

A regular meeting of the Bath Planning Board was called Tuesday, March 4, 2025, for the purpose of conducting regular business.

**MEMBERS PRESENT**

Bob Oxtan, Chair  
Phyllis Bailey  
Robert Gersh  
Greg Johnson  
Andy Omo  
Cal Stilphen

**MEMBERS ABSENT**

James Hopkinson, Vice Chair

**STAFF PRESENT**

Marc Meyers, City Manager  
Jenn Curtis, City Planner  
John Rutecki, Assistant City Planner  
Karly Perry, Recording Secretary  
Lawrence Renaud, Fire Chief  
Johnathan Carpenter, Facilities Director

Planning Board Chair, Bob Oxtan, called the meeting to order in the third-floor Council Chambers at 6:00 pm on Tuesday, March 4, 2025.

**Minutes: February 4, 2024, meeting.**

**MR. GERSH, SECONDED BY MS. BAILEY, MOVED TO APPROVE THE MINUTES AS PRESENTED**

**PLANNING BOARD UNANIMOUSLY APPROVED.**

**Old Business**

None

**New Business****Item 1**

**Request for Site Plan Approval – Setback Reduction in the NRPO – 163 Blackwater Cove Road (Map 7, Lot 45); Jack Kriskey, applicant**

Mr. Rutecki introduced the application to construct a 1482 sf dwelling with 384 sf deck attached and demolish the existing cabin. The applicant has requested a reduction to the waterfront setback. The property is located within the R3 (Low Density), Shoreland, and NRPO Districts and if approved will meet all setback requirements. The applicant is requesting a waiver for hydrogeological evaluation based on the limited scope of the project, which will utilize the existing septic system and not require MDEP permitting. Mr. Rutecki reviewed Staff recommendations, noting that the Planning Board will need to determine whether the applicant is eligible for the waterfront setback within the NRPO, whether or not to grant waivers requested by the applicant, whether the location of the existing cottage will be revegetated after demolition, and may include conditions to be met prior to the issuance of a building permit.

Joe Marden of Sitelines introduced himself as representative for the applicant. He then presented an aerial photo of the property on which he identified the location of the existing

cottage and proposed structure. He noted that the property is made up of two non-conforming parcels which will be combined to form a conforming lot. The applicant has requested a setback reduction from 150' to 75'. Mr. Marden stated that existing lawn, as well as any areas disturbed during construction will be revegetated to improve stormwater management on site. He then identified the location of the septic and existing driveway, which will be reseeded and relocated to improve the turnaround for emergency vehicle access. Clearing will be limited to the location of the new structure and any necessary earthwork related to the project.

Ms. Bailey asked the capacity of the existing septic system, as well as the location of the well.

Mr. Marden identified the location of the well on the site plan. He noted that the septic is designed to handle 240 gal per day with the same number of bedrooms proposed for the new structure. A replacement septic system was installed in 2005.

Mr. Marden then proposed that the Board include a septic inspection as a condition of approval for the project.

**MR. OMO, SECONDED BY MR. STILPHEN, MOVED TO FIND THE REQUEST FOR SITE PLAN APPROVAL WITH SETBACK REDUCTION IN THE NRPO AT 163 BLACKWATER COVE ROAD, MAP 7, LOT 45, TO BE COMPLETE.**

**PLANNING BOARD UNANIMOUSLY APPROVED.**

Mr. Oxtan opened the floor to public comment, to which there was none.

Mr. Gersh asked Mr. Martin to confirm the location of the existing cottage will be revegetated after demolition.

Mr. Marden confirmed that the area will be reseeded as lawn space.

Ms. Bailey asked what the timeline for demolition of the cottage is.

Mr. Marden explained that the applicant will live in the cottage during construction and demolish the cottage once construction is complete.

Mr. Omo requested that the details for revegetation of the demolition area be included on the site plan, to which Mr. Marden agreed.

