



TOWN OF MIDDLEBURY

Economic Development Commission

**Regular Meeting Minutes, Monday April 22, 2024, 6:30 p.m.
Town Hall Conference Room**

Present: Chairman Jesse Langer
Secretary Terrence McAuliffe
Commissioner David Cappelletti
Commissioner Nicole Griffin
Commissioner Armando Paolino
Commissioner Frank Mirovsky (6:45)
Commissioner Mark Petrucci (remote)

Edward Fitzpatrick
Justin Bridges
Mark Grocki
Eric Watts
Girish Patel
Jennifer Mahr

Absent None

CALL TO ORDER

The meeting was called to order by Jesse Langer at about 6:30 pm.

APPROVAL OF MINUTES

Terry McAuliffe MOTIONED to approve the March 25, 2024 minutes, SECOND by Nicole Griffin and unanimously approved.

ARCHITECTURE REVIEW – 764 Southford Road

Attorney Fitzpatrick, representing the applicant, introduced the team, including engineers from VHB and the architect. He stated that the application involved a reduction in building size, parking spaces, and impervious area compared to the previously approved plan. The engineer, Mark Grocki, presented the site plan changes, highlighting that the perimeter limit of disturbance remained the same, and stormwater management features were unchanged. The architect, Justin Bridges, discussed the architectural changes, including the use of precast concrete instead of metal panels, color schemes, and a pitched roof with a parapet wall to screen rooftop units.

The commissioners raised questions about the building height, mechanical equipment visibility, landscaping and color schemes to blend with the surroundings, air quality concerns near the nearby elementary school, traffic flow

and curb cuts, the potential for future changes by tenants, and the project's overall fit within the neighborhood. The applicant addressed these concerns, stating that the average building height was slightly over 41 feet, the parapet wall would screen rooftop units from most angles, landscaping plans were approved, air quality reports suggested compliance with regulations, traffic flow was designed to avoid residential areas, and changes by tenants would be limited.

The applicant was asked to provide the commission with renderings or visuals showing how the building's color scheme and landscaping would appear with the sound wall in place, to ensure it blends well with the surroundings.

Resident Girish Patel raised questions about the applicant's business model and the potential for denied curb cuts. Small Town Alliance president Jennifer Mahr reminded the Commission about ongoing appeals of the Planning and Zoning and Conservation Commission approvals, cited a state law potentially prohibiting the project, and claimed the public did not have a chance to comment on late-submitted reports during the Planning and Zoning hearings. The applicant maintained that they have valid approvals from Planning and Zoning and Conservation commissions, addressing previous concerns raised by the Commission.

No formal action was taken by the commission on the review.

NEW BUSINESS – DINOVA'S FOUR CORNERS GROCERY STORE

The commission discussed the closure of Dinova's at Four Corners and expressed a need for more proactive economic planning. They recognized community concerns about the store's departure and reviewed past unsuccessful efforts to expand the shopping center. The discussion highlighted the commission's resource limitations and the necessity for greater involvement in shaping future local business developments to align with community needs.

OLD BUSINESS – None

PUBLIC COMMENTS

Board of Selectmen member Jennifer Mahr advocated for the commission to engage early with businesses planning to enter or change within Middlebury. She emphasized aligning business visions with community needs and pledged her support for providing the EDC with necessary resources.

ADJOURNMENT

Terry McAuliffe MOTIONED to adjourn, SECOND by Nicole Griffin and unanimously voted at about 8:10 pm.

Respectfully submitted,

Terrence McAuliffe

Secretary—Economic Development Commission

cc. Town Clerk, Commission Members