

JULY 19, 2023

The regular meeting of the Newton Planning Board was held at the Town Hall on July 19, 2023. Chairman LeFrois called the meeting to order at 7:03 pm. Chairman LeFrois stated that proper notice had been given for this meeting in accordance with the "Open Public Meetings Act."

Vice-Chairman Marion led the Salute to the flag.

OATH OF OFFICE

Board Attorney Kienz swore in Mr. Schlaffer as an alternate member to the Planning Board.

ROLL CALL

Deputy Mayor Couce – absent	Mr. Flaherty – present
Ms. Hall-Romer – present	Mr. Marion – present
Mr. Russo, Jr. – present	Mayor Teets –absent
Ms. Vrahnos – present	Mr. Wink – present
Mr. Ragsdale, Alternate #1 - present	Mr. Schick, Alternate #2 – present
Jason Schlaffer, Alternate #3 – present	
Chairman Le Frois – absent	

Also present: Steven Tombalakian, Board Attorney, David Simmons, Board Engineer, Jessica Caldwell, Board Planner, and Kerry Brown, Board Secretary

RULES

Vice-Chairman Marion read the rules of the Newton Planning Board.

MINUTES

Ms. Vrahnos made a motion to adopt the June 21, 2023 minutes. Ms. Hall-Romer seconded the motion.

AYE: Ms. Vrahnos, Ms. Hall-Romer, Mr. Flaherty, Mr. Marion, Mr. Wink, Mr. Ragsdale

HISTORIC RESOLUTIONS

No Historic Preservation Commission Resolutions

BUSINESS

Sussex County Community College

1 College Hill Road, Block 3.01, Lot 1, Zone SD-2

Construct 2,500 sq ft addition to existing Optics Center (Building R)
(Knutelsky & Caldwell-Dykstra)

Mr. Tombalakian recused himself and Ms. Caldwell stepped forward.

Ms. Caldwell stated the project was being presented as a Capital Improvement Project under Section 31.

Ms. Caldwell stated the Town reviews the project compared to the Master Plan Consistency Review.

Ms. Lisa Leili from Porzio, Bromberg and Newman came forward to present for Sussex County College.

Ms. Leili stated the College is proposing a 2,500 square foot addition to the Optic Center, also known as Building R.

James Gaddy, Optic Center HR Director

Mr. Gaddy explained that Optics is an important part of SCCC and the future of the College. Mr. Gaddy stated the College is looking to expand the building to house additional tools and train more students.

Chris Wolverton, Architect

Mr. Wolverton detailed the existing building and explained the proposed addition. Mr. Wolverton explained the existing building is 2000 square feet and the College is proposing to add 2,500 sq ft and will match the existing building. Mr. Wolverton stated the addition will consist of two additional classrooms and two labs.

Mr. Wolverton stated there will be two new signs for the building, one in the parking area showing where the building is located.

There were no questions from the Board members.

Ms. Caldwell stated if the Board is in favor of the addition, they could make a recommendation that the addition is consistent with the Master Plan.

Mr. Flaherty made a motion to make a recommendation and Mr. Wink seconded the motion.

AYE: Mr. Flaherty, Mr. Wink, Ms. Hall-Romer, Mr. Russo, Ms. Vrahnos, Mr. Ragsdale, Mr. Schick, Vice-chairman Marion.

Sussex Realty Investments, LLC PB-4-2023

122 Main Street Block 7.09, Lot 5

124 Main Street Block 7.09, Lot 3

Reconsideration and modification for amended preliminary and final site plan and variance application to construct four (4) apartments.

(Knutelsky & Caldwell-Dykstra)

Mr. Wayne McCabe came forward and raised concerns and questions pertaining to the May 15, 2023, conditional approval from the Historic Preservation Commission. Mr. McCabe questioned whether the application needed to go before the HPC again for review and approval due to the reconsideration and revisions.

Mr. Tombalakian stated the Board had jurisdiction to hear the application.

Vice-Chairman Marion stated the Board would hear the application and would make a decision if the applicant needed to go back to the Historic Preservation Commission. It was determined that the Board would like to proceed with the hearing.

Mr. Roger Thomas, attorney for the applicant

Donna Bullock, Morgan Engineering, engineer for the applicant

Chris Wolverton, HQW Architects, architect for the applicant

Doug Shelley, applicant

Mr. Thomas stated the applicant received site plan approval from the Planning Board in January 2022 to convert 122 and 124 Main Street from offices to residential flats. Mr. Thomas stated the property at 124 Main Street has already been converted to apartments and 122 Main Street is currently being converted to apartments.

