

Montpelier Development Review Board
March 20, 2006
City Council Chambers, City Hall

Subject to Review and Approval

Present: Kevin O'Connell, Vice-Chair; Roger Cranse; Jack Lindley; Guy Teschmacher, Ylian Snyder; Kenneth Matzner
Staff: Valerie Capels

Call to Order

The meeting was called to order by Mr. O'Connell.

Minutes

Action on the minutes of the March 6, 2006 meeting was deferred to the next meeting to allow for review by a quorum of the members who were present at that meeting.

I. Design Review

Property Address: 11 West Street
Applicant: Willey Construction, Inc.
Property Owner: RKG, LLC
Zone: HDR/DCD

- Construction of a five space parking lot at the rear of Howland Hall for use by the occupants of 9 and 11 West Street.
- DRC recommended approval with adjustments and options

Interested Party: Phil Willey

Ms. Capels described the application to develop a five-space parking area in an area currently used for informal parking. She said that the DRC recommended approval of the application with some alternatives. Mr. Willey said that RKG needs additional parking for people who currently work at the site. He said that a five-space parking area is proposed. He said that the parking area will have a 12" gravel base and 3" of plant mix at the surface. He said that the DRC recommendations were acceptable to the applicant. Mr. Matzner asked whether the TRC looked at the proposal. Ms. Capels said that she was not sure of that. Mr. Matzner noted that one of the DRC's recommendations was to back into the spaces. Mr. Willey said that the reason for that recommendation was the concern for headlights shining toward an adjacent residence. Mr. O'Connell said that he did not think that the recommendation made a great deal of sense since backing into the spaces would be difficult at night. Ms. Snyder said that the DRC simply included that as a suggestion. Mr. Lindley asked why a hedge was not proposed along the property line. Mr. Willey said that the narrow area between the parking and the property line was designated for temporary snow storage. He added that the salt from the parking area would be likely to kill the hedge if it was planted. Ms. Snyder noted that a berm was proposed along the property line. Mr. Willey said that was correct.

Ms. Capels asked how the cars that are presently parked in the area in question got onto the property. Mr. Willey said that they probably used the curb cut. He said that he was not even sure whose cars they were. Mr. Cranse said that the existing situation and the proposed plan were difficult to understand. Ms. Snyder said that the current use of the property is confusing. She said that people are parking in a disorganized fashion now, but the plan will separate the property in question from the adjoining property and formalize the location of the parking spaces.

Ms. Capels asked if the existing tree shown on the plan will remain. Mr. Willey said that the applicant will try to save the tree. He said that some branches may have to be trimmed to allow the vehicles to get under it.

Mr. Lindley said that the proposal appeared to be an effort to bring some order to the parking on the site. Mr. Cranse asked whether the parking spaces will be marked. Mr. Willey said that they will be temporarily marked by painting or liming lines on the plant mix surface to delineate the spaces and allow people to get used to the layout.

Mr. Matzner made a motion to grant design review approval with the DRC recommendations. Mr. Teschmacher seconded the motion. The motion was approved by a vote of 5-0 with Mr. Cranse abstaining.

II. Public Hearing - Amendment to a Planned Residential Development and Site Plan Review

Property Address: Cedar Hill Lane
Applicant: Bernard Chenette
Property Owner: William McNamara, Central Cedar Hill, LLC
Zone: MDR

- Reconfiguration of the parking area, including drainage and lighting

Ms. Capels described this application for an amendment to a previously approved PRD. She said that the application is intended to bring the site into compliance with a prior approval and to address some deficiencies on the site. She said that the application will address a parking area has been developed without approvals and will address some drainage issues. Mr. Chenette, an engineer for the owner, explained that there are three residential buildings with 12 units in each building. He said that the access lanes will be widened to improve the access for fire equipment. He described changes to the parking areas that are intended to bring order to the parking patterns. He said that existing dumpsters will be relocated. Mr. O'Connell asked whether any screening of the dumpsters was proposed. Mr. Chenette said that no screening was proposed as the site is well screened by existing cedar hedges. Mr. Chenette said that eight pole-mounted lights are proposed at the parking area. Mr. O'Connell asked what type of lights were proposed. Ms. Capels said that a specification sheet was provided with the application information. Mr. Chenette said that the lights would be 100-watt, downcast lights on 10'-14' poles.

