terrain Standards. This project will have no increase to the rate of runoff and to the volume of runoff.

No modifications are being made to sewer or water. The proposed building will be connected to underground electric for lighting. Wall pack lighting is being proposed for site lighting, which meets city standards. There will be no light pollution because of this project.

With respect to the landscaping plan, Mr. Branon stated a number of shrubs are being proposed along Winchester Street. The proposed lower plantings which will have no impact for line of sight for any of the intersections close to this site. There are also shrubs being proposed to the front of the site. The plan calls for Rhododendron shrubs, Dogwood shrubs. There is also landscaping being proposed near the existing building. He felt the landscape plan meets city standards. Red Maples are being added along the eastern boundary as well as landscape addition based on comments from the Conservation Commission – Weeping Willows were requested by the Commission and those have been added along the south side of the project. The applicant has also agreed to use a northeast native seed mix to restore the compensatory flood storage area.

In summary, Mr. Branon stated the applicant believes this project meets the 19 development standards.

Mr. Branon then addressed the exception request as it relates to the western access point off Krif Road. Under the Driveway Design Standards for Commercial Driveways – It states as follows: *The driveway shall be a minimum of 12-ft wide and maximum of 25-ft wide at the property line and 50-ft wide at the curb line, unless additional width or lanes are required as the result of a traffic study and/or geometric analysis prepared by a NH licensed engineer.* Mr. Branon stated as the registered engineer for the project they looked at the geometric requirements for that access point. When a tractor trailer pulls out from the loading dock and turns, the trailing edge requires a lot more turning radius and the applicant feels the design before the Board is an appropriate design. He indicated he has a turning template he would be happy to share with the Board. He noted the existing curb cut onto Krif Road is proposed to be widened to 45 feet at the property line, and 66 feet at the curb line. This width was determined by a geometric analysis performed by an engineer in their office, where a tractor trailer truck was modeled for turning movements in and out of the site.

Mr. Branon went on to say that the proposed driveway width will allow for easier access but the widening of this driveway would require the relocation of a fire hydrant located west of the existing curb cut. It has been determined this hydrant is in need of repair and hence can be repaired as part of this plan. Based on this evaluation, the application is requesting an exception from that standard.

Mr. Branon then went over the exception criteria:

A. Issuance of the exception will not adversely affect the safety of pedestrians, bicyclists, and vehicles using adjacent streets and intersections.

Mr. Branon stated if the exception is granted the proposed driveway will not adversely impact the safety of the public, as it will allow for easier truck turning motions and trucks can exit the site at a perpendicular angle. This will provide a better sight distance for the truck driver and thus a safer traffic scenario. There are no existing sidewalks or bike lanes on this section of Krif Road.

B. Issuance of the exception does not adversely affect the efficiency and capacity of the street or intersection.

Mr. Branon stated by issuing an exception for this driveway widening, the efficiency and capacity of the street will remain unchanged. The wider driveway will reduce how long the truck blocks the city street to maneuver into the site. The trucks will enter the site, loop around storage units, and back into the loading dock without having to back into the site from the Krif Road.

C. There are unique characteristics of the land or property which present a physical hardship to the requestor:

Mr. Branon stated the unique characteristics of the property are the location of the existing buildings, access points, and the adjacent Ash Swamp Brook with a substantial floodplain. These characteristics hindered the applicant from obtaining an ideal site layout for the mixed use business. The floodplain restricts the southern portion of the property to house the warehouse building. These reasons together present a physical hardship to the applicant.

D. In no case shall financial hardship be used to justify the granting of the exception:

He noted there are no financial implications of redeveloping the site. But just the physical location of the driveway and location of the proposed building, require a wider entrance to accommodate the turning motions of large trucks.

Mr. Branon then addressed the Conditional Use Permit Criteria which impacts the surface water protection area located on the southeast corner of the existing building.

- A. The proposed use and/or activity cannot be located in a manner to avoid encroachment into the Surface Water Protection Overlay District.* The existing property conditions create this request. Due to the proximity of the building to Ash Swamp Brook, the 30 foot overlay buffer restricts the use around the southwest corner of the building. The driveway design is for fire truck access for all sides of the building and the rear parking lot. Mr. Branon noted the access around this building serves two purposes; emergency access

around the building as well as U-Haul traffic to recycle on site without exiting onto Krif Road.

