

Monkton Development Review Board
Meeting Minutes
Monkton Town Hall & via Zoom
March 10th, 2025
(Approved: TBD)

Attendance:

DRB Members Present: Curtis Layn, Jaime Schulte, Mark Boltz-Robinson, Chris Acker, Scott Gordon, Stephen Pilcher, Michael Brennan (alternate)

DRB Members Absent: Vicky Stern

Others in Attendance: Susan Gulrajani (Zoning Administrator), Scott Baker (Barnard & Gervais), Hannah Schwartz (Riverflow), Lisa Burns, River Parker, Cathie Buscaglia, Elizabeth Campbell, Jim Caffry, Mike Leonard, Tracie Cassarino, Paul Cassarino, Jasper Gilbert.

- **Call to order and determine quorum**
 - The meeting was called to order at 7:36 by C. Layn with six members and alternate present.
- **Public Comment** - Not related to the agenda - None offered.
- **New Business**
 - **Sketch Plan Review of Riverflow Community, Inc., 57 Cedar Lane, Monkton, Vermont for Conditional Use & Site Plan Applications**

Riverflow Community, Inc. is located on a 29.58± acre residential parcel (Kathleen & Michael Langen, landowners) located at 57 Cedar Lane in Monkton. The property is currently improved with an 8-bedroom community residential home, tennis court and associated infrastructure. Riverflow is proposing to construct additional residential and accessory structures to accommodate up to 50 community members and friends/clients. The existing residence would continue to be served by an existing on-site in-ground wastewater disposal system and to be provided water by an existing drilled well. The proposed structures will be served by on-site mound wastewater systems and will be provided water by on-site drilled wells.

- Scott Baker of Bernard & Gervais described the project, similar to the above description. The idea is to fit the project into the existing neighborhood. Reviewed the site plan. Discussed the locations of wetlands. Wastewater capacity will be a limiting factor as soils are not well suited. Multiple state permits will be needed, including wetlands for a crossing to the southern section. S. Baker will be meeting with Zapata Courage, state wetlands ecologist, in the spring for state oversight of the wetlands resources on the property. Four residential structures are proposed and possibly some tiny homes as well. Stormwater permits will also be needed due to proposing more than ½ acre of impervious surface. Depending on state review of

water, wastewater, stormwater, and wetlands this plan might be scaled down somewhat, so this represents a master plan or maximum plan.

- S. Pilcher asked about Cedar Lane's location beyond the subject property as a town right of way. Discussed the town right of way from Cedar through to Stillson Lane.
- S. Pilcher asked about this as a Sketch Plan review. S. Baker noted he thought this was Conditional Use and Site Plan reviews. J. Schulte described that we do not have a formal sketch plan concept for Conditional Use and Site Plan, but for a project of this size we are considering it to be such and not a formal hearing tonight. S. Pilcher asked S. Baker to describe further how this project might fit under Conditional Use relative to Monkton's UPD. S. Baker noted that the applicant met previously with the fire chief. C. Layn (fire chief) noted that while traffic might be lighter in this project, vs. regular apartment buildings in some projects, Cedar Lane might need to be wide and improved with an adequate turnaround. The applicants are amenable to safety and road improvements. Discussed multiple turnaround locations in the plan.
- M. Boltz-Robinson asked what type of Conditional Use is being requested for this parcel in the RA5LD, regarding the number of units. Is it a Residential Care Group Home? S. Baker said that is the closest to this project and a Conditional Use is needed for more than 8 residential units.
- M. Boltz-Robinson asked why the buildings would be under commercial business standards vs. residential. S. Baker said the commercial standards are more stringent. These are considered commercial due to the occupancy. The state fire marshall indicated these are public buildings, which need to follow the commercial standards.
- S. Pilcher asked about the Conditional Use to site additional residential units on this lot. Was this considered as a subdivision Planned Unit Development? S. Baker said this is not a subdivision to parcelize. The intention is to keep the project under one ownership and lots would not be sold. C. Acker said this kind of project would usually be as a PUD for multiple units. S. Baker noted this is not an investment type of project with multiple lots and spoke about the value of the project. Hannah Schwartz (Riverflow) mentioned that this is a non-profit and an intentional community. Subdividing it puts it at risk to reduce the property over time. This approach was done in the town of Hardwick (Heartbeet) and some lessons have been taken from that.
- S. Baker is amenable to giving time to look at the improvements that might need to be made to Cedar Lane and perhaps to look at the property in Hardwick.
- M. Boltz-Robinson asked H. Schwartz to describe the mission of the Riverflow community. H. Schwartz described an intentional community to house adults with developmental disabilities in a new model. There is a lack of care capacity and caregivers and there are over 600 unhoused folks in the state. An Act 186 pilot grant will support Riverflow. The project supports a growing need for a dignified adult life.
- Kathy Buscaglia asked H. Schwartz to comment on developmental disabilities and what examples are. H. Schwartz described that there is a range of care needed for disabilities such as Autism, Down Syndrome, and others. Idea of caring for the community and the land and a place for

