

**MINUTES  
TOWN OF GORHAM  
ORDINANCE COMMITTEE MEETING  
Tuesday, June 20, 2023 – 11:00 a.m.  
Gorham Municipal Center, Conference Room A**

**Committee Members:** Councilor Virginia Wilder Cross – Committee Chair, Councilor Seven Siegel, Councilor Ronald Shepard - Not Present

**Non-Members Present:** Town Manager Ephrem Paraschak, Town Planner Carol Eyerman, Assistant Town Planner Damon Yakovleff, Town Engineer Charles Norton, Director of Community Development Tom Poirier, Peter Mason from Economic Development, Assistant Town Clerk Kimberly Getchell. Present from Sebago Technics was Sr.VP of Strategy and Development, Owens McCullough, Sr. Project Mgr, Shawn Frank, Kendrick Ballantyne of KV Enterprises, and Vincent Maietta of KV Enterprises

**1. Consideration of minutes of May 15, 2023 meeting:**

Councilor Siegel MADE a motion to approve, SECONDED by Councilor Wilder Cross, and VOTED to accept the minutes of the May 15, 2023 meeting. Unanimous vote.

**2. Current Business:**

**A. Review proposed contract zone for single and multi-family housing off of Robie Street, and send recommendations back to the Town Council (referred by Town Council on April 4, 2023)**

Mr. Poirier began by explaining the project and what was needed for the proposed contract zone. Essentially a modified number of units per year is being requested to make the most of the project for the Town, Sebago Technics, and KV Enterprises. Currently, 10 Multi or Single Family units are allowed in the zone per year.

Owens McCullough of Sebago Technics brought up the current master plan for Robie Street. The density of the project is approved by the zone. Much of the cost of the project is coming from the implementation of the infrastructure. The project will be done in three phases and could take approximately 6-10 years to complete. Sebago Technics is asking to build 20 single-family homes each year in addition to the multi-units. This rate of development will align the cost (infrastructure) with the revenue (sale of homes).

A discussion ensued regarding roads within the subdivision and road access. Some roads will be connected such as Ridgeway but will be one-way because the road isn't very wide to ease the flow of traffic. There was also talk about access to New Portland Rd. via Birch Lane to be done in a later phase, and more ways in and out to reduce traffic and spread it out.

Home specifications were discussed, such as minimum setbacks for homes. On an 8,000sq/ft lot, there would be 80ft on the sides, 15ft front and back, there will be public water and sewer as the project is in the growth zone. The developer would like to see diversity in height of the multi-units. Currently, they are 3-4 stories but could go as high as 5 stories if it was appropriate.

Mr. Maietta stated that the project is expected to take 10-12 years. They would like 20 units per year but may not build that many based on the market. The market may not be able to sustain 20 single-family and multis in a year, but in a better market year could build more.

Mr. Ballentyne went on to say that this plan began in 2021 before the new growth ordinance was passed in January of 2023. The plan meets Gorhams current proposed density. Nothing will change regarding density, just the number of builds per year. This build could happen within the current zoning but may take longer and not work as well overall. At this time they could only build a 10-unit building in the current contract zone, so the 24-unit buildings could not be built without exceptions.

Councilor Wilder Cross stated she was not opposed to growth, but is concerned about growth that is too fast and growth that creates traffic and school issues later on. She would like to see more multi-family units as they are much needed in the area and would likely not house families with children. She also asked if Bramblewood would be connected like Ridgeway and would they be widened?

Mr. Frank stated that Ridgeway would be one-way and that Bramblewood had not been discussed

Mr. Maietta said staff asked that there be as many access and egress ways through the project. Four have been designated at this time, but that could be changed by staff.

Councilor Siegel asked if the number of single and multi-family homes was set in stone?

Mr. Maietta stated that they may have to go with more single-family homes depending on what was decided about the ordinance. If the ordinance stays the same they won't be able to build any multi-units. One single-family home equals approximately 4-5 multi-units. A single-family home is more cost effective.

Councilor Siegel also asked if there could be a consideration of mixed-use buildings? Having a coffee shop or flower shop or other low-impact retail on the first floor of the multi-units might make the area more attractive and bring in residents from the whole town, making it less of a gated community.