**MR. OMO, SECONDED BY MR. GERSH, MOVED TO APPROVE THE REQUEST FOR SITE PLAN FOR THE CONSTRUCTION OF A SINGLE-FAMILY RESIDENCE WITH THE DEMOLITION OF THE EXISTING RESIDENCE AND WATERFRONT SETBACK REDUCTION AT 163 BLACKWATER COVE ROAD, MAP 7, LOT 45, BE APPROVED WITH THE CONDITIONS OF THE FINDINGS OF FACTS AND WAIVERS AS DOCUMENTED IN THE STAFF MEMO DATED FEBRUARY 25, 2025, WITH THE ADDITION OF A NEW #3 THAT THE AREA OF THE EXISTING COTTAGE WILL BE**

**REVEGETATED AND RESEEDED AFTER DEMOLITION AND SO NOTED ON THE SITE PLAN (EXISTING #3 WILL BE RENUMBERED TO #4, AND SO FORTH).**

**PLANNING BOARD UNANIMOUSLY APPROVED.**

**Item 2**

**Request for Pre-Application Workshop – 826 High Street (Map 26, Lot 1); City of Bath, applicant.**

Ms. Curtis introduced the Pre-Application Workshop for the City of Bath, represented by Gorrill Palmer. The proposal seeks to construct a new fire station headquarters at the northern portion of the former Morse High School. The project will be located in the R1 High Density residential district, which does allow for public safety as a permitted use. Ms. Curtis then noted that the purpose of the workshop is to understand the nature of and issues presented by the proposed development and identify any issues that will need to be addressed in future submissions.

Ryan Barnes of Gorrill Palmer introduced Mina Abdelmasih, Architect for Context Architecture, along with City Staff: Marc Meyers, City Manager; Lawrence Renaud, Fire Chief; and Johnathan Carpenter, Facilities Director.

Mr. Barnes began by identifying the location of the project.

Ms. Curtis explained that the property is uniquely categorized as a “through lot” which resides between two parallel streets. In this instance, the lot resides between High Street, Maple Street, and Chestnut Street. Therefore, it has three frontages, which creates a unique circumstance wherein parking waivers are required for frontage setbacks.

Mr. Barnes then described the project, which proposes to create a 15,964 sf, six-bay station with access to High Street for emergency vehicles, as well as rear-access for both smaller emergency vehicles as well as employee parking. He noted the location of the standby generator and dumpster within the site plan.

Mr. Barnes explained the front apron which accesses High Street, impacting pedestrian traffic. The apron will include a crosswalk for pedestrians, who will be alerted to vehicles exiting the project by flashing lights and sirens on the vehicles themselves (for which drivers are trained to look for pedestrians).

Mr. Stilphen asked if on-street parking would be an issue for exiting vehicles.

Mr. Barnes noted that parking will remain across the street from the facility, but any parking on the same side as the project would be reduced to allow for an appropriate turn radius.

Mr. Barnes then noted that in addition to the parking waiver, the applicant is seeking a second waiver reducing the 30’ curb radii to 20’ in order to reduce entrance size and improve pedestrian safety to the rear of the building. He explained that the 30’ radius is not necessary for the smaller vehicles utilizing the rear parking area.

Chief Renaud explained that High Street would be the primary entrance and egress for larger vehicles, with additional ambulance and service vehicles utilizing Maple Street. Maple Street will remain a one-way street as vehicles will have the ability to back into the bays from High Street.

A third waiver for setback reduction is being requested, again due to the unique location of the property. Mr. Barnes explained that the current parking areas will be reduced in order to soften the property and increase green space, including a memorial area located to the north of the front apron.

Mr. Barnes addressed drainage, which is still in the revisionary stage. He noted that prior to former Public Works Director, Lee Leiner, retiring, he was able to discuss the area in detail. In response to these discussions, all drainage will be directed away from High Street and bypassing Chestnut Street collection basins in order to maintain and improve current drainage on site.

Mr. Barnes presented a landscape plan including the location of the proposed memorial area, as well as a preliminary lighting plan.

Ms. Curtis suggested that the applicant may request a waiver for lighting if it is deemed necessary for public safety.

Ms. Abdelmasih presented sketch designs of the proposed building. The current sketch shows a five-bay design, as the additional bay is based on what funding is received for the project.

The Board agreed that the final sketches and site plans for the project should be accurate prior to final approval, noting that the applicant can return to the Board in order to amend the plan once approved.