B. Encroachment into the buffer area has been minimized to the maximum extent possible, including reasonable modification of the scale or design of the proposed use.

Mr. Branon stated design revisions have been made to address this. The access width on the northeast portion of the site has been reduced down to 22 feet and that portion will be curbed so all storm water will be collected and conveyed to a storm water treatment swale. The display area has also been reduced so that surface water will not be disturbed.

C. The nature, design, siting, and scale of the proposed use and the characteristics of the site, including but not limited to topography, soils, vegetation, and habitat, are such that when taken as a whole, will avoid the potential for adverse impacts to the surface water resource.

Mr. Branon stated curbing will be installed to prevent surface runoff from the paved area from entering the brook. The catch basin will have an oil/debris separator hood and deep sump to collect sediment/debris from entering the drainage system.

D. The surface water buffer area shall be left in a natural state.

The encroachment area will be permanently altered. Existing vegetation in the remaining buffer area will be maintained and the floodplain compensation area will be an upland buffer to the water resource and natural vegetation will grow in this area

E. The Planning Board may consider the following:

- 1. The size, character, and quality of the surface water being encroached upon.*
Ash Swamp Brook runs west to east in the southern portion of the site. This brook flows through many commercial developments and eventually flows into the Ashuelot River. Mr. Branon explained when they were reviewing this site with city staff, they were advised the bridge in this area is going to be replaced in the near future. The area the applicant is going to impact is also going to be impacted by that work.
- 2. The location and connectivity of the surface water in relation to other surface waters.*
Mr. Branon stated Ash Swamp Brook connects to the Ashuelot River.
- 3. The nature of the ecological and hydrological functions served by the surface water.*
The proposed development will not have an adverse impact on the ecological or hydrological functions of Ash Swamp Brook. The storm water is being collected onsite, treated and then discharged in a responsible manner. The floodplain compensation will offset any fill within the floodplain and allow flood waters to back up in a similar fashion. The floodplain elevation will allow for wildlife habitat to maintain the ecological balance around the site.
- 4. The nature of the topography, slopes, soils, and vegetation in the surface water buffer.* The slopes, soils, and vegetation will not change except for the area that is going to be impacted.

5. *The role of the surface water buffer in mitigating soil erosion, sediment and nutrient transport, groundwater recharge, flood storage, and flow dispersion.* Storm water is being collected and discharged appropriately, and there will be no detrimental impacts to overland flows to Ash Swamp Brook. Soil erosion, sediment and nutrient transportation will be mitigated by using proper erosion control measures and this is outlined in the design plan.
6. *The extent to which the surface water buffer serves as wildlife habitat or travel corridor.* Mr. Branon noted this buffer area is adjacent to Route 10 and this area will be impacted. The travel corridor is on the edge of that brook and these areas will not be altered.
7. *The rate, timing and volume of storm water runoff and its potential to influence water quality.* The project has been designed to meet the storm water standards; water quality and volume is being addressed. The rate, timing and volume will be mitigated by use of deep sump catch basins and interconnected pipe and stone trenches. Based on this there will be no adverse impact to water quality from site development.
8. *The sensitivity of the surface water and the surface water buffer to disruption from changes in the grade or plant and animal habitat in the buffer zone.* Flood Plain compensation will allow for flood waters to influence how water is handled on the site than the existing conditions and the flood plain compensation will allow for wildlife habitat.

This concluded the applicant's presentation.

Councilor Remy asked with the geometric analysis that was done whether the result would have been the same if the trucks were exiting from the far right. Mr. Branon agreed it would have been, and explained the critical movement along Krif Road is when a truck is entering the site. In the city street when a truck is on the road it has to be in its own lane and the turning movement of the applicant's trucks drives the width of the request. The Councilor asked whether the direction of the concrete pad could be reversed to the opposite side of the loading dock so that it will eliminate a driver trying to back into the site. Mr. Branon stated the orientation is primarily for vehicles to come in and back up. He indicated if a truck came in and backed up the turning movement would still be the same at this intersection. The Councilor stated he is trying to prevent someone from using the street to turnaround. Mr. Vaine added with respect to the loading dock; this is a recessed loading dock already, the main platform is grade level at the rear and a fork lift can drive on and off it. However, if it is reversed, there will be drop off.

