

1 DEVELOPMENT REVIEW BOARD
2 BENNINGTON FIRE FACILITY, 3RD FLOOR
3 130 RIVER STREET
4 BENNINGTON, VERMONT 05201

5 TUESDAY, JULY 19, 2016

6 MINUTES

7 **BOARD MEMBERS PRESENT:** Charles Copp-Chair; Barry Horst-Vice Chair; Bill Barney; Charles Kokoras; Ron
8 Alderman.

9 **BOARD MEMBERS ABSENT:** Dan Malmberg.

10 **ALSO PRESENT:** Dan Monks-Zoning Administrator; Chris Oldham; Linda Bermudez; Jennifer Krynen; Dain
11 Krynen; Betty Tange; George Gilman; Julie Thayer; Chris Ponessi; Dave Wynn; 7 other citizens and Nancy
12 Lively-Secretary.

13 At 6:30 P.M., Charles Copp called the meeting to order.

14 **1. MINUTES OF JULY 5, 2016**

15 *Barry Horst moved and Charles Kokoras seconded to approve the Minutes of July 5, 2016 as*
16 *presented. The motion carried unanimously.*

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18 **2. INTEREST PERSONS – APPEAL RIGHTS – READING OF WITNESS’ OATH**

19 Dan Monks read the oath.

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21 **3. DISCLOSURE OF EX PARTE COMMUNICATIONS AND CONFLICTS OF INTEREST**

22 None.

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24 **4. THOMAS & ZACHARIAH BURKE, BENNINGTON COALITION FOR THE HOMELESS, 966 MAIN STREET –**
25 **SEEKING DEVELOPMENT PLAN APPROVAL FOR A SHELTER HOME.**

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27 Mr. Oldham introduced three of the Coalition’s Board Members and addressed the additional
28 information as requested by the Board from the last meeting:

- 29 • ‘Modify site plan to reflect accurate property setback requirements.’ *Done.*
- 30 • ‘Note square footage of building on plan.’ *It is 2,408 square feet.*
- 31 • ‘Note ADA access on plan.’ *Added new concrete sidewalks up to the porch.*
- 32 • ‘Note paving of driveways 20 feet in from the right of way on plan.’ *Decided to pave*
33 *whole area, including 3 parking spaces, plus the area to the east of the house.*
- 34 • ‘Note number of parking spaces on plan.’ *Four.*
- 35 • ‘Note staff size and number of staff that will be at the property at any one time.’
36 *Approximately 4 give or take 1 or 2 depending on if the property manager is at the site*
37 *or not.*
- 38 • Explain how people coming into or out of the building are monitored to insure staff,
39 resident and neighbor security and safety.’ *There are 4 entrances to the building, each*

40 with a different alarm plus surveillance cameras. There will also be door knobs that can
41 be locked from the outside which will generally be used after business hours.
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43 Additional Board questions were asked:

- 44 • What are the exact number of beds? *We don't have an exact number at this time but*
45 *are pushing for 17-20.*
- 46 • Will you serve meals? *We will have a kitchen available to the participants but we do*
47 *not serve meals.*

48 Betty Tange spoke to the fact that all homeless have “some sort of problem” – mental,
49 emotional, drugs, etc. - and to her relatives experience with working with these problems in other
50 cities. The Board noted, that since Ms. Tange was not an abutting property owner and not following
51 the DRB rules, her comments were irrelevant. She was asked to be seated but refused. Mr. Oldham
52 stated that the Coalition sent out 95 letters to the neighborhood residents and offered to meet with
53 Ms. Tange to address her concerns in detail one-on-one. However, he did add that this is a transitional
54 housing where residents stay 1-3 months, are taught life skills during that time, and only get in after
55 passing a strict screening process. Those that are accepted are those that want to improve their long
56 term situation by receiving a “hand up, not a hand out”.

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58 George Gilman has lived on Gage Street since 1960 and is concerned for the safety of the
59 neighborhood. He noted the many vacant buildings that are available in other areas of Town and
60 wondered why those couldn't be used instead. Mr. Monks state that the other areas that Mr. Gilman
61 has referred to are not zoned to accommodate this type of use, whereas, 966 Main Street is. Mr.
62 Oldham added that drug testing is not done per se, but, all possessions are checked and those with an
63 addiction problem are mandated to participate in a rehabilitation program in order to be able to stay.
64 The Coalition has a 0 tolerance for drugs. Mr. Oldham also offered to meet with Mr. Gilman one-on-
65 one to address his concerns.

66 Mr. Gilman asked how the Shelter would improve the neighborhood, and Mr. Oldham noted
67 the aesthetic improvement of additional shrubbery, privacy fencing and paved parking. Mr. Oldham
68 listed existing shelter neighbors – Anne Mook, Jonas Spivak, Justin Corcoran, and Jim Woodard who
69 would speak on the Shelter's behalf.

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71 Julie Thayer noted that there isn't any transportation available in that area, so how are the
72 residents going to get to where they need to be? And, where are the program participants coming
73 from? Mr. Oldham explained that they are talking with Green Mountain Express and a few other
74 agencies to provide transportation, as well as, taxi use as needed. As to where are they coming from,
75 99% are from Bennington and transients – regardless of where they are from – are not going to fit into
76 our program.

