

MINUTES OF MEETING  
SITE REVIEW TECHNICAL ADVISORY COMMITTEE

2:00 P.M.

JUNE 10, 2008

**EILEEN DONDERO FOLEY COUNCIL CHAMBERS  
MUNICIPAL COMPLEX, 1 JUNKINS AVENUE  
PORTSMOUTH, NEW HAMPSHIRE**

**MEMBERS PRESENT:** David Holden, Director, Planning Department, Chairman; David Allen, Deputy Director of Public Works, Deborah Finnigan, Traffic Engineer; Thomas Cravens, Engineering Technician; David Desfosses, Engineering Technician; Peter Britz, Environmental Planner; Steve Griswold, Deputy Fire Chief and Len DiSesa, Deputy Police Chief

**ALSO PRESENT:** Lucy Tillman, Chief Planner

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**I. OLD BUSINESS**

A. A compliance hearing shall be held to determine whether **Portsmouth Casey Home, Owner, and Heyland Development, Applicant**, for property located at **1950 Lafayette Road**, has complied with their Site Review Approval granted on November 17, 2005 and amended on March 16, 2006 to construct a 2 ½ story office building, with a 3,280 ± s.f. footprint and a 1 story 6,000 ± s.f. function hall, with related paving, utilities, landscaping, drainage and associated site improvements. Said property is shown on Assessor Plan 267 as Lot 7 and lies within an Office Research district; (This application was referred to TAC by the Planning Board at their April 17, 2008 meeting for review and a report back for their June 19, 2008 meeting.)

The Chair read the notice into the record.

**SPEAKING TO THE APPLICATION:**

Mr. Holden advised the Committee that they had sketches of four options and he would like to see them choose the one that they feel is most appropriate. Traffic and Safety is meeting in two days so the Committee's recommendation will be conveyed to them and ultimately this will be heard by the Planning Board on June 19<sup>th</sup>. Also, whoever makes the motion will be invited to the Planning Board to make the case as the Planning Board wants tire shredder. He suggested that the people from DPW should be prepared to make a strong verbal case.

Ms. Finnigan walked through the four sketches.

Sketch A closes out access completely on the left side of the building.

Sketch B shows going to a 14' width all the way to the north side of the driveway, permanent with curb and grass.

Sketch C puts the 14' in the middle and split it between the two sides.

Sketch D also closes off access completely to that driveway but keeps access available around the building.

Mr. Britz asked about the tire shredder option ? Ms. Finnigan stated that the Traffic & Safety Committee did not agree with that option. Mr. Desfosses agreed with that. Mr. Allen asked if it was unanimous. Ms. Finnigan indicated that there is more in the minutes and there wasn't really a vote as it was postponed. Mr. Holden added that they referred it to TAC so that we could make the decision.

Ms. Finnigan stated there was one more option which would be a gate.

Erik Heyland, owner, spoke regarding the tire shredder option. That is an end result but in speaking to the manufacturer you can damage your tires going in the right way if you go too fast. Then they would be in a situation to deal with the shredded tires as a property owner. He felt that Sketch D looks to be reasonable with the loss of one parking space. If someone drove around the south side of the building, they could always block that off as well. This would be the first approach at solving the problem. They could also put an arm at the back of the building. Mr. Holden confirmed that Mr. Heyland liked D.

Ms. Tillman indicated that both A & D eliminate parking. They have 143 on-site spaces and they need 100 for the function hall and 43 for office space, based on all professional office space. If there are uses that are not professional, that would reduce the parking. Otherwise they would need a variance for reduced parking. As defined in the ordinance, if those uses are not professional offices then the parking demand would be one for every 250 as opposed to one for every 200. Her understanding is that one tenant is a monument company which would not be professional office so that may reduce the required parking. She would have to review the parking requirements. Also, with Sketch D, she asked Ms. Finnigan if there was sufficient area to back out for the first parking space against the building on the left hand side in the front? Ms. Finnigan didn't know as the sketches are not engineered. They would have to check that.

Mr. Britz asked if they have a use that is not an office use, then do they have to do anything to avoid a variance? Ms. Tillman indicated that she could sit down and go over the list with Mr. Heyland.

Mr. Holden asked if they have to have 143? Ms. Tillman confirmed that was correct. They have provided 143 and that is what is required. Mr. Holden asked if they could find another parking space in there somehow? Mr. Heyland felt it was possible down at the other end. He would have to look at that.

Mr. Desfosses disagreed with option D and stated that he likes option B. He felt it needs amendments but he felt it is the safest. He felt D has too many conflicting movements with people entering the site, people backing out, and people trying to take the corner. Option D is the second best but option B is his first choice. He stated option A just doesn't work. The reason that he likes option B is because it doesn't eliminate any spaces and it makes the most sense. There are no conflicting movements at all and the 14' would have to be narrowed for hatched off shoulders on both sides so that would only be a 10' way, and the left radius coming off Lafayette Road could be dramatically tightened for right in only. That would make it more like a shoot than a right in right out driveway than it is now. It lines up with the through lane once you get on the site, which is why he doesn't like option C. He felt that when you are in the parking field, approaching Lafayette Road, and you have to steer into the other lane and you then barrel over a one way street that is heavily marked "One Way" and with "Do Not Enter" signs, he doesn't think most people are going to go up there as there is not room for two cars to pass. With a two lane road it encourages people to use it both ways. His preference is option B but he would vote for D if that's what others felt was best.