Mr. Maietta liked the idea but it had not been considered because of zoning. They would do what would be acceptable to the town. This could affect traffic etc in the neighborhood.

Councilor Siegel felt the 6 ft side setbacks were appropriate, and he was ok about being flexible with the height of the multi-units as long as it fit in with the village feel.

Mr. Poirier said that there aren't any height restrictions.

A discussion ensued surrounding the use of the 50 acres of open space, and whether some of it could be built upon. The developer felt that this was a possibility. There are some wetlands and uplands.

Councilor Siegel stated that he would like to see 1 parking space per unit instead of 1.5 spaces per unit. Less parking would mean fewer cars and less traffic.

Councilor Wilder Cross said she would like to see 1.5 spaces.

Planner Eyerman stated that people can park on the street. There are enough spaces for this.

The developer stated that currently each unit has 2 spaces and would like to see it dropped to 1.5 spaces per unit. It would average out and there could be space for guest parking.

Councilor Seigel asked about parking under the building with the apartments above.

Mr. Maietta stated that it isn't feasible and Mr. Balletyne said that it would have to be steel and would add to the cost.

Town Mgr. Paraschak asked Mr. Poirier what the standard requirements were normally? Mr. Poirier stated that access management for pedestrian connections Robie, Birch, etc would be looked at as well as traffic movement permits by the DOT. The functional open space would be reviewed by the Planning Board as well as design standards for the multi-units. The Development Transfer Standard will be followed it is a build-to-line 10-15 ft and all homes are located within that distance, so the development looks like a traditional neighborhood. This allows for larger backyards. They would also look at maintenance and stormwater protection. DEP applications will be needed. The pump station would be approved by the Portland Water District.

Councilor Siegel asked about extending sidewalks, would this be done as well?

Mr. Maietta said they would need to do road studies.

Planner Eyerman brought up the Pedestrian/bike Plan for the Village Area within the Robie St. Section near the school entrance.

Mr. Maietta brought up impact fees for recreation. This takes away from off-site improvement money. Impact fees for this neighborhood is over \$2 million dollars

Mr. Ballantyne commented that the connection to White Birch is not presumptuous, that is something that was being worked on from the beginning, at the direction of city staff, and thought it was a good idea.

Councilor Wilder Cross stated she would like to see the project take 10 years to complete because she wants gradual development and wants resident buy-in.

Mr. Maietta went on to say that although they are requesting 20 units per year, they may build fewer because of the market, but then in a good year roll over the permits to build more. It is all market driven. It will average out.

Mr. Poirier said it seems they need to establish an average number of units per year.

Councilor Wilder Cross said that makes sense.

Town Mgr. Paraschak asked Mr. Poirier what the timeline would be? Mr. Poirier said it would next go to the Town Council for recommendation they in turn would then send it to the Planning Board. The Planning Board most likely would have several meetings before sending it back to the Town Council for a Public Hearing.

Mr. Maietta pointed out that it has been about 2 years since the project has begun and the person they are purchasing the property from is actively looking to close on the sale. They will most likely begin the

project as a small development in phase one so the property won't be lost while negotiations are still ongoing.

Mr. Poirier said this is why he was trying to establish a number to start with.

Councilor Siegel asked about age 50 plus housing. Is the developer interested in that?

The Developer said they have thought of an age 50 and older section this would depend on growth and the housing market at the time.

Mr. Poirier asked Councilor Siegel and Councilor Wilder Cross if they were ok with 15 permits per year as an average, and both replied yes. Mr. Siegel stated he would like more multi-units and some commercial. Councilor Wilder Cross would like to see more age 50 plus units and have this plan going forward by the August meeting.

Councilor Wilder Cross asked if a 50 and older unit could be built first? She thought that they would be filled very quickly. Mr. Maietta agreed, however, the bank does not and wants more bankable units. Not focused on one segment of the population. He has seen builds like this become 50-plus without any designation. Could commit to making one of the phases 50 and older.

Mr. Ballantyne said maybe one building 50 and older and the rest market value, within a phase.

Councilor Wilder Cross asked if this subdivision would have an association? Mr. Maietta said each section/property would be managed by a management company.

Councilor Cross wanted to know which side would the project start on? Mr. Maietta said the Rte 114 side.