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78 Jennifer Krynen reiterated her concern for the continued availability of the three parking places
79 in front of their bakery noting how that availability has affected their business. Mr. Oldham stated that
80 he is committed to not having anyone from the Coalition use those parking spaces during business
81 hours and would anticipate an increase in the bakery's business from staff, fundraisers, meetings, etc.

82 *Barry Horst moved and Bill Barney seconded to close the Open Session and to go into*
83 *Deliberative Session to discuss Thomas & Zachariah Burke, Bennington Coalition for the Homeless,*
84 *966 Main Street seeking development plan approval for a Shelter Home. The motion carried*
85 *unanimously.*

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87 **5. BENNINGTON COUNTY HABITAT FOR HUMANITY, 296, 330 AND 334 NORTH BRANCH STREET:**
88 **SEEKING SUBDIVISION PLAN APPROVAL FOR A 7 UNIT PLANNED RESIDENTIAL DEVELOPMENT**
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90 Chris Ponessi shared the following information with the Board:

- 91 • Two of the three properties purchased were torn down (a synthetic house and trailer) and the
92 third was rehabilitated.
- 93 • The plan is to take the three lots that were purchased and subdividing them into seven lots.
- 94 • The lots would go from 15,000 square feet to 8,000 or 9,000 square feet.
- 95 • We plan to add an access roadway which will slope toward the back and keep the frontage
96 similar to the rest of the street.
- 97 • Additional trees will be planted and some removed to build the roadway.
- 98 • We have been approved for Phase 1 from the Water and Sewer Department for the existing
99 area, and also approved for Phase 2 which is the construction of the additional residences.
- 100 • We assume that the houses will be 3 or 4 bedroom houses but the houses are assigned to
101 specific families and built accordingly so there may be some 2 bedroom houses. All houses,
102 regardless of the number of bedrooms, will look similar on the outside.
- 103 • The sidewalk/crosswalk plan has been revised and was distributed to the Board.
- 104 • Families that get the houses must build the house with 200 hours of sweat equity, they are the
105 sole owners of the residence at a rate that is affordable to them with a low interest mortgage
106 which is usually 0%, they must have income enough to support the house (usually 30%-60% of
107 the median income in Bennington), and they must pass background and credit checks.
- 108 • There is a family already selected for the next residence.
- 109 • The last Habitat house built in Bennington was on Silver Street. There have been more homes
110 constructed in Manchester recently that are appraised at \$210,000-\$220,000. These houses
111 are expected to appraise for around \$160,000.
- 112 • Letters have been sent to Green Mountain Power, Comcast, the ambulances, and the fire
113 department. All but the fire department have responded.
- 114 • There is a fire hydrant on the property.

115 Board questions were as follows:

- 116 • Why are there no specific setbacks? *Because it's a PRD specific setbacks are not required and*
117 *each individual site will be looked at.*
- 118 • What are the front yard requirements? *All dimensional requirements can be waived with the*
119 *specific requirement being that the density not be exceeded – and they are not.*
- 120 • Water and sewer access? *The house being built already has water and sewer service to it. All*
121 *others will be on the new connection that will be installed with the new roadway.*
- 122 • Where is the ingress and egress? *An ingress and egress are not required because there are only*
123 *four houses that do not have street access.*
- 124 • Will the roadway be paved? *That is the plan at this time.*
- 125 • What will the siding and roofing be? *It will be vinyl siding of neutral colors, i.e. beige, yellow,*
126 *light green, etc. with asphalt shingled rooves.*

- How long will construction take? *We will be building two houses here next year and one house per year for the following five years. We are trying to work with the CDC to help us build our houses.*
- What are the utility line plans? *Existing electric poles will service two of the houses and the others will have underground service. Water will be tapped from the main up to a hydrant and sewer will be going under two manholes with everything flowing by gravity.*
- Does the watershed all go to the lowest level? *Yes, to the drainage catch point via the rain guards, which hold 6"-8" of water that will be put on each property.*
- Is snow removal plans to bring it to the storm water area? *Yes.*

Dave Winn was concerned about the duration of the project, the height of the grade above the sidewalk, and the condition of the infrastructure that will be supplying these houses. *The project slopes away from the street, and the water and sewer lines must be certified and tested by the Town. Building of the roadway, water and sewer infrastructure is planned for next spring. Mr. Ponessi will send Mr. Winn a full set of plans.*

Barry Horst moved and Charles Kokoras seconded Preliminary Approval of the Bennington County Habitat for Humanity, 296, 330 and 334 North Branch Street seeking subdivision plan approval for a 7 unit Planned Residential Development. The motion carried unanimously.

6. OTHER BUSINESS

Mr. Horst would like to see the decisions made in Deliberative Session added to the Minutes, and Mr. Monks will see that that is done.

At 7:46 P.M., Barry Horst moved and Bill Barney seconded to adjourn the meeting and go into Deliberative Session. The motion carried unanimously.

Nancy H. Lively

Secretary

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176 ***At 7:30 P.M., the meeting was adjourned into Deliberative Session.***

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178 Nancy H. Lively

179 Secretary

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