Mr. Omo asked if there are plans for communications equipment on the roof.

Mr. Abdelmasih confirmed that in addition to speakers and lighting, there will be an antenna to the north of the structure, smaller than the current antennae, which will be located towards the middle of the building to reduce visibility from the street. All equipment will be identified on the plan. Mr. Abdelmasih noted that the apparatus height will be approximately 24', with administrative space reaching 28', as well as a 33' training tower which is approximately 300sf. Land will be raised slightly in order to avoid ledge during construction, approximately 2-3' higher than the existing base.

Mr. Barnes noted that MDOT permitting will not be required, due to the traffic volume, and that DEP permitting will be reduced based on the permitted use.

Ms. Curtis recommended that the Board allow the Public Works Director to determine whether or not peer review of the project will be required, to which the Planning Board agreed is reasonable.

Ms. Curtis asked if the Board would require landscaping to be prepared by a licensed architect.

Mr. Barnes confirmed that Gorrill Palmer is using a licensed architect for all landscaping plans.

Mr. Oxtan opened the floor to public comment.

Robert Keeble of 852 High Street identified himself as an abutter and asked about landscaping to the northeast of the project and how the project may impact drainage to the north.

Mr. Barnes identified the path of drainage, noting that landscaping would mitigate some of the runoff to High Street and direct runoff away from the adjacent residences.

Mr. Omo encouraged the applicant to reach out to abutters individually to address their concerns.

Roo Dunn of 57 Green Street and Representative for Ward 4 asked whether utilities would be buried under aprons.

Mr. Barnes identified the location of gas, water, and sewer. He noted that aerial utilities will go directly underground to connect to the building and utilities along High Street will be raised in order to allow additional clearance at the site of the apron.

Mr. Dunn noted the location of the dumpster, expressing concern for the abutters. He similarly identified the location of the electrical pad and its proximity to abutters. Additionally, he questioned whether screening would be planned for the roof to hide equipment.

Mr. Barnes noted that equipment on the roof has been relocated to reduce visibility, but that screening could be reevaluated. He then explained that the location of the dumpster is to allow for truck access during collection. He noted that the electrical pad is at the discretion of CMP, however the applicant will work with CMP throughout the process.

Myra Keeble of 852 High Street expressed concern regarding on-street parking at Chestnut Street. Mr. Barnes agreed that the only parking removed will be to facilitate safe egress.

Mr. Oxtan closed the public comment session.

Mr. Oxtan agreed that drainage is a major concern based on the elevation and encouraged the applicant to meet with abutters in order to avoid exacerbating any existing issues.

Mr. Oxtan then expressed concern with the noise from the transformer pad and suggested that the applicant suggest choosing a quieter unit.

Mr. Barnes noted that while this is the prevue of CMP, there are several options that can help mitigate noise. Mr. Oxtan suggested screening to the generator as well, if viable.

The Board collectively agreed that the suggestion to move the dumpster had merit.

Mr. Barnes cautioned that relocating the dumpster could create a hazard for vehicles existing the facility during an emergency.

Mr. Stilphen observed that parking to the west of the property includes EV-capable spaces.

Mr. Barnes noted that the number of parking spaces is below the threshold requiring EV spaces, but there will be two spaces designated as EV-capable.

Mr. Johnson asked if the applicant has considered solar panels for the roof.

Mr. Barnes confirmed that while solar panels are not included in the proposal, the roof will be fitted for future installation of panels.

Mr. Omo expressed concern regarding sirens during the evening hours.

Chief Renaud stated that emergency response must satisfy State law, but that the Fire Department minimizes sirens whenever possible during the evening hours.

Mr. Omo expressed concern on the rate of speed by employees entering the parking area and recommended prominent pedestrian signage.

Ms. Curtis suggested mountable curbs or curb extensions.

Mr. Barnes explained that either option may cause large vehicles to damage a tire.

The Board thanked the applicants for their time and presentation.

**Other Business**

None

**MR. GERSH, SECONDED BY MS. BAILEY, MOVED TO ADJOURN.**

**MEETING ADJOURNED BY UNANIMOUS ACCLAMATION AT 7:12 PM.**

Minutes prepared by Karly Perry, Recording Secretary