With respect to the 36 spaces, the Councilor asked whether this number takes into consideration after the spaces the applicant would be using for their fleet. Mr. Branon stated it does. The Councilor noted the exterior design for this site, is essentially a large advertisement which is in direct violation of the Board's standards. Mr. Branon stated the biggest design change pertains to the appearance from Winchester Street. The faux doors originally proposed have been revised to retain the brick, based on staff and Board comments. He felt the current design is in keeping with the current design standards of the Board. Other improvements, are brick façade along the detached building. Mr. Branon felt what is being proposed is going to be an improvement to the site. Mr. Vaine added the colors they are using are soft and neutral. They are breaking up the walls so there are no long walls like it is today. A parapet and woodgrain are being added to the

showroom. He stated this is a storage facility and the applicant does have to show that they are renting storage but felt it was being done in good taste. Councilor Remy felt orange cannot be considered a calm color that blends in. Mr. Branon noted the orange doors are a branding element of U-Haul and there are no other options to that.

Vice-Chair Orgaz asked whether the display area at the corner of Krif Road and Winchester Street has a raised elevation. Mr. Branon stated it is an existing paved area which is being repurposed. The applicant does not want this area for parking because of its close proximity to Winchester Street. It will be at grade utilizing existing pavement. Mr. Branon added trucks pulling in through the existing curb cuts on Krif Road does not work. The applicant did try to eliminate the curb cut off Winchester Street, however, the Zoning Board did not provide for that relief.

Mr. Farrington asked whether the tractor trailers are used just for U-Boxes. Mr. Branon answered in the affirmative. He asked for the frequency of these vehicles coming in and out of the site. Mr. Vaine stated for a site of this size, there would probably be a truck coming in every day or every other day. There are 84 boxes that go into this site, which is relatively a small number. Mr. Farrington asked for clarification on the boundary fencing. Mr. Branon stated none are being proposed. Chair Russell Slack recalled the applicant indicating during the site visit that the fencing on Krif Road was going to be taken down – Mr. Vaine agreed.

Mr. Weglinksy asked for a rendering of the southwest elevation. Mr. Branon referred to same and explained the view and indicated the view would be much better than the large yellow expanse that exists currently. He also noted to the east elevation which currently has a brown door.

Mr. Lamb addressed the Board next and stated staff appreciates all the effort the applicant has put into with the recent changes. However, those changes were received by staff today at 2pm. The applicant is proposing a lot of changes which staff has not had the opportunity to review as of yet.

Staff comments were next. Ms. Brunner stated she will be addressing the departmental comments that have been received. With respect to parking on site; Code Enforcement and Zoning are asking the applicant to be very clear as to where U-Haul trucks will be parked on site versus public parking.

Snow Storage and Removal – There is a lot of paved area showed on the site plan and there is very limited area where snow can be stored. There is only a five-foot wide edge of land between the edge of pavement and the compensatory flood storage area where snow can be stored. Staff is requesting a condition of approval to request any excess snow to be removed off site.

Landscaping – Ms. Brunner stated the applicant has brought forward a revised landscaping plan which shows five red maple trees and three weeping willow trees located to the rear and side of the site. There are also low level shrubs proposed along Winchester Street. Ms. Brunner noted there was a comment made at the site visit regarding sight distance. The City Engineer reviewed the sight distance from Krif Road. There is a shaded area shown on the plan – the location where the City Engineer is requesting tall plantings to be excluded, but there is still an area along Winchester Street where taller plantings can be accommodated.

Screening – There is a dumpster behind the building that will be screened. The exact location of HVAC and mechanical equipment have not been designed, however the applicant has indicated the general areas where this equipment will be located at a later date, which is not visible from the road.

Lighting – Ms. Brunner stated lighting has been addressed with the photometric plan that was submitted.

