

**MINUTES
TOWN OF GORHAM
ORDINANCE COMMITTEE MEETING
Wednesday, July 19, 2023 - 4:00 p.m.
Gorham Municipal Center, Conference Room A**

Committee Members:

Councilor Virginia Wilder Cross, Chairperson
Councilor Ronald Shepard
Councilor Seven Siegel

Non-Members Present:

Town Manager Ephrem Paraschak, Town Planner Carol Eyerman, Director of Community Development Tom Poirier, Fire Chief Ken Fickett, 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 Manager Shawn Frank, Kendrick Ballantyne of KV Enterprises, and Vincent Maietta of KV Enterprises. Also present were several residents of the Town of Gorham, Sandra Jones, Mark and Susan Robie, Roger and Peggy Marchand, Roger Brown, Maria Marchetti, Sara Nelson, Zilpha Weeman, and Clayton Loubier.

1. Consideration of minutes of June 20, 2023 meeting.

Councilor Shepard MADE a motion to approve, Seconded by Councilor Wilder Cross, and VOTED to accept the minutes for the June 20, 2023 meeting. Unanimous vote.

SEE ATTACHMENT 1

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 reiterating the requests of the Committee from the previous meeting. The committee wants to see a ratio of 1.5 parking spaces per unit, have at least one (1) of the four (4) phases be 55 and older housing, add more multi-family housing and decrease the number of single-family homes, build a maximum of fifteen (15) single-family homes in one year. Include some sort of community gathering space in the design.

Mr. McCullough added that the points Mr. Poirier stated were changed in the plan and that if the right commercial business was found like a sandwich shop etc., they would allow the opportunity. This may or may not happen. He went on to say that the roads would be built to town standards as well as the utilities, sidewalks, and public right-of-ways. Set aside is fifty-one (51) acres of open space for trails and recreation. This would amount to over a million dollars in Impact Fees. Initially, Robie Street would be extended to connect with Bramblewood Drive. Eventually, there would be access through the town/school property to White Birch Lane to add more connectivity

Councilor Wilder asked about community space, a place to gather. Where would this fit into the plan? Mr. McCullough responded that there was a conversation around a commercial business but they could not build a dedicated community building because of cost. There is still an open space area with approximately (5) five trail connections.

Presumpscot Regional Land Trust has expressed interest in the open space area which has uplands and wetlands within the parcel.

Councilor Shepard pointed out that the Impact Fees go to the Recreation Department and asked if fees could be added to specifically fund Robie Park?

Mr. McCullough stated that the Impact Fees are added to the cost of the build of each unit. This is then passed on to the consumer. Mr. Maietta added that the Impact Fees have nearly doubled since the inception of the project.

Councilor Wilder Cross asked where on the map would the project begin? Mr. Ballantyne stated that this was a conceptual plan. That they really couldn't say exactly where each home would be built in a phase until they have the permits. This would dictate where they start to build

Mr. Frank added that they can't build randomly because of infrastructure. For instance, they wouldn't build say a water/sewer line way ahead without having houses built at the beginning of the line. This wouldn't make sense financially.

Mr. Poirier pointed out that the builders need a general direction which may be tweaked along the way as permits are approved.

Councilor Siegel noted that the owners can build what they want on the parcel but they want to work with the town to make a better plan. He also brought up MS4's (Municipal Separate Storm Water Systems). Mr. Poirier elaborated: This is a regulatory authority for stormwater permitting. Developments would do yearly testing of areas, guidance to reduce impervious surfaces, essentially low-impact development. Councilor Siegel said reducing impervious surfaces is one reason for fewer parking spaces and more trail access.

Planner Eyerman mentioned TMP (Traffic Movement Permits). She also added that the Ordinances in place look at everything else, including site plan ordinance, and subdivision ordinance, there is a lot to go through and review first.

Councilor Seigel asked how much tax revenue there would be from the project? Mr. Maietta responded with over half a million dollars. Councilor Siegel asked for a hard number on this and pointed out that as soon as a child moves into town, the town loses money. He would like to see more multi-family housing.

Mr. Maietta said he could debate that statement. Families moving in register cars, pay sales tax, and expand the consumer base. Single-family homes cost more but he didn't think the town necessarily wrote checks for families.

Mr. Frank pointed out that the multi-units would be built at the same time as the single-family homes.

Councilor Seigel asked if the roads in the development would be public and what is the width of the road?

Mr. McCullough said yes and that the width is 24ft from curb to curb.

Planner Eyerman stated the roads are a little wider to allow for on-street parking which in turn slows down traffic.

Councilor Seigel suggested an easement around the VESTA development and a bridge for connectivity.

Mgr. Paraschak commented that the bridge while achievable would be costly. He then apologized for having to leave early and urged the Board to make some decisions to go to the Town Council. It needn't be the final product just something to move forward.

Mr. Poirier had questions about the additional fees. How much and who would pay?

Councilor Shepard said he was not sure about the fee amount but thought it should be one fee for single-family homes and one fee for multi-family homes.