Mr. Holden stated they get customers coming to their site that are coming from the South and turning left into the site. Mr. Heyland confirmed they do. Mr. Desfosses stated that movement doesn't matter as you are crossing 3 lanes so you can make a wide corner and it is the right turn that you need the radius for. Mr. Holden asked if option B would be able to handle the left turn traffic that would be coming in? Mr. Desfosses felt it would with the modification that he indicated, which would be a 5' radius on the left side and the shoulders and the one way. The way it is striped now is really effective but the road is so wide it is just too tempting. He also thinks the tire shredders are silly and no one else is required to do that on this corridor.

Mr. Allen would go with option D. He would respectfully disagree with Mr. Desfosses as far as the amount of conflict as he sees the same amount of conflict with option B. The curve entrance in D is a little more of a physical barrier and makes it tougher for someone to make an honest mistake of going straight out. They will pull straight out and it may create more of a problem because it is so narrow and someone is going to have to back off. He prefers option D.

Mr. Britz agrees with Mr. Allen. His concern is it would be too narrow and two cars could get stuck in there. He would be more concerned with that. He asked about adding a stop sign or cautionary note "incoming traffic" so they would be aware of cars entering. Mr. Desfosses suggested a Yield sign. Mr. Britz felt that as much as they narrow it, some people think they can still make it and will continue to use the exit.

Mr. Desfosses asked if option D removes any more trees? Mr. Heyland indicated there is one large tree at the entrance that they can save.

Ms. Finnigan felt that the radius shown is what's out there now. The 24' radius on the right hand side, coming off the road, is the same. Mr. Desfosses was talking about the next one up. The gravel would have to be dealt with too.

Ms. Tillman asked if they can do option D without eliminating the parking space and cutting back the radius on the right hand side on the lawn. Ms. Finnigan felt that would be tight. She felt the left side of the building needs to be one way coming around the building now. Ms. Tillman referred to the island in the front on the left side of the building where it says 8' radius, if that is a one way travel aisle, it needs to be 18'. Ms. Finnigan felt it was 24' now because it is two way. Ms. Tillman stated once they eliminate the parking space they have to look from the island to the new extension they brought out so it needs to be 18' one way. Mr. Desfosses felt it could be. With the soft curb there shouldn't be a problem. It would just be the issue of finding the one parking space.

Deputy Fire Chief Griswold looked at option D being the most preferable option. He thought option B, with two way traffic in front of the building would encourage people to take that left turn. Option D forces them to go in a circle. They would still have an option to drive in and it makes more sense.

Deputy Police Chief DiSesa asked how wide was the entry road on option D? Ms. Finnigan confirmed it was 14'. Deputy Police Chief DiSesa indicated there was some discussion about keeping the road narrow to discourage people and it doesn't have the appearance of a two lane road. He likes option D because some people are going to push the envelope and it is the best set up to discourage people who may inadvertently go that way.

Mr. Holden asked what was the best way to proceed? Ms. Finnigan stated that Traffic & Safety will meet in two days on Thursday at 8:00 a.m. She will present whatever is decided here. Then that will get referred to the Planning Board. Mr. Heyland confirmed they will need a new sketch. Ms. Tillman suggested it be tabled for an engineers drawing but Mr. Holden felt they should move it along. Ms. Finnigan felt they could suggest tabling at T&S for an engineers drawing although Ms. Finnigan felt that the applicant has done due diligence so she doesn't want to continue to throw road blocks down.

Mr. Holden suggested that they take a vote and if it is option D, they will present that to Traffic & Safety. Ms. Finnigan confirmed they will need an engineered drawing. Mr. Holden felt the concern is whether they have to go back to the BOA. Maybe they should touch base with Lucy to get another space in there. BOA said they have to have a minimum of parking and they have to technically meet that magic number. Ms. Tillman was unsure what the BOA required. They have leased to a majority of professional offices but they can review the figures. If they can reduce by .6 they would lose a parking space. Mr. Heyland indicated he will look at the physical space of the building and figure out what the required space would be. Mr. Holden felt that might work.

Mr. Allen made a motion to adopt option D as the recommendation of the Committee. Mr. Desfosses seconded the motion.

Mr. Holden felt a stipulation should be that they work out signage. Ms. Finnigan requested that this be referred to Traffic & Safety. Ms. Tillman requested an engineered drawing.

Mr. Holden confirmed that if they can stay on target, they can still bring it up at the Planning Board at their June meeting. However, they are trying to work through a resolution and they acknowledge that.

The motion to recommend option D passed unanimously.

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**II. ADJOURNMENT** was had at approximately 2:30 pm.

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Respectfully submitted,

Jane M. Shouse  
Administrative Assistant