



CITY OF DOVER

**COCHECHO WATERFRONT DEVELOPMENT ADVISORY
COMMITTEE - MINUTES**

Meeting Type: Regular Meeting
Meeting Location: McConnell Center Room 305, 61 Locust Street, Dover, NH
Meeting Date: **Tuesday, May 7, 2013**
Meeting Time: **5:30 pm**

PRESENT: Jack Mettee (Chair), Dana Lynch (Vice Chair), Steve Brewer, Frank Torr, Kim Schuman, Thom Hindle, Sean Fitzgerald, Tom Dunnington, Carla Goodknight, Jim Schulte

EXOFFICIO MEMBERS: Jack Buckley, Dean Trefethen, Michael Joyal

STAFF: Steve Bird-City Planner, Allan Krans-General Legal Counsel, Dan Barufaldi-Economic Development

OTHERS: Chris Wyskiel, Mark Dickinson, Tony McManus, Bob Carrier, Tom Fargo, Mike Crago, Wil Brown

1. Meeting was called to order at 5:35 pm.

2. Minutes of December 11, 2012

Motion: Brewer made the motion to approve the minutes, Torr seconded. Vote: Unanimous.

3. Citizens Forum

Mettee asked if any citizens would like to make any comments. There were none.

4. Changes to the Agenda

Mettee welcomed Carla Goodknight as the newest member of the committee.

Mettee recognized the upcoming retirement of Jack Buckley from the Dover Housing Authority and thanked him for his years of service to the committee. We will miss his advice in the future.

5. Correspondence

None

6. Old Business

None

7. New Business

A. Presentation by Dickinson Development Corporation of Revised Concept Plan

Dickinson: Thanks to the City Councilors here tonight. Their support during the amendment process was very important. Potential investors were not pleased with the single family homes on the plan. Apartment complexes are more attractive to investors. The most significant change to the plan is to replace the 14 single family homes with two apartment buildings. There are a total of 185 apartments and 12 live work units. I have raised significant interest with this new plan.

Northmark Capital has shown interest. One benefit is that more units will result in additional people living and shopping in the downtown. There will be higher assessed valuation with the new plan. Rents will be in the area of \$2,000 a month. Parking will be underground for the two new apartment buildings. The apartments could be converted to condominiums in the future. The units will have higher end finishes and amenities to justify the higher rents. The units will have to meet the design standards. You get three bites at the apple – the design standards, CWDAC review, and Planning Board review. My investor may want to make some design changes but we will be back again.

Mettee: Thank you for the update. Do any members have questions?

Brewer: Didn't you also relocate River Street on this plan?

Dickinson: That is only conceptual at this point, it may move back after we look at it.

Brewer: Will the roundabout have to go away if the road does not move?

Dickinson: Yes it would not work so close to the bridge.

Schulte: How much commercial space do you show on the revised plan?

Dickinson: About 22,000 to 24,000 square feet.

Goodknight: Why did you go with 2 large apartment buildings instead of smaller multi-family buildings?

Dickinson: I wanted to test the density of the 200 units to help attract investors. The larger buildings could be split into smaller ones to improve visibility to the river.

Goodknight: I have a concern with us ending up with a more homogenous site and if the larger buildings will wall off the public from the river.

Dickinson: The public park will provide access to the water for the public.

Goodknight: How big are the units?

Dickinson: the two bedrooms will be about 1,140 sq. ft. and the one bedroom will be 780 sq. ft.

Goodknight: Earlier sketches were very nice. I would encourage diversity in unit types.

Dickinson: There will be diversity in unit rents depending on location and number of bedrooms. There are not many comparables in Dover.

Brewer: Is your desire to get a green light tonight?

Dickinson: Yes.

Brewer: At what point will we get another submission to CWDAC to address concerns we might have?

Dickinson: After I get an investor on board we will come back.

Brewer: Has the phasing plan changed after talks with investors?

Dickinson: yes there have been some discussions in terms of what happens first. I talked with Severino about the time it takes to remove the bluff and we want to have that done before building begins. We can't begin until we own the property.

Torr: At one time there was a proposal to remove the bluff that was rejected many years ago.

Dickinson: We will have to listen to the neighbors during the process. They will have improved views of the river. It is better than accessing the site through the neighborhood. The cost to remove the bluff is close to \$2 million but that is reduced by the value of the material to \$1.2 million.

Torr: I am pleased to see the addition of underground parking. Could you do more?

Dickinson: It is too expensive for underground parking. I have to increase rents to pay for it.

Torr: Could you add more commercial space?

Dickinson: My hope is that the bluff area could be used for commercial like a conference center or hotel.

Torr: I have a concern with the limited mixed use versus the original proposals that were rejected. We have a fiduciary responsibility.