Mr. Thomas stated the applicant is requesting amended preliminary and final site plan approval to construct a two-story addition to the rear of an existing building to add four (4) additional apartments to 124 Main Street.

Ms. Bullock provided the Board with an overview of the site plan. Ms. Bullock testified pertaining to stormwater management, parking, ADA accessibility, exterior lighting levels and dumpster location and access.

Mr. Wolverton detailed the design and details of the architectural plan, including the proposed elevation for the four (4) additional apartments. Mr. Wolverton detailed the need for limited egress door lighting to comply with building codes. Mr. Wolverton confirmed that the addition will be fully sprinklered with a fire alarm system.

Mr. Shelley provided the Board with an overview of the plan revisions. Mr. Shelley provided the Board members with the proposed revisions, including the trash enclosure location and design, EV station location; accessible ADA parking; improved pedestrian access, improved landscaping; and an agreement to provide on-site exterior toilet facilities during construction.

At this time the meeting was opened to the public.

Ralph Porter, 12 Pine Street, Newton

Mr. Porter stated the replacement windows should have been replicated.

Vertiy Fox, 121 Main Street

Ms. Fox raised concerns with safety issues as well as stacking issues.

Ernest Phillips, 121 Main Street, Newton

Mr. Phillips raised concerns about the existing lighting and the glare.

Blake Paino, 128 Main Street, Newton

Mr. Paino stated he was not in favor of the proposed project. Mr. Paino also raised concerns about the exterior lighting, taxes, property value and snow removal.

Kathleen Messina, 17 Paterson Place, Newton

Ms. Messina stated she does not live in the immediate area, but drives through the area multiple times a day and is not in favor of the proposed project. Ms. Messina said the feel of the town is changing and she is not in favor.

Wayne McCabe, 125 High Street, Newton

Mr. McCabe stated the Town should be trying to maintain historic structures along Main Street. Mr. McCabe stated the appearances of the residential structures is changing and he is not in favor.

Mr. McCabe also stated that the chimneys should not have been removed and the window replacements were not in kind.

Mike Lehmann, 34 Linwood Avenue, Newton

Mr. Lehmann stated he moved to Newton for its historic charm and is disheartened to see the changes.

Lisa Holder, 63 Ryerson Avenue, Newton

Ms. Holder stated that the proposed changes are not in keeping with the character of Main Street.

Mr. Simmons detailed his report and had a few questions regarding the dumpster area and the property lines.

Ms. Caldwell went over her report in detail. Ms. Caldwell stated the applicant is not seeking any variances and it is permitted use.

There were several questions from the Board members. Most of the Board members stated the application was in compliance with the ordinances.

Mr. Russo made a motion to approve the application. Ms. Vrahnos seconded the motion.

AYE: Ms. Hall-Romer, Mr. Russo, Ms. Vrahnos, Mr. Ragsdale, Vice-chairman Marion.

NAY: Mr. Flaherty, Mr. Wink, Mr. Schick

The Board took a five-minute break at this time.

Redevelopment Plan

125 Water Street & 5 South Park Drive, Block 10.01, Lots 5 & 6

Ms. Caldwell stated the Plan was introduced to the Board at last month's meeting. Ms. Caldwell stated the Board had requested additional language be added to the Plan regarding the potential subdivision. Ms. Caldwell stated the language was added and was introduced at the Town Council meeting. The Council approved the Plan and referred it back to the Planning Board for formal referral.

Mr. Flaherty made a motion to approve the Redevelopment Plan and that it is consistent with the Master Plan. Ms. Vrahnos seconded the motion.

AYE: Mr. Flaherty, Ms. Vrahnos, Ms. Hall-Romer, Mr. Russo, Mr. Wink, Mr. Ragsdale, Mr. Schick, Vice-chairman Marion.

RESOLUTIONS

No resolutions presented.

CORRESPONDENCE

Letter from Mr. Kienz, Board Attorney regarding Ordinance 2023-18 Ordinance to Amend, Revise and Supplement Section 320-28 "Conditional Uses" of the Zoning Code of the Town of Newton to Regulate the Number of Approved Cannabis Retail Facilities and Delivery Businesses in Certain Zones within the Town of Newton.

Letter from Mr. & Mrs. Kuever, 3 Dunn Place

Letter and pictures from Blake Paino, 128 Main Street

Vice-Chairman Marion stated that there were no items scheduled for executive session.

Vice-Chairman Marion opened to the public. At this time no one from the public came forward. The public portion of the meeting was closed.

Motion to adjourn the meeting was made by Mr. Russo and seconded by Mr. Flaherty. All in favor. The meeting was adjourned at 9:20 pm.

Respectfully submitted,
Kerry Brown
Planning Board Secretary