everyone to belong to. Each house would be an extended family household with caregivers living in them and some day-workers coming in.

- M. Boltz-Robinson - mentioned there are plans for House 2. Would the rest of the buildings be very similar? H. Schwartz said yes. The proposed community center would replace the tennis court? Yes and the community would be invited to some events.
- M. Boltz-Robinson asked about the timeline of building the dwelling units. H. Schwartz said Riverflow is a non-profit so it will take time, as this is a 10-12 million dollar build-out. S. Baker noted that there is considerable up-front cost for the basic infrastructure.
- M. Boltz-Robinson asked about the 20-car lot and how runoff from the lot would be managed.
- S. Pilcher asked H. Schwartz about covenants for this intentional community to ensure houses are maintained and infrastructure is maintained. The org received a grant from VHCB, so that documentation is coming. VHCB has very clear requirements. There isn't an exact phased plan yet, but the major infrastructure would be done first and houses over time. J. Schulte clarified that most of the infrastructure would be in place earlier in the implementation.
- C. Layn asked how many people per home would be in the plan. Eight people. M. Boltz-Robinson asked if the possible tiny homes would come in after the four main houses? H. Schwartz said the timing might depend on what works best for the population they have.
- J. Schulte commented that the nature of the project seems important for the larger community. The question for the DRB is whether the project is aligned fully with the zoning regulations. Is this the best or only approach? At least an acceptable approach? J. Schulte is also interested in the wetland considerations, but appreciates that the state will be reviewing that piece of it. S. Baker mentioned that Conditional Use appears to allow this kind of project - they have tried to keep the development more centralized and somewhat away from the quieter single-family homes nearby or the Rec Field. There is a possibility of some screening where it might help - open to some adjustment/tuning to take a good idea and make it work in the location and with the neighbors.
- Comments from the public and continued questions from the Board:
 - Paul Cassarino lives to the east - is there a 50' setback? S. Baker clarified that buildings need to be 50' from boundaries, but driveways do not.
 - Tracie Cassarino asked about the process. C. Layn described that we ultimately have a hearing to clarify whether the project complies with the zoning regulations and that all necessary permits are in place. It is helpful to make changes to the plan early in the process, but we will not be making decisions tonight. S. Baker stated they want to work very well with the neighbors. He and the owners are happy to walk on the property with the DRB.
 - T. Cassarino asked about widening Cedar Lane. She understands it would still be within the 50' ROW. What would it look like? Paved? C. Layn described the need for emergency vehicles to be able to pass each other during an incident. 16' wide likely for the gravel surface. S.

