

The Town of Washington

"THE FIRST WASHINGTON OF ALL"

June 21, 2021

7:00 p.m.

APPROVED Town Council, Planning Commission Work Session Minutes

- CALL TO ORDER: Vice Mayor Mary Ann Kuhn opened the continued joint work session for the Town Council (TC) at 7:04 p.m. Council members Jean Goodine, Gail Swift and Joe Whited were present with Mayor Catlin, Patrick O'Connell and Brad Schneider absent. Town Attorney John Bennett and Town Clerk Barbara Batson were present.

Vice-chair Judy DeSarno opened the continued joint work session for the Planning Commission (PC) at 7:04 p.m. Commission members Drew Beard, Constance Bruce and Jeanne Kauffmann were present with Caroline Anstey absent.

- Ms. Kuhn thanked Mr. John Foote for his responses to the questions presented by the Town Council and Planning Commission. She also thanked Mr. Ralph Masi for his comments sent to the Town Council. Ms. Kuhn asked Mr. Bennett to review the comments and responses he has received to date. She said that after his review, anyone could offer additional comments.
- Review of comments and responses for the Rush River Commons (RRC) Planned Unit Development (PUD) application: Mr. Bennett reviewed the 19-point response (attached) received from Mr. Foote and Mr. Bennett's comments regarding each point (attached). He also welcomed comments and questions from the Town Council, Planning Commission, and the public.

There are three major areas of concern regarding the project:

1. The layout of the 110 ft long commercial building facing Warren Avenue;
 2. What type of housing units will make up the residential portion of the project;
 3. How the project will integrate into the fabric of the Town.
1. Comments and concerns regarding the commercial building facing Warren Avenue:
 - After discussion, it was determined a detailed sketch was needed to have a better understanding of how the commercial building will look from Warren Ave. Concerns were raised that this is the first thing people will see when entering Town.
 - It was mentioned that there may be options to making the building appear more attractive. Suggestions of window groupings, a façade on the back of the building, a staggered roof and landscaping were mentioned.
 - There was a question about how close the commercial building would be to Warren Ave.
 - There was a concern that the project would interfere with the historic classification of Town.
 2. Comments and concerns regarding housing types:

- It was mentioned there is no physical description of the residential units in any of the documentation presented. Will there be 1-, 2-, or 3-bedroom units? Will there be a certain percentage that are set aside for elderly housing?
- What is the position of parking for the residential units?
- Is there green space in front of the residential units?

3. Comments and concerns regarding integration with the Town:

- It was mentioned that the current plan does not integrate into the fabric of the Town.

It was brought to the attention of Mr. Chuck Akre, the developer and owner of the property, that there was a discrepancy in the documentation regarding the width of Leggett Lane. In some places it mentioned Leggett Lane will be widened to 18 ft and in other places it says 20 ft. Mr. Akre said they were aware of the misprint and Mr. Stephen Plescow, engineer for the project, said they would be widening the road to 18 ft which is the standard for a Town road.

Response from Mr. Chuck Akre: He asked for clarification on what Mr. Bennett meant by “integrating with the fabric of the Town.” He also said his architect could do additional detailed sketches to give a better representation of the commercial building and how it will look from Warren Ave. He reminded the group that currently the entrance to Town is a post office under construction and two dilapidated buildings. The RRC’s plan would ensure RRC would have a nicer appearance than what was currently there. He also asked for clarification on the approval process moving forward. Mr. Akre also said that the current plan was to have two story buildings but they did not want to eliminate the possibility of having a third story. He also reminded the group that the majority of buildings in Town are right along the street; the commercial building is 20 ft from Warren Ave. He also shared he couldn’t provide more specifics about the make-up of the residential units because it depends on what the requirements are for the type of funding that will be used.

Mr. Bennett explained that the PC had until August 2 to make a recommendation to the TC. The PC could vote nay, aye, or aye with conditions. The TC then has 120 days to vote on the Special Use Permit application. It can reject, approve or approve with conditions. Additionally, RRC would need to go through the zoning and Architectural Review Board approvals. Mr. Bennett said the PC’s recommendation needs to be based on sound land planning. He also shared there is currently plenty of capacity at the wastewater plant for this project.

- Public Comment: Public comments included a suggestion for a terrain walk and a 3D model of the plan be built. It was also mentioned there is a concern of how the commercial building will integrate into the Town and the need to see walking paths in the plans. It was suggested that the Washington Baptist church on Mt. Salem Ave is 100 ft long and that may give others an idea of the size of the proposed commercial building. It was suggested that people may be thinking the building is much larger than it actually is. It was also suggested the block where The Inn at Little Washington’s gift shop is located is 100 ft long and that could also give people another perspective. A concern the project would give the appearance of two distinct (upper and lower) sections of Town was shared.

Requests for additional information from the RRC developer: To address the concerns raised in items 1 through 3 the Town would like to see site sketches, renderings, and building elevations for the rear of the building facing Warren Ave as well as the residential housing component.

Mr. Akre and Mr. Plescow committed to providing the following prior to the July 9 Planning Commission meeting.

- Detailed sketches, including elevations, from all cardinal directions of the project;
- Detailed sketches, including all sides, of the commercial building. To include any landscaping and detailed sketches of the housing units;
- Site visit with the commercial building being marked by stakes.
 - Mr. Plescow will work with Barbara Batson, Town Clerk, to schedule a site visit.

ADJOURNMENT: Ms. Kauffmann made a motion for the Planning Commission to close the joint work session and Ms. Bruce seconded and a roll call vote was taken:

Mr. Beard voted “yes”	Ms. Bruce voted “yes”
Ms. DeSarno voted “yes”	Ms. Kauffmann voted “yes”
And the motion passed 4-0 with Ms. Anstey absent.	

Ms. Goodine made a motion for the Town Council to close the joint work session and Mr. Whited seconded and a roll call vote was taken:

Ms. Goodine voted “yes”	Ms. Kuhn voted “yes”
Ms. Swift voted “yes”	Mr. Whited voted “yes”
And the motion passed 4-0 with Mayor Catlin, Mr. O’Connell and Mr. Schneider absent.	

THE NEXT REGULARLY SCHEDULED MEETING OF THE TOWN COUNCIL IS
July 12, 2021

Barbara Batson, Town Clerk

Attachments:

Mr. John Foote’s responses

Mr. John Bennett’s responses