

Town of Barre
Planning Commission
April 19, 2023

The Town of Barre Planning Commission held a meeting on Wednesday, April 19, 2023, beginning at 7:00 p.m. in the Municipal Building at 149 Websterville Road, Websterville, VT.

MEMBERS PRESENT:

In person: Cedric Sanborn, Byron Atwood, Mike Gilbar, George Clain, Craig Chase, Terry Reil and Alice Farrell

MEMBERS ABSENT:

STAFF PRESENT:

In person: Cindy Spaulding and Brandon Garbacik

OTHERS PRESENT

In person: Aimee Green (Barre Area Development)

Remote: Trym Chouinard (applicant) and Tom Lauzon (BAD Board member)

A. CALL TO ORDER – 7:00 P.M.

Mr. Sanborn called the meeting to order at 7:00 p.m.

B. CHANGES TO THE PUBLISHED AGENDA?

There were no changes to the agenda.

C. APPROVAL OF MINUTES

1) March 15, 2023

On motion by Mr. Gilbar, seconded by Mr. Chase, the Planning Commission approved the minutes of March 15, 2023 as amended. Vote 5-0-2 (Reil & Farrell abstained).

D. NON-AGENDA ITEMS (PUBLIC COMMENT)

Mr. Rogers introduced Brandon Garbacik as the new Zoning Administrator. He then thanked members of the PC for their services to the community.

E. PUBLIC HEARING

Request by Trym Chouinard LLC for allowed use determination in accordance with Article 2, section 2.4 (c) whereas the applicant is proposing to use not allowed in a medium density residential zone. The applicant is proposing to use the existing building at 127 Birchwood Park Drive for a small woodshop and storage. The property is owned by Interstate Maintenance: Parcel ID: 005/055.01; AU-23000002.

This is a warned public hearing. Mr. Chouinard is before the Planning Commission seeking an allowed use determination in accordance with the Barre Town Zoning Bylaw, Article 2, section 2.4 that reads as follows:

(B) Any uses not specifically permitted in any given zone may be considered and allowed if, after review by the Planning Commission in a public hearing, the Planning Commission determines that the use will not alter the characteristics of the area and will not cause an undue burden on the community.

Trym Chouinard, LLC. is a mix of residential and commercial construction company. As the warning notes, they would like to use the building located at 127 Birchwood Park Drive (at the intersection with Miller Road) for an office, wood shop and storage.

The subject property has had a light industrial building located on it for decades. This parcel and several around it at one time were zoned industrial. The industrial zoning designation went away after the 2008 rewrite because of the lack of municipal services. The building has seen various uses over the years, starting the Tony's Pizzas, Schwan Food Company, and others. Most recently, but it has been awhile, it was used for Interstate Maintenance, a cleaning service. The building has been essentially empty for the last several years.

In November of 2020, the Planning Commission approved a request from Montpelier Construction to use the building as a workshop and storage. That deal never closed and the building has remained unused. There have been numerous businesses over the years interested, but nothing has moved forward to this point.

Below are the criteria used to help the Planning Commission with its review and decision. The applicant's responses are in regular font and mine are italic.

1. Emergency services:

N/A

The Town of Barre operates a full-time Police and Ambulance Service along with a call-paid Fire Department I believe the Town of Barre emergency services has the ability to serve this proposed use.

2. Water, sewer, or other municipal utility systems:

Onsite water and septic system

There is no impact on municipal utilities.

3. The character of the area affected as defined by the purpose(s) of the zone within which the project is located, and specifically stated policies and standards of the municipal plan:

The property is in a medium density residential area and was built and designed for commercial use.

The proposed use of this lot has existed as a commercial/light industrial use for decades. The best use of this parcel given the existing building and proximity to VT Rt. 63 still provides benefit to a small, light, industrial use.

4. Traffic on roads and highways in the vicinity:

There will be an occasional delivery of building material and the employees will use it as a start and end of the day.

The subject parcel is located on a gravel Town class 3 road at the corner of Birchwood Park Drive and class 3 paved Miller Road. The expected traffic will be minimal.

5. Zoning bylaws and bylaws then in effect:

N/A

The current Barre Town Zoning Bylaw does not specially allow the proposed use. However, after holding a public hearing the proposed use will not alter the characteristics of the area and will not cause an undue burden on the community.

6. The impact on neighboring uses:

There should not be a change in impact to the neighborhood.

The impact on the neighborhood should be minimal.

7. Minimum lot size:

N/A

Medium residential zoning's minimum lot size is 2.0 acres. The lot size of the subject parcel is 1.0 acres. The subject parcel was created when zoning required a minimum lot size of 1.0 acre and as such is grandfathered, a pre-existing, nonconformance.

8. Off-street parking requirements in accordance with standards outlined in Article 3, Sec. 3.9 of this bylaw:

10+ parking spots at this property

Barre Town Zoning Bylaw requires 6 parking spaces for a 2,930 s.f. industrial building. The site has ample parking to meet the 6-parking space requirement.

9. Loading/unloading facilities:

No formal loading or unloading docks etc. currently exists.

There is no specific loading and unloading docks etc. at this location and the use will not require any.

SUMMARY AND RECOMMENDATION

After reviewing the above, it is recommended to approve with conditions:

1. The applicant should consult with a Vermont Permit specialist to determine if any other State permits are necessary.
2. A change of use permit will be required.
3. Any other conditions the Commission would like to add.