Traffic & Access Management – Ms. Brunner stated the applicant has submitted traffic generation estimates today, which indicate that there will be six trips during the morning peak hour, ten trips during the afternoon peak hour with 83 trips in all associated with the mini warehouse. Retail use would generate four trips in the morning, six trips in the afternoon with 47 being the daily total, bringing the total to 130 trips. Ms. Brunner noted staff does not have the estimate for the previous use of this site by Clark Distributors. Ms. Brunner stated because this information was received just today, staff has not been able to calculate the comparison between current and prior use. She added the City Engineer feels it might not be a huge increase in the number of trips compared to the prior use. However, he felt a self-storage use could yield a higher traffic count compared to a warehouse use, which Clark Distributors was. She added staff does not have clear guidance on this issue.

Ms. Brunner referred to Subsection 2.B of this standard, which states *“Wherever possible, the number of curb cuts or driveways on public streets shall be limited to one per lot.”* This parcel when combined would have four curb cuts and hence engineering staff did note, due to ongoing concerns of access management and the excessive curb cuts on Winchester Street, they would like to see the Winchester Street curb cut closed which however, is an existing condition and the applicant has indicated this is a necessity for the way the site is designed.

Ms. Brunner noted the applicant is proposing to widen the eastern most curb cut on Krif Road. Geometric analysis is required to approve this, and staff has not received this item yet.

Surface Waters & Wetlands – The applicant is requesting a conditional use permit to have pavement extend into the surface water buffer. Per Section 11.6.3.A of the LDC, the Surface Water Protection CUP Application has been referred to the Conservation Commission. The Conservation Commission had some suggestions which were reviewed by Mr. Branon previously. The Commission voted not to intervene on this application provided the Planning Board confirms that the Fire Department would require the pavement around the corner of the building. Staff followed up on this issue with the Fire Department who have indicated this pavement would not be required under the NFPA Standards; the drive aisle is not required by the Fire Department and will agree to removal of same. Ms. Brunner confirmed with Mr. Lamb the Conservation Commission’s motion is a recommendation to the Board. Mr. Lamb agreed.

Architecture & Visual Appearance – Staff received revised elevations today. Many of the Winchester Street façade concerns have been addressed by the applicant but the Krif Road façade is still showing faux doors in bright orange. Ms. Brunner referred to the following language from Section 2.C of the standard: *“Architectural features shall not serve primarily as an advertisement, commercial display, or identifying characteristics corresponding to corporate identity.”* In addition, section 2.G states: *“Exterior materials, textures, and colors shall*

minimize visual aggressiveness and shall harmonize with the City's distinctive architectural identify and unique character."

With that, Ms. Brunner stated the recommendation in the staff report is to continue this public hearing due to the amount of information that was outstanding at the time of the staff report. However, she stated the Applicant has submitted additional information, so if the Board feels ready, staff do have recommended language for a motion should the Board wish to approve this application tonight. This concluded staff comments.

Mayor Hansel agreed this public hearing should probably be continued because staff has not had the opportunity to look over the changes that have been made. He felt the applicant has done a great job with a complicated site. He stated the one area he would be looking closely is the display area; he noted the applicant is bringing their product very close to Winchester Street. If there is no screening being required for this portion, he would want to make sure this is consistent with other uses in the area on Winchester Street.

Councilor Remy agreed to the continuance. He stated he has concerns with the orange doors which are purely for advertising and felt the signs were sufficient for marketing the applicant's product. He added if it is functional it would be one thing, but purely informational is difficult for him.

Chair Russell Slack stated she appreciates the changes. She indicated her concern is the road frontage on Winchester Street and hoped staff had more time to look over the changes submitted today.

The Chair asked for public comment. With no comment from the public, the Chair closed the public hearing.

C. Board Discussion and Action

A motion was made by Mayor George Hansel to continue public hearing for SPR-897, Modification 1 to the December 20, 2021 Planning Board meeting. The motion was seconded by Councilor Michael Remy and was unanimously approved.

