

Planning & Development Committee
Wednesday, March 7, 2018 – 5:30 p.m.
1st Fl. Council Committee Room – City Hall
-Minutes-

Present: Chair, Councilor Valerie Gilman; Vice Chair, Councilor Jen Holmgren; Councilor Paul Lundberg (entered the meeting at 5:35 p.m.)

Absent: None.

Also Present: None.

The meeting was called to order at 5:32 p.m.

1. SCP2018-001: 1 School Street, Map 14, Lot 67, GZO Sec. 2.3.1(8) Conversion to or new multi-family or apartment dwelling, seven or more dwelling units in the R-5 District (Cont'd from 02/21/18)

Councilor Gilman confirmed that the applicant through their attorney made notice to abutters about this public meeting. **Attorney Mark Nestor**, 45 Middle Street, representing 80 Middle Street Partners, LLC of Winchester, MA came before the Committee for a Special Council Permit to convert an existing storage area in the basement of the building into an additional studio apartment for moderate rent under GZO Sec. 2.3.1(8) Conversion to or new multi-family or apartment dwelling, seven or more dwelling units in the R-5 District, submitted for the record copies of letters sent to all abutters of 1 School Street from a Certified Abutters List which was part of the Special Council Permit application (on file). He noted that no abutters spoke against or in favor of the ZBA application when it was before that Board.

He then reviewed the Special Council Permit application as follows: This application is to convert a ground-level storage area to a studio apartment which was already approved by the ZBA. This will bring the number of units in this apartment building to a total of 26 from 25. This is the rebuilt Lorraine Building which burned down 10 years ago. The rebuilt Lorraine Building is completely up to date -- all systems per city Building Codes. Issues were addressed with the Building Inspector about necessary storage areas for the building to his satisfaction. There are separate storage areas for trash, brooms, and like equipment on each floor; and the snow plowing and landscaping is contracted out. It was pointed that the development of apartments such as this in the downtown area is furthering the goals of the Community Development Plan for the City of Gloucester, 2001. He recounted that his client has another property in the downtown, 155-171 Main Street, that combines ground-level retail with second floor living spaces.

As to tenant parking, **Mr. Nestor** advised that the Lorraine Building is "grandfathered" for parking, so no off-street parking is necessary. He noted that the majority of the tenants of the building don't own vehicles, and use either commercial or public transportation. He said that when the ZBA granted the Applicant a Special Permit in December of 2017 it waived the off-street parking requirement. He reiterated this is a studio apartment, not a one-bedroom apartment.

Mr. Nestor then reviewed the six criteria under GZO Sec. 1.8.3 as follows:

1. Social, Economic or community need served by the proposal: The new proposed studio apartment will provide an additional moderately priced housing unit to the building;
2. Traffic flow and safety: Converting the basement into a studio apartment will not cause any interference with traffic flow and has no safety issues as no parking is required.
3. Adequacy of utilities and other public services: The existing utilities and public services are adequate to service an additional studio apartment.
4. Neighborhood character and social structure: Converting the storage area into a basement studio apartment is in keeping with the existing building and the neighborhood and dovetails with the 2001 Community Development Plan.
5. Qualities of the natural environment: There is no expansion of the exterior of the building, and there will be no negative impact on the natural environment.
6. Potential fiscal impact: Converting a storage space into a single studio apartment will provide additional real estate taxes, although minimal.

Councilor Gilman confirmed that no abutters got back to the attorney. **Mr. Nestor** said that he didn't expect to hear from abutters -- this is an existing building, and the neighbors are pleased it is a new state-of-the-art building. **Councilor Gilman** said she was appreciative to see an application such as this brought forward that enhances and supports the goals of the Community Development Plan, 2001, combining retail with residential in the downtown area. **Mr. Nestor** said in much of Gloucester's downtown there is very little office spaces that still exist on second floors of these buildings as they're all slowly being converted to apartments. He said this makes for a livelier and more vibrant downtown.

COMMITTEE RECOMMENDATION: On a motion by Councilor Holmgren, seconded by Councilor Lundberg, the Planning & Development Committee voted 3 in favor, 0 opposed, to recommend that the City Council grant 80 Middle Street Partners, LLC, 30 Mystic Avenue, Winchester, MA, a Special Council Permit (SCP2018-001) for School Street #1, Map 14, Lot 67 in the R-5 Zoning District pursuant to GZO Sec. 1.8.3 and Sec. 2.3.1 (8) Conversion to or new multi-family or apartment dwelling, seven or more dwelling units to convert an existing storage space to a studio apartment in the basement level of the building as shown on a plan entitled, "Proposed Studio Apartment, 80 Middle Street," as signed by Daniel F. DiLullo, Registered Architect, 16 Crystal Street, Melrose, Mass., and dated 06-09-17. This Special Council Permit is found to be in harmony with the intent and purpose of the Zoning Ordinance.

This matter will be advertised for public hearing.

2. *SCP2017-012: School House Road #2, #3 and #4, Map 262, Lots 14 & 37 and Gloucester Crossing Road #7, Map 43, Lots 4 & 5 for a Special Permit under the Mixed Use Overlay District pursuant to GZO Sec. 5.29 (including Major Project under GZO Sec. 5.7) and Sec.'s 5.29.10 and 5.11.8 - For the purpose of a Committee discussion with city staff and the Applicant on a vote taken at the 01/29/18 Special P&D meeting to refer the issue of a renegotiation of the Affordable Housing Hardship claim by the Applicant under GZO Sec. 5.11.8 and directly related matters therein*

Councilor Gilman advised that this matter will be continued to March 21, 2018.

A motion was made, seconded and voted unanimously to adjourn the meeting at 5:45 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Dana C. Jorgensson

Clerk of Committees

DOCUMENTS/ITEMS SUBMITTED AT MEETING:

- Letters to abutters from the Certified Abutters List notifying of the Planning & Development Committee Meeting of March 7, 2018.