ADDITIONAL COMMENTS

Mr. Chase and Mr. Atwood recused themselves from participating in the public hearing and removed themselves as acting members of the Planning Commission.

On motion by Mr. Clain, second by Mr. Gilbar, the Planning Commission opened the public hearing. Vote 5-0-0.

Mrs. Spaulding provided an overview of her staff report stated above. Mr. Chouinard stated the location of the property is a perfect spot for his construction company.

Questions/Answers

Sanborn: How many employees do you have?
 Chouinard: Five employees, not including him.

Sanborn: How many employees can the septic system accommodate?
 Chouinard: Up to eight employees and most employees will be working on a jobsite.
 Chase provided an overview of the septic system and state approval.

Farrell: Are there plans for future expansion?
 Chouinard: There are no plans for expansion.

Farrell: Will there be a dumpster property?
 Chouinard: Dumpsters are on the job site.

Farrell: Will you be paving the parking lot.
 Chouinard: No plans to pave the parking lot.

Gilbar: Will there be any changes to the building?
 Chouinard: The building may be painted and some landscaping.

Reil: Will there be a fence in the yard, gated entrance, or lighting?
 Chouinard: There will not be fencing or a gate. There will be cameras and lighting.

Mr. Sanborn suggested including LED lighting down cast on the building as one of the conditions.

On motion by Mr. Clain, seconded by Mr. Gilbar, the Planning Commission closed the public hearing. Vote 5-0-0.

On motion by Mr. Gilbar, seconded by Mr. Reil, the Planning Commission approved a request Trym Chouinard LLC for allowed use determination in accordance with Article 2, section 2.4 (c) whereas the applicant is proposing to use not allowed in a medium density residential zone. The applicant is proposing to use the existing building at 127 Birchwood Park Drive for a small woodshop and storage. The property is owned by Interstate Maintenance: Parcel ID: 005/055.01; AU-23000002 Contingent on the following conditions 1-3: 1. The applicant should consult with a Vermont Permit specialist to determine what if any other State permit are necessary. 2. A change of use permit will be required. 3. Install downcast LED lighting on the building Vote 5-0-0.

Mr. Chase and Mr. Atwood returned to the meeting as members of the Planning Commission.

D. NEW BUSINESS

Presentation by Aimee Green of Barre Area Development: Prospect Heights Development

Ms. Green explained that Prospect Heights Project Inc (PHPI) is a newly created 501(c)4 organization proposing to develop 30 acres of land on Prospect Street in the City of Barre for the purpose of housing. PHDI is organized to address a critical housing shortage by helping to establish, rehabilitate and support housing growth necessary to sustain a stable growing tax basis and work force in need of housing and to support development of vacant land to create a vibrant, safe, and affordable living community.

Proposed Project Principles

- Barre Area Development, Inc. (BADC) as the sponsor of the Project, BADC will coordinate all aspects of the Project, and act as the facility lead for all stakeholders.
- The City of Barre is Vermont's third largest metropolitan area, with a growing workforce needing housing support. The City of Barre will support varying aspects of the Project including but not limited to permitting review and approval, management of grant funds, Project timelines and approvals.
- Town of Barre, immediately situated around the City, and a part of the third largest metropolitan area in Vermont with a growing workforce needing housing support.
- Central Vermont Medical Center (CVMC) as the largest employer in the Central Vermont region, with a critical need for housing to support workforce recruitment and retention efforts.
- Downstreet Housing as they are key to strengthening the future of affordable housing, in Central Vermont by helping to create permanently affordable homes.
- Thomas Lauzon as a strong local developer, property owner and CPA.
- Fecteau Residential with over 50 years in residential and light commercial construction, framing, roofing, and siding. Fecteau has handled the permitting and development of over 2000 multi and single-family housing, and the construction of manufactured and modular housing in Vermont and NH.

Snapshot of Opportunity

Project consists of the completion of engineering, permitting and infrastructure renderings for a residential housing development for a range of housing from affordable to market rate. The project would have 50 single family lots and two multi-family lots of clusters with one for up to 32 units and the other up to 48 units.

PHDI is seeking letters of support for federal grant application to fund building the public infrastructure (roadway, water, and sewer) as the first phase.

Discussion ensued between members, Ms. Green and Mr. Lauzon with highlights:

- Update development drawings from 1991.
- Affordability of houses at \$250,000.
- Subsidized housing.
- Conditions using grant funds.
- Infrastructure (water & sewer).

Mr. Sanborn asked if members wanted to send a letter of support for the grant. It was the consensus the Town's letter of support was sufficient.

E. LEGISLATIVE UPDATE AND BILL REVIEW – Tabled to April meeting.

Mr. Sanborn updated members S100 bill is currently in the House of Representatives for discussion. He provided an overview of the proposed changes to the bill.

F. OLD BUSINESS

G. FOLLOW-UP

1) Central Vermont Regional Planning Commission report

Mr. Clain reported VLCT conducted a presentation on bills in the House and Senate, and election of CVRPC officers is coming up.

H. ROUND TABLE

Mr. Clain would like to implement impact fees as outlined in 24 VSA Chapter 131 Section 5203.

I. ADJOURN

On motion by Mr. Clain, second by Mr. Gilbar, the Planning Commission adjourned at 8:56 p.m. Vote 7-0-0.

Respectfully submitted,

Cindy Spaulding, Clerk

Cedric Sanborn, Chair

Mike Gilbar

George Clain

Byron Atwood

Vacant

Craig Chase

Terry Reil