



City of Keene Minor Project Review Committee

AGENDA

Thursday, September 19, 2024

10:00 AM

City Hall, 2nd Floor Conference Room

- I. **Call to Order** – Roll Call
- II. **Election of Chair**
- III. **Minutes of Previous Meetings**
 - a. **Pre-submission Meeting** – August 1, 2024 & September 5, 2024
 - b. **Minor Project Review Committee Meeting** – July 18, 2024
- IV. **Final Vote on Conditional Approvals**
 - a. **Minor Site Plan** – SPR-876 Modification #4, Ametek, 44 Black Brook Rd
 - b. **Minor Site Plan** – SPR-204 Modification #4, Bergeron Mechanical, 216 Marlboro St
- V. **Staff Updates**
- VI. **New Business**
- VII. **Upcoming Meeting Dates**
 - **October** - Pre-submission Meeting – October 3, 2024 at 9:00 am
 - **October** - 1st Monthly MPRC Meeting – October 3, 2024 at 10:00 am
 - **October** – 2nd Monthly MPRC Meeting – October 17, 2024 at 10:00 am (*if needed*)

1 City of Keene
2 New Hampshire

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5 MINOR PROJECT REVIEW COMMITTEE
6 MEETING MINUTES
7

Thursday, July 18, 2024

10:00 AM

Council Chambers,
City Hall

Members Present:

Jesse Rounds, Chair / Community
Development Director
Evan Clements, Vice Chair / Deputy Zoning
Administrator
Mari Brunner, Senior Planner
Richard Wood, Building Official / Fire
Marshal
Yelma Desseta, Civil Engineer

Other Staff Present:

Megan Fortson, Planner

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9 **1) Call to Order – Roll Call**

10
11 Chair Rounds called the meeting to order at 10:00 AM. Roll call was conducted.

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13 **2) Election of Vice Chair**

14
15 Mr. Wood nominated Evan Clements as Vice Chair. Chair Rounds seconded the motion, which
16 passed by unanimous vote.

17
18 **3) Minutes of Previous Meetings**

19
20 **A) Pre-submission Meeting – July 3, 3034**

21
22 Mr. Clements made a motion to approve the Pre-submission Meeting minutes of July 3, 2024. Mr.
23 Wood seconded the motion, which passed by unanimous vote.

24
25 **B) Minor Project Review Committee Meeting – July 3, 2024**

26
27 Mr. Clements made a motion to approve the MPRC Meeting minutes of July 3, 2024. Mr. Wood
28 seconded the motion, which passed by unanimous vote.

29
30 **4) Final Vote on Conditional Approvals**

31
32 Chair Rounds asked if there were any conditional approvals in need of a final vote today. Ms.
33 Fortson replied yes, SPR-644, Modification #2. She continued that this was for the expansion of

34 the parking lot at 426 to 428 Winchester St., as well as the installation of some lighting and
35 landscaping related to the parking lot. The six conditions of approval the applicant needed to meet
36 prior to final approval by the MPRC were as follows:

37

- 38 • The submittal of an updated narrative, note sheet, and proposed conditions plan to indicate
- 39 the correct number of proposed parking spaces,
- 40 • Having the owner’s signature appear on the title page and proposed conditions plan,
- 41 • The submittal of five paper copies and a digital copy of the final plan set,
- 42 • The submittal of a security to cover the cost of landscaping and sediment and erosion
- 43 control,
- 44 • The submittal of an updated drainage report, clarifying the intent of the 4” orifice
- 45 connection to the city drainage system, and
- 46 • The submittal by the property owner of a letter acknowledging that the City will not be
- 47 responsible for the maintenance of any portion of the onsite drainage.

48

49 Ms. Fortson continued that all of the precedent conditions of approval have been met and staff
50 recommends the MPRC issue final approval for the application.

51

52 Mr. Clements made a motion to grant final approval to SPR-644, Modification #2, for the project
53 located at 426-428 Winchester St. Mr. Wood seconded the motion, which passed by unanimous
54 vote.

55

56 **5) Staff Updates**

57

58 **A) MPRC Review Process Discussion**

59

60 Chair Rounds stated that staff (in the Community Development Department) have been discussing
61 some updates to policies and procedures for the Minor Project Review Committee (MPRC). He
62 continued that Ms. Fortson and Ms. Brunner have been working hard on this. He asked to hear
63 from Ms. Brunner.