Planner Eyerman pointed out that they should find out what the Impact Fees are that are required, there be fees that residents may not know about.

Mr. Poirier stated that the fee for a single-family home is \$3136.00, for a 1- bedroom it's \$1176.00, for a 2-bedroom it's \$1960.00, and 3 bedrooms plus are \$2940.00.

Mr. Maietta noted that the fees to the town are more than 2 million dollars. There are more fees for traffic movement which inflates the cost of housing. May also push the project off to another town. A \$450,000.00 home can inflate to \$500,000.00 because of fees and the home buyer ends up paying too much. He also pointed out that they will build the project even without the Contract Zone, there will be fewer homes built each year. The fees themselves have almost doubled since this began and hopefully, this is not intentional. They really want to work with the town to have a better result that the town will like.

Councilor Shepard and Councilor Wilder Cross both said they support and are pleased with the project.

Mr. Poirier brought the Committee back to the additional fees.

Councilor Shepard was ready to make a motion, but Councilor Wilder Cross was concerned with an additional fee. She didn't want this small detail to stop the project.

Councilor Seigel stated he wasn't sure what the amounts should be but wanted money set aside for Robie Park.

Mr. Poirier reminded them that the number is not set in stone it still needs to be approved by Town Council and go to Public Hearing.

Councilor Shepard MADE a motion to set a \$1000.00 fee for a single-family home and a fee of \$500.00 for a multi-unit, SECONDED by Councilor Seigel and VOTED to approve. Unanimous vote.

Mr. Poirier brought up a request for multi-use paths; should this be a requirement?

Councilor Seigel stated he would like to see 10ft multi-use paths in the plan to connect to school, shopping such as Hannaford, and to other paths.

Mr. McCullough stated that there may need to be some flexibility in the placement of paths, because of a lack of control of roads, wetlands abutting properties etc. The path may not be 10 feet wide in some areas.

Councilor Seigel said he thinks of multi-use paths as transportation vs. recreation, supporting other means of getting around town.

The Committee talked about making a motion, however, Councilor Seigel thought having some townspeople who were present speak about their concerns would be a good idea since they are being affected

Councilor Wilder Cross said that was fine as long as people stated one concern and it wasn't something they had already discussed in the meeting.

Susan Robie spoke, she had submitted a letter to the committee beforehand. She said that in the Comprehensive Plan, it was stated that a new development will not be allowed to destroy/damage existing neighborhoods. This is a concern for her that has not been addressed and she would like to see it in the Contract Zone.

Mr. Mason asked when does the school get involved regarding accommodation for the number of new students?

Planner Eyerman said that the school superintendent will ask the town for the number of permits issued to determine numbers in school population, so there is a balance of students in each school. She went on to say that the number of permits issued isn't enough to upset the balance in the schools.

Mr. Poirier clarified that the school can provide input but there isn't a requirement to approach the school about this issue.

Peggy Marchand spoke about protecting the neighborhoods as these are critical parts of the town and keeping trees which are very important.

Mr. Poirier stated that this would be protected by town standards that are already in place such as the Planning Board, traffic movement, stormwater protection and landscaping.

Susan Robie stated she would like it stated in the Contract Zone and that the Comprehensive Plan should be considered. With the Contract Zone, there is a certain amount of latitude and she wants to avoid that by having it specifically stated.

A resident in the audience asked Councilor Siegel what materials would be used for the multi-use trail? Councilor Siegel responded asphalt would be the first choice then stone dust then gravel. The resident went on to say that cutting trees will impact the wildlife preserve and that deer are already coming out onto the streets.

Mr. Ballantyne stated that they would cut as little as possible and say as many trees as they could. He grew up in Gorham and played in these areas, he was not interested in putting in a bunch of homes without trees, shrubs landscaping, etc. The project needs to fit in with the community.

A resident at the back of the room asked about the school size and the school wanting a new building because of overcrowding. If these permits aren't an issue why is a new school even needed?

Councilor Wilder Cross commented this wasn't the meeting for that question, and Councilor Siegel said he could address it after the meeting.

Mr. Poirier began to formulate a motion; the neighborhood would be protected regarding the character of the neighborhood, varied lot sizes, and tree canopy...

Planner Eyerman commented that the homes do not have the same setbacks, the home designs are varied, with narrow streets and varied house designs.

Councilor Siegel said he liked Planner Eyerman's wording as it was more specific. He would like language that would protect the character of already developed neighborhoods, the tree canopy, homes that would be of varied design, narrow streets, and protect established trees.

Councilor Siegel MADE a motion to include language to preserve the character of existing neighborhoods, Councilor Wilder Cross SECONDED, and VOTED to approve. Unanimous vote.

A discussion ensued about how to create multi-use paths while preserving the landscape of the existing neighborhoods.

Councilor Wilder Cross stated she wanted to move this forward to Town Council so it doesn't keep getting pushed out.

Councilor Shepard MADE a motion to move the Contract Zone to the Town Council, Councilor Siegel SECONDED and VOTED to approve. Unanimous vote.