Mr. Lamb stated the applicant is attending the next hearing by zoom and noted this is not a remote meeting. Zoom access is provided for those who want to join if they are travelling from a distance but it has been the practice for applicants to be physically present at the meeting. This is important, if the Board is getting changes at the last minute, which is the case for the upcoming application. He indicated it is up to the Board to decide how they wish to proceed. Ms. Brunner noted revised plans were submitted today; the main revision is that they are going to maintain all existing trees along Island Street.

V. Public Hearing

(3) SPR-972, Modification 7 – Site Plan Review – Colony Mill Landscaping, 210-222 West Street – Applicant and owner Brady Sullivan Keene Properties LLC proposes to modify the landscaping for the new retail building on the property located at 210-222 West St

(TMP# 576-009-000), including the removal of existing trees along Island St. The site is 6.49 acres and is located in the Commerce District.

A. Board Determination of Completeness

Ms. Brunner stated staff recommends that the Board grant the requested exemption and accept the application as Complete. Vice-Chair Orgaz as a resident of 222 West Street requested he be recused from this public hearing.

A motion was made by Mayor George Hansel to recommend the Board accept Application SPR-972, Modification 7 as complete. The motion was seconded by Councilor Michael Remy and was unanimously approved.

B. Public Hearing

Mr. Ben Kelley addressed the Board and indicated he had been in Keene earlier but was just informed he was exposed to someone who had tested positive for Covid 19. Mr. Kelley referred to a plan and stated at the site visit the applicant realized the trees on Island Street were important to the Board. The applicant went back to what was originally approved – there were some trees that came down due to site work. There is also a sidewalk being constructed north of the new Island Street building and there was concern about the crab apple trees shedding fruit onto the sidewalk and these trees will be replaced with a Little Leaf trees. Everything else remains as-is on Island Street and would remain as was approved on the prior plan.

Mr. Lamb explained the rectangle in the middle of the plan is the new building and referred to the circulation lanes located to the right and the left. He referred to the area where the Board asked for a sidewalk to connect the upper portion of the site to this structure for pedestrian safety.

Mayor Hansel asked if these changes will be the Site Modification 7 and asked for a date for this plan. Ms. Brunner stated the last revised plan would be November 19, 2021.

The Chair asked for public comment. Mr. Anthony Mastronardi of 100 Darling Road, Keene addressed the Board and thanked the applicant for these changes to the plan.

With no further comment, the Chair closed the public hearing.

C. Board Discussion and Action

A motion was made by Mayor George Hansel Approve SPR-972, Modification #7 for modifications to landscaping, as presented in the plan identified as “Landscape Plan, Multi-Tenant Use, 0 Island Street” prepared by Fuss & O’Neill at a scale of 1 inch = 20 feet, dated June 17, 2021 and last revised November 19, 2021 with the following conditions prior to signature by Planning Board Chair:

1. Landscape Architect’s stamp appears on plan.
2. Owner’s signature appears on plan.

The motion was seconded by Councilor Michael Remy and was unanimously approved.

VI. Community Development Director Report

Mr. Lamb stated this is his last meeting with the Planning Board. He indicated Mari Brunner would be taking the lead for Planning Board issues. He also indicated that John Rogers, the Building and Health Official will be taking over in the interim as Acting Community Development Director and Med Kopczynski Economic Development Director, would also be stepping in during the interim period. He also reminded the Board the December meeting will be on the 3rd Monday. Chair Russell Slack thanked Mr. Lamb for all his work on behalf of the City and indicated the City is losing a vital staff person.

VII. New Business

None

VIII. Upcoming Dates of Interest – December 2021

- Joint Committee of the Planning Board and PLD – December 13, 6:30 PM
- Planning Board Steering Committee – December 7, 11:00 AM
- Planning Board Site Visit – December 15, 8:00 AM
- Planning Board Meeting – December 20, 6:30 PM

Chair Russell Slack encouraged members of the Board to kindly respond to emails from planning staff, especially regarding quorum issues.

There being no further business, Chair Russell Slack adjourned the meeting at 8:37 PM.

Respectfully submitted by,
Krishni Pahl, Minute Taker

Reviewed and edited by,
Mari Brunner, Senior Planner