64

65 Mari Brunner, Senior Planner, stated that they are making changes both to the setting for the MPRC
66 meetings and the process that the group follows. She continued that the intent of this Committee
67 is to move closer to the goal of having a more expedited review for applicants, while also being
68 sensitive to the amount of staff time and staff work that needs to happen ahead of time when an
69 application is submitted. The first change, starting in August, is that the MPRC meetings will take
70 place in the 2nd floor conference room. This means the meetings will no longer be broadcast online.
71 The conference room is a more informal setting, with everyone seated around a conference table.
72 City Staff hopes that this will help make the meeting feel more friendly to applicants and give
73 them the sense that they are all (staff and applicants) working together. This setting change is
74 intended to change the tone of the meetings, per the goal of being as customer-friendly as possible.

75

76 Ms. Brunner continued by stating that the second item is not so much a change that is taking place,
77 but rather something Planning staff are asking of the MPRC. Planning staff do not have enough
78 time to fully review the submitted applications before they get to the MPRC. Megan Fortson,
79 Planner, is the staff liaison. When an application is submitted, most of Ms. Fortson's time is spent
80 on creating the physical application folder, getting everything setup in the software system, making
81 sure everything is stamped and coded correctly, and making sure all of the submittal items have
82 been submitted.

83
84 She does not have time to go through and evaluate the application to see if it meets all of the
85 different criteria and standards. The intent is for the MPRC members, when they receive the
86 agenda packet, to do that review themselves, ahead of the meeting. Staff understand that a week
87 is not enough time to have a lot of back and forth with an applicant, which they are not asking the
88 MPRC to do. They are asking the MPRC to review the application materials ahead of time, and if
89 they have any questions, to come to the meeting with those prepared. Then they can have a
90 productive meeting and ask those questions. It is great if the applicant can answer the questions
91 during the meeting, but if more information is needed, that is what the second monthly MPRC
92 meeting is for.

93
94 Ms. Brunner continued that at the Planning Board meetings, they try to get through (an application)
95 in one meeting, but this was not the intent for the MPRC meetings, when the MPRC meetings were
96 set up. Applications that come to the MPRC do not have as much staff review ahead of time, nor
97 as much back and forth ahead of time, nor is a staff report prepared for the MPRC. The intent of
98 these meetings was initially for the applicant to come to the first meeting, and potentially get their
99 approval in one meeting if the application is simple and clear with no major questions raised.
100 However, most applications will probably need a second meeting so that the applicant can answer
101 the MPRC's questions or provide more materials as needed. She and Planning staff encourage the
102 MPRC to use that second meeting more, if they need it, instead of creating a long list of conditions
103 that may be difficult for staff and the applicant to understand and track.

104
105 Ms. Brunner continued that Planning staff, for their part, will try to be more up-front with
106 applicants and make it clearer to them that going to the MPRC is a different path than going to the
107 Planning Board, and that while it is a little bit faster, there are also risks associated with this path
108 and limitations to it. They want applicants to fully understand that staff will not vet an application
109 before it gets to the public hearing and that the applicant might have to go to a second MPRC
110 meeting. Applicants will clearly understand this ahead of time and can decide ahead of time
111 whether they would rather take the path of going to the Planning Board or to the MPRC.

112
113 Ms. Brunner asked if there were any questions or concerns about this approach. Chair Rounds
114 stated that he has a practice question. During a public hearing, an application may still need to be
115 continued to the next meeting, so at the end of the (first meeting), is he correct in his understanding
116 that the MPRC will need to make a motion to continue the application. Ms. Brunner replied yes,
117 if they do not make a decision at the first meeting, they would have to continue the public hearing
118 and state the date, time, and location of the meeting that the application is being continued to. She

119 continued that the MPRC has a 60-day timeframe to make a decision. They hope to never get
120 anywhere close to that, but there might be times when the MPRC needs more information and it
121 takes the applicant more time to get it. In those hopefully rare instances, they would need a written
122 agreement from the applicant to extend beyond that timeframe, or the MPRC would need to deny
123 the application. The reason projects come to the MPRC is that they do not meet the threshold for
124 major projects; they do not have any waiver requests associated with them, and so on and so forth.
125 The hope is that (applications that come to the MPRC) are relatively simple ones that will not need
126 that amount of time.