Dickinson: The previously approved concept plan had a similar amount of commercial.

Schulte: The LDA requires 18,800 sq. ft. of commercial in phase 1, but you show only about 16,000 sq. ft. That will not comply with the LDA.

Dickinson: I think we are close to that but we could expand the space to get to that number.

Schulte: This is a 95 percent residential project, not what the city envisioned. We only have one chance to do this right.

Dickinson: This is what it wants to be according to the market.

Schulte: There is no market for this level of rent.

Goodknight: More information on the amount of commercial is needed. I am concerned about the atmosphere created by large residential buildings.

Schulte: If we approve the concept will we be tied into that design?

Mettee: I want to see if there are more comments before we decide on a course of action.

Trefethen: We have to look at this with a different view than in 2008. Reality has changed. There are two other mixed use projects in Dover that are stalled right now, with only the residential portions being built now. We need to do a blend with keeping with the 2008 version and the reality of today's market. The bluff is an opportunity to add more commercial.

Lynch: I agree with Dean. We are actually working with a 20 year old design charrette. There were many different ideas that were considered. This concept is not what I had in mind back then, but we need to remember that the original charge was to put the land back on the tax rolls. The bluff could be commercial. Downtown merchants were concerned that commercial in this area would negatively impact their businesses. We need to strictly hold to our design guidelines.

Mettee: We have had a range of opinions during this discussion. We have been at this for a long time and we are at a fork in the road. Times have changed and we need to adjust. This development is part of a bigger community – the downtown. This is not a final commitment, there will be more changes. This is the next step in the process. Would anyone like to make a motion?

Brewer: I make a motion to approve the concept plan for density and general layout, with the understanding that the developer will return to CWDAC for a design workshop 60 to 90 days prior to the formal submission, to weigh in on the final design. Motion was seconded by Lynch.

Schulte: What formal submission are you talking about?

Brewer: What I meant was the submission process outlined in the design guidelines where there are specific steps required.

Goodknight: I suggest that we include the commercial as proposed and that the building footprints as shown are subject to approval.

Brewer: I feel that my motion covers that.

Schulte: Does that motion adopt the commercial density as displayed on this plan as opposed to the density set forth in the LDA?

Brewer: That would be the change, to take the amount of commercial off the table.

Dickinson: I think it is the same.

Brewer: I am okay with adding that language.

Schulte: We either approve a plan that complies with the LDA or begin the process of amending the LDA.

Joyal: At your last meeting you approved amendments to the LDA subject to approval of the City Council.

Brewer: I don't think the 2,000 sq. ft. difference is a deal breaker.

Joyal: The LDA amendments do not include any change in commercial space.

Schulte: I don't want this committee to be in a position of explaining to a future City Council why there was a binding contract that we are not complying with. My understanding is Mr. Dickinson is saying his proposal will comply with the LDA.

Dickinson: I think it does comply but I could be proven wrong. I would rather have this concept plan approved.

Lynch: Can this motion assume it does comply with the LDA until we get more detailed architectural plans and Mr. Dickinson brings forth a request for an amendment to the LDA?

Mettee: I would think so.

Joyal: Based on what was articulated earlier, there are amendments to the LDA that were approved and we are not negating that.

Mettee asked for a vote on the motion. Vote: Motion carries with one opposed (Schulte).

B. Land Disposition Agreement (LDA) Amendment Status

Joyal: A new LDA has not been signed yet as we were waiting for input from CWDAC. We need to incorporate the amendments related to payments and timing agreed to by CWDAC in December and the City Council in January.

Mettee: All those items we were made aware of at our December meeting.

8. Public Comments and Questions

Mettee: Are there any members of the public that would like ask a question or make comments?

McManus: It is important to look at previous concept plans. Every change has diminished the project. The original charrette was a long time ago but it created a vision. CWDAC should support Dover's idea not Dickinson's idea. This is one of the most valuable pieces of property in the seacoast. Look at Portsmouth, they are doing commercial and mixed use projects. I am concerned that people on the bluff will be looking down at apartment buildings. Let the developer walk away, we can wait. Underground parking was not going to work previously. He needs to make a decent profit. Look at previous concept plans. We should not subsidize him.

Wil Brown: The size of the project will impact the area. Will low impact development techniques be used? Is flooding a concern with the removal of the bluff? We have had more 100-year floods.

Dickinson: The removal of the bluff will not impact flooding. We will look to incorporate LID designs in the project, like porous pavement. Regarding McManus's comments there is no subsidy of the project. I have spent over a million dollars so far. I know something about the market. His comments about the underground parking are not accurate. I take umbrage at his comments.

9. Adjournment

Lynch made a motion to adjourn at 7:00 PM, Torr seconded the motion. Vote: Unanimous.