Mr. Lindley said that he recalled that issues related to stormwater drainage and maintenance of the drainage system and a fire hydrant were raised during the last application on this site. He asked why the catch basin was covered with ice at the time when the drainage analysis was done. He said that neighbors had previously expressed concerns about runoff impacts to their properties. He asked whether there are maintenance issues. Mr. Chenette said that the plan would only change the drainage on one side of the site and would result in the diversion of some of the runoff that currently drains into the neighbors properties. He said that the other drainage structures are working well. He said that the drainage system and the hydrant were fixed several years ago. He added that Tom McArdle had looked at the plan carefully.

Thomas Ball said that he was the owner of property that is located down a steep slope from the proposed parking lot. He said that the catch basin continues to clog with gravel, sand, silt and trash and the report shows that there will be an increase in the drainage flowing to that basin in exceptional situations. He said that, when the basin clogs, the runoff flows down the side of the road. He said that the edge of the proposed parking lot would be at the edge of the steep slope. Mr. Ball said that the drainage swale that was installed at that location has been filled in and he appreciates the fact that it will be reestablished as part of the proposed plan. He said that he is uncomfortable with the fact that the ditches must be maintained in order to continue functioning. He said that he was concerned that the drop catch basin at study location #2 is not adequate for heavy stormwater runoff. He said that his other concern is with the proposed lights since the existing light shines into the back of his house. Mr. O'Connell noted that the proposed lights would be directed downward. Mr. Ball asked if screening was a possibility since the trees on the hill are thin and do not provide screening. Ms. Capels asked whether the lights would be photocell activated. Mr. Chenette said that he did not know, but that could be added as a specification. Mr. O'Connell asked Mr. Ball whether

he was saying that the catch basin is inadequate. Mr. Ball said that it is not adequate as excess runoff bypasses it. Mr. Chenette referred to staff note #19. He said that the grate of the catch basin will be changed to improve the situation so that the basin will function even if there are leaves on it. He said that a culvert will probably be added all the way through into that catch basin to reduce the need for a ditch on that side. He said that he could also look at a more directed light so that the light would shine away from the slope. Mr. Ball said that he would like to see motion sensors on the lights so that they would not be on all night.

John Noyes said that his property is also down the slope from the subject property. He said that the new owners have been good neighbors, but he is concerned about the size and scope of the project. He said that he has noticed more drainage running into his yard in the past two years and that he has raised concerns about dumping on the property in the past. He said that cedar hedges would help keep headlights from shining onto his backyard. He added that he did not want to see the pole mounted lights shining from dusk to dawn and motion sensors should be used. He said that his primary concerns were noise, security, lighting and drainage.

Mr. O'Connell asked why no landscaping was proposed. Mr. Chenette said that the owner thought that the existing vegetation was enough, but cedar hedges could be added along the swale area. Ms. Snyder said that she did not think that the cedar hedge will be enough to screen the lights on the poles. Mr. Teschmacher said that a different type of light could be used. Mr. O'Connell said that he was not sure that the issues could be resolved that night. Mr. Matzner said that there seem to be two unresolved issues – the headlights and the overhead lights. Mr. Teschmacher added that the drainage issue also should be resolved. Mr. Chenette said that he assumed that the change to the catch basin would be a condition of the board's approval.

Ms. Capels said that she wondered if the type of light that is proposed existed anywhere in Montpelier so that they could be seen in operation. She said that the 100 watt lights seemed to be fairly lower power compared to other parking lot lights. The board discussed the possibility that the lights on the bike path were similar to the ones proposed.

Mr. O'Connell said that the board seemed to feel that additional work was needed on the application. Mr. Lindley said that he would like to hold the application over to allow the applicant to address the concerns. Ms. Capels said that the next two meeting agendas were full and the next available meeting would be May 1. Mr. Chenette said that he was not available then. Ms. Capels said that the meeting after that would be May 15.

Mr. Lindley made a motion to table the application to the May 15, 2006 meeting. Mr. Cranse seconded the motion. The motion was approved unanimously.

Other

Mr. Lindley noted that the next meeting will start at 6:00 p.m. due to the expected length of the agenda.

Adjournment

Mr. Matzner made a motion to adjourn. Mr. Lindley seconded. The Board unanimously approved the motion to adjourn.

Respectfully submitted,

Valerie Capels
Planning and Community Development Director