127
128 Mr. Wood asked if it is correct that if the MPRC receives an application with enough information
129 for them to act on it at the first meeting, they can do so. Ms. Brunner replied yes. Mr. Wood
130 replied that if that were not the case, it would beg the question of what the expedited difference
131 would be between going to the Planning Board or to the MPRC. He continued that as long as the
132 MPRC has the ability to act on an application at the first meeting, if there are not too many
133 unanswered questions or information lacking, he thinks it is a good process. Ms. Brunner replied
134 yes, that is a good point. She continued that if someone comes before the MPRC with a relatively
135 simple application, the MPRC could definitely approve it in one meeting. They always have that
136 ability.

137
138 Ms. Brunner continued that now that the MPRC has been operating for a couple of years, Planning
139 staff have noticed some instances in which the MPRC's eagerness to get an application through in
140 one meeting has backfired and actually extended the process. It was more money, more time, and
141 more heartache for the applicant than it would have been if the MPRC had just continued the
142 application two weeks and worked out the issues. A good example is that if the MPRC has a
143 question about whether the application meets the Zoning Ordinance, that is a red flag. The MPRC
144 approved a plan that did not meet the Zoning Ordinance, which invalidated the whole plan, and
145 the applicant had to start from square one. She would rather the MPRC continue an application
146 for two weeks than risk the whole application in an effort to rush it. Some mistakes and situations
147 that were not ideal might have been caused by the process moving quicker than it should have in
148 those instances. Another red flag, for example, would be if the MPRC thinks the applicant is not
149 able to meet one of the standards. They should look out for these issues. Anytime a standard is
150 not met, the applicant can ask for a waiver, but that requires going to the Planning Board.

151
152 Mr. Clements asked what the process is if the MPRC determines, while reviewing an application,
153 that the applicant needs a waiver. He asked if the MPRC should deny the application, or if they
154 could forward it, essentially saying that the MPRC no longer has jurisdiction over it and it has to
155 go to the Planning Board. He asked if that would require a new public hearing notice.

156
157 Ms. Brunner replied yes, it would require a new public hearing notice before the Planning Board,
158 which is another risk they will need to be clear about with the applicant. She continued that
159 regarding the first question, her thought would be that if the applicant says they want to withdraw
160 the application that would be the cleanest path. She will have to get back to the MPRC about
161 whether they would have to deny the application, and what the exact protocol would be in those

162 situations. If the MPRC took action on something they did not have jurisdiction over, that action
163 would be void ab initio. If the MPRC notices something that requires the project to go to the
164 Zoning Board of Adjustment or the Planning Board, the MPRC cannot act on it. If an MPRC
165 member notices this at any point in the process, they should raise this as an issue/
166

167 Mr. Desseta stated that he does not have any objection, if it simplifies the process.
168

169 Chair Rounds stated that something else they talked about, which he wanted to raise here in case
170 he is not at a meeting and the Vice Chair or someone else is serving, is that maybe he can put
171 something together that has the standard requirements and the standard conditions of approval that
172 the MPRC always asks for, such as five copies (of needed documents). Then it would always be
173 there and they could append it to everything at the beginning. Ms. Fortson replied that she is
174 already working on preparing something like that, so the MPRC will have it to use.
175

176 Ms. Brunner stated that something else Planning staff talked about was that when the MPRC is
177 making a decision on an application, because they are doing the review in the meeting, the staff
178 liaison will no longer provide the MPRC with recommended motion language. Planning staff
179 provides the Planning Board with sample language for motions so they have a place to start from,
180 because the Planning Board gets an application through in one meeting. When staff does that for
181 the Planning Board, there has been a rather thorough review completed; an application has been
182 sent for departmental review, and they have already identified the issues.
183

184 Since Planning staff is not doing that review for the MPRC's applications, they do not want to give
185 recommended language for a motion. They can give them the standard beginning of the motion,
186 such as the title of the application and the name of the applicant, but the MPRC members will need
187 to place their own conditions of approval. This is because staff is not doing the review, and they
188 do not want the MPRC to just read what is on the paper, thinking that the (sample motion) has
189 everything captured in it that is needed. However, the MPRC could lean on staff if they ever have
190 questions about conditions and how to word a motion. For example, if the MPRC determines the
191 need for a condition related to drainage when a building permit is submitted, they could ask staff
192 for advice on how to word that condition. They hope that having the meetings in the conference
193 room around a conference table will help encourage more of that type of discussion.
194

195 Mr. Wood stated that it might be helpful to have a list of potential conditions that they could check
196 off as they are reviewing the applications in the meetings. For example, the list could have the
197 standard conditions that Chair Rounds mentioned, and the additional things that the MPRC
198 foresees coming up from time to time, so they are not trying to wordsmith on the fly. Ms. Brunner
199 replied yes, that is a good point, and she thinks Ms. Fortson is working on that. She continued that
200 some standard conditions would probably be required for every application, and the list could
201 probably include some that are not needed for every application but are common. Planning staff
202 mainly wants to emphasize the importance of the MPRC doing a review in the meeting and making
203 sure to identify issues that need to be captured in a condition. If something is not on the list from
204 Planning staff, it does not mean it cannot be included as a condition of approval. That is the point

205 Planning staff wants to make. They want the MPRC to be comfortable with placing conditions
206 they think are needed.