Councilor Wilder Cross also wanted to know how the Economic Development Committee felt about the project? Mr. Mason said they felt good about it and would like to incorporate more commerce.

Mr. Maietta pointed out that it would need to be something that would bring people into the neighborhood. However, the neighborhood doesn't want people coming in. A business won't succeed if there aren't enough people to support it. Could commit to one unit with commercial that is convenient to all people, however, this would negate the growth permits. There would be separate parking for commercial use

When asked if he had enough to go on, Mr. Poirier said yes and listed out topics:

- Mix use buildings
- More multi-units less single
- Percentage of workforce vs. senior housing for each phase. What does this look like?
- Mixed-use whole building or just first floor?
- 15 permits a year for single-family units as an average

Councilor Wilder Cross suggested a recreation building or gym, something the whole town could use.

Mr. Mason suggested a pavilion, like Kennebunk has (Waterhouse Pavilion). There is always something going on each day. Would bring commerce to the area but not tons of traffic.

Councilor Siegel commented about a mixed-use path for pedestrians and bicycles. Would like to see cross-town travel.

Planner Eyerman asked if there were something in recreational planning for a project that the town is saving impact fees for, that could be placed in the subdivision for the whole town.?

Town Manager Paraschak stated that there wasn't anything specific but he was sure something could be thought of that would be a selling point. The council is looking for something different and creative.

Planner Eyerman made the statement that they should talk to the Recreation Director, Cindy Hazelton. She may have ideas that won't take up a lot of space. Something that is neighborhood-centric.

Councilor Wilder Cross wants sidewalks leading into this so it doesn't feel gated.

He also wanted to make sure that the infrastructure and the Rte 114 connection would be done first. He didn't want dump trucks and other equipment going through the development for years and he didn't think the residents did either. The Developer affirmed this, and that the second phase would include the connection to New Portland Road.

The date of the next meeting was discussed (July 17, 2023).

Councilor Wilder Cross stated that they wanted the Town to want this project because it is needed.

Mr. Ballantyne offered assistance in providing more information, facts and data to the Town Council.

Councilor Siegel MADE a motion to table this item until the next meeting, Councilor Wilder Cross SECONDED and VOTED to approve. Unanimous vote.

The group as a whole discussed what should they tackle next with limited time?

**E. Review increasing the Stream Protection Sub District to include all streams (not just those currently protected), better define aquifers, and send recommendations back to the Town Council (referred by Town Council on March 7, 2023).**

Mr. Poirier stated that he had talked with Inland Fisheries and Wildlife and was given a list of streams that have Brook Trout. James Pellerin of MDIFW said via email that in the absence of data they typically take a more conservative approach but it was up to the town.

Councilor Wilder Cross said she was fine with sending it to the Town Council with the added protections.

Mr. Poirier added he thought the added protections were good.

Councilor Siegel MADE a motion to send to Town Council, Councilor Wilder Cross SECONDED, and VOTED to approve. Unanimous vote.

Mr. Poirier inquired about the Aquifer Protection Zones. He thought this should be moved to the next meeting.

**B. Develop a long-term plan for pedestrian improvements consistent with the Town's Comprehensive Plan (referred by the Town Council on August 2, 2022).**

Planner Eyerman explained that this removes a lot of language that was all over the place and puts it in one place with one fee schedule attached. If a change needs to be made to fees, only that attachment needs to be changed not the whole ordinance.

Mr. Norton discussed how the fee schedule was determined, so as not to be a burden to commercial developers

Councilor Seigel MADE a motion to send this item to the Town Council, Councilor Wilder Cross SECONDED, and VOTED to approve. Unanimous vote.

**C. Review revising standards for curb cuts on arterials and designated collectors consistent with the Town's Comprehensive Plan (referred by Ordinance Committee on January 17, 2023).**

Mr. Norton began by answering Councilor Wilder Cross' question, that yes, any cuts would include intersections and that roads do not typically jump from one classification to another. Any changes would be made as a whole.

Councilor Siegel MADE a motion to send this item to the Town Council, and Councilor Wilder Cross SECONDED, and VOTED to approve. Unanimous vote.

Parking and Fire Suppression will be discussed at the next scheduled meeting

Councilor Siegel MADE a motion to adjourn, Councilor Wilder Cross SECONDED and VOTED to approve. Unanimous vote