- Baker described the Hinesburg standards - 16' wide continuous or if less with a 20' wide passing zone 60' long every 250' or so.
- S. Gordon asked about adding housing to get toward 50 residents. Is there a potential to add more housing on this parcel? H. Schwartz and S. Baker said not on this property, especially without a substantial improvement in wastewater technology. S. Baker said this is more of a master plan than a PUD. There are many challenges with this property, including the pipeline corridor, wetlands, etc.
 - Elizabeth Campbell is the parent of a resident of Riverflow - she wanted to convey how important communities like this are. Quality of life for her son is greatly improved by the opportunity to live here.
 - S. Pilcher - said he understands not wanting to subdivide. The zoning rules do allow for Conditional Uses that are not otherwise specifically allowed or not allowed. This project is generally similar to the intent of a PUD, so does it work as a Site Plan and Conditional Use? C. Acker asked if this is compatible as a Conditional Use with other uses in the district. C. Layn thought the project does make sense as one lot.
 - Does a Conditional Use permit run with the land? Yes, although it cannot be amended without coming back to the DRB.
 - J. Schulte asked about setbacks and having structures up against them. S. Baker described establishing building envelopes and clearing limits to address this to prevent spread of use toward the neighbors.
 - J. Schulte noted that the Planning Commission could provide a mechanism for the DRB to do an initial "Sketch" review of Conditional Uses, Site Plans, and projects that are not a subdivision. In this case we are creating that initial review, but it is not described in the UPD.
 - S. Gulrajani asked about the proposed well shield extending onto the neighboring property. S. Baker said there are state rules for wells and wastewater. Overshadowing (crossing property lines with a shield) is allowed.
 - J. Schulte asked about review of the shields. S. Baker described that the state will ensure there is nothing in the wetlands or buffers. The state now requires buildings to be at least 10' from a wetland buffer with signage and fencing/boulders on buffers.
 - Discussed next steps. S. Baker will incorporate what has been discussed into the site plan, meet with the Cassarinos, with the fire chief, it is still too early for the state wetlands ecologist to review. Aim for an updated plan to be ready in about 2 weeks time with the goal of board members having a week or two to review. Discussed the idea of a letter, which is not normally done for a Sketch. S. Baker - will review the notes now and make sure there is an understanding of what needs to be updated. J. Schulte also noted the recording will be posted on the website by tomorrow morning.
 - C. Acker clarified that the state will review water, wastewater, stormwater, and wetlands. We just need to work out if this project fits into our zoning regulations.

- Next Steps - list of steps discussed with S. Baker to address ahead of the formal Conditional Use and Site Plan hearings:
 - Wetlands - S. Baker will be in touch with Zapata Courage.
 - S. Baker/Riverflow to meet with Paul and Tracie Cassarino - hear their specific considerations.
 - S. Baker to create more defined building envelopes relative to setbacks and possibly clearing setbacks.
 - S. Baker to do a site visit with the Fire Chief.
 - S. Baker to look at access with the Selectboard and permission to work in a town right of way.
 - S. Baker to schedule the hearings with the Zoning Administrator when ready. We would like all of the pieces to be in place before hearing the Conditional Use and Site Plan. The plans could change based on state reviews, etc. The plans we review in the formal hearing should be the final plans. J. Schulte also noted that we need to do a site visit before the final hearing.

- **Regular Business**

- Zoning Administrator Update - upcoming projects & schedule; other updates
 - Certificate of Occupancy for Lauren & Steve Parren
 - Lynne Caulfield - prepping for Final on a 2-lot subdivision
 - Building Permit for Jared Badger
 - New zoning/application permit fees are in place and posted on the website
 - Annual report section updated
 - Potential for a subdivision of Mary Simons at New Leaf Organic
- Reviewed the minutes of February 24th, 2025. **C. Acker moved the minutes as written and S. Gordon seconded. So moved (7-0-0).**

- **Old Business**

- There was mention of V. Stern and C. Acker's terms on the DRB expiring.
- Decision letters for recent projects - no update
- DRB Clerk job description - postponed to next meeting

Adjournment - S. Pilcher moved to adjourn the meeting at 9:43pm. So Voted (7-0-0).

Minutes taken by Jaime Schulte