207
208 Chair Rounds asked if there were any other questions. Hearing none, he thanked Ms. Brunner and
209 Ms. Fortson.

210
211 Mr. Wood stated that that he thinks the MPRC members agree that this makes sense. He asked if
212 there is a sense of when this might be enacted. He asked if they need time to build the elements,
213 or if they will just jump right in at the next meeting. Chair Rounds replied that they will jump
214 right in for the first August meeting, and figure it out as they go. Ms. Fortson replied that they
215 have not received any applications for the August meeting, so it will be whenever they receive the
216 next application for the MPRC to review.

217
218 Mr. Clements stated that this path is not used very often, unfortunately, so there will be some
219 “brushing the rust off” and figuring it out as they go, since they do not do it very often. Chair
220 Rounds replied yes, they will figure it out as they go, and they might get rusty if it is three months
221 between applications, for example. The reason they are pursuing this path, and the beauty of
222 having the MPRC, is that the members are all professionals who work for the City and are used to
223 seeing these applications, and thus have many of the concerns in their heads already. Something
224 he has appreciated with the MPRC is that even when they have had the support of Planning staff
225 members who have written out (suggested language), issues have still come up in the meetings
226 and the MPRC has dealt with them. There is evidence that (this process) will work. He appreciates
227 this opportunity and appreciates the MPRC members’ willingness to try this.

228
229 **6) New Business**

230
231 Ms. Brunner stated that the Land Development Code (LDC) was recently updated with a new
232 Article, which changed all of the Article references past Article 17. She continued that anyone
233 who uses a printed, physical copy of the LDC will probably want to reprint it. The LDC is
234 updated/correct online.

235
236 **7) Upcoming Meeting Dates**

- 237 • **August – Pre-submission Meeting - August 1, 2024, at 9:00 AM**
238 • **August – 1st Monthly MPRC Meeting - August 1, 2024, at 10:00 AM**
239 • **August – 2nd Monthly MPRC Meeting - August 15, 2024, at 10:00 AM (if needed)**

240
241 Discussion ensued about the August meeting dates. Ms. Fortson stated that they will not cancel
242 the August 1st meeting at this point, in case something is ready for final approval. Mr. Clements
243 stated that he and Chair Rounds will both be absent on August 1. Mr. Desseta replied that he will
244 be, too. Discussion continued about the possibility of quorum. Ms. Brunner stated that the
245 appointee can change from meeting to meeting, so it could be possible to have other staff members
246 attend, in case there are applications in need of final approval and they are in a rush. They could
247 probably work something out. Chair Rounds replied that is true of Pre-submission meetings, too,

248 and they might want to hold the Pre-submission meeting regardless, because many applications
249 are time-sensitive and applicants want to have a chance. He continued he will reach out to the
250 MPRC members and figure out who could be stand-ins, which would be very helpful.

251

252 Mr. Wood asked for clarification about the Pre-Submission meeting start time. Ms. Fortson replied
253 9:00 AM.

254

255 **8) Adjourn**

256

257 There being no further business, Chair Rounds adjourned the meeting at 10:27 AM.

258

259 Respectfully submitted by,
260 Britta Reida, Minute Taker

261

262 Reviewed and edited by,
263 Megan Fortson, Planner

1 **City of Keene**
2 **New Hampshire**

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5 **MINOR PROJECT REVIEW COMMITTEE**
6 **PRE-SUBMISSION MEETING MINUTES**
7

Thursday, August 1, 2024

9:00 AM

2nd Floor Conference Room,
City Hall

Members Present:

Megan Fortson, Planner / Community
Development Director's Designee
Mari Brunner, Senior Planner / Acting Zoning
Administrator's Designee
Richard Wood, Fire Marshall / Building &
Health Official
Rebecca Landry, Deputy City
Manager/Economic Development Director &
City Manager's Designee

Staff Present:

Lt. Shane Maxfield, Police Dept.
Michael Hagan, Plans Examiner

8
9 **1) Call to Order – Roll Call**

10
11 Megan Fortson, Planner, called the meeting to order at 9:03 am. Roll call was conducted. Ms.
12 Fortson made a motion to elect Mari Brunner as the Chair Pro-Tempore for the meeting. Mr. Wood
13 seconded the motion, which was approved unanimously.
14

15 **2) Scheduled Pre-submission Inquiry**

16
17 There were no scheduled pre-submission inquiries.
18

19 **3) Walk-In Pre-submission Inquiries**

20
21 Zach Luse, owner of Paragon Digital, attended the meeting to discuss the potential review process
22 and requirements for the installation of geothermal wells on his property at 34 Court St (TMP
23 #568-022-000). City Staff discussed the proposal with Mr. Luse and provided feedback.
24

25 **4) Upcoming Meeting Dates**

- 26
- Pre-submission Meeting – Thursday, September 5, 2024 at 9:00 am
 - 1st Monthly MPRC Meeting – Thursday, September 5, 2024 at 10:00 am
 - 2nd Monthly MPRC Meeting – Thursday, September 19, 2024 at 10:00 am (*If needed*)
- 28
29

30 **5) Adjournment**

31
32 There being no further business, Acting Chair Brunner adjourned the meeting at 9:38 AM.
33

34 Respectfully submitted by,

35 Megan Fortson, Planner
36
37 Reviewed and edited by,
38 Mari Brunner, Senior Planner

1 City of Keene
2 New Hampshire

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5 MINOR PROJECT REVIEW COMMITTEE
6 PRE-SUBMISSION MEETING MINUTES
7

Thursday, September 5, 2024

9:00 AM

2nd Floor Conference Room,
City Hall

Members Present:

Jesse Rounds, Community Development
Director / Chair
Evan Clements, Planner & Deputy Zoning
Administrator
Yelma Desseta, Civil Engineer / Public
Works Director's Designee
Richard Wood, Fire Marshal/Building
Official

Staff Present:

Megan Fortson, Planner
Lt. Shane Maxfield, Police Dept.

8
9 **1) Call to Order – Roll Call**

10
11 Chair Rounds called the meeting to order at 9:00 am. Roll call was conducted.
12

13 **2) Scheduled Pre-submission Inquiries**

- 14
15 **a. Conceptual Subdivision Application** – The ~7.1-ac parcel at 0 Old Walpole Rd (TMP
16 #503-005-000) is owned by Monadnock Habitat for Humanity Inc. and is located in the
17 Rural District.
18

19 Mr. Dave Bergeron of Monadnock Land Planning and Mr. Matt Keenan & Mr. Michael Conway
20 of Monadnock Habitat for Humanity joined the meeting to discuss the potential subdivision and
21 development of the ~7.1-ac property located at 0 Old Walpole Rd (TMP #503-005-000). City Staff
22 discussed the proposal with the potential applicants and provided feedback.
23

- 24 **b. Conceptual Site Plan Application** – The ~3.53-ac parcel at 0 Ashuelot St (TMP #567-
25 001-000) is owned by JRR Properties LLC and is located in the High Density District.
26

27 There was no one present at the meeting to discuss this inquiry.
28

29 **3) Walk-In Pre-submission Inquiries**

30
31 There were no walk-in Pre-submission inquiries.
32

33 **4) Upcoming Meeting Dates**

- 34 • Pre-submission Meeting – Thursday, October 3, 2024 at 9:00 am

- 35 • 1st Monthly MPRC Meeting – Thursday, October 3, 2024 at 10:00 am
- 36 • 2nd Monthly MPRC Meeting – Thursday, October 17, 2024 at 10:00 am (*If needed*)

37

38 **5) Adjournment**

39

40 There being no further business, Chair Rounds adjourned the meeting at 9:23 AM.

41

42 Respectfully submitted by,
43 Megan Fortson, Planner

44

45 Reviewed and edited by,
46 Mari Brunner, Senior Planner



CITY OF KEENE
NEW HAMPSHIRE

Minor Project Review Committee

2nd Floor Conference Room, Keene City Hall

September 19, 2024

10:00 AM

RECOMMENDED MOTIONS

SPR-876, Mod. 4 – Final Approval Recommended Motion:

“Move to issue final approval for SPR-876, Modification #4.”

SPR-204, Mod. 4 – Site Plan - Recommended Motion:

“Move to issue final approval for SPR-204, Modification #4.”