

**MINUTES OF PUBLIC HEARING
HELD BY THE PLANNING AND ZONING COMMISSION
JULY 19, 2021**

ROLL CALL:

Members Present:

In Person: Patrick Kennedy, Vice Chairman
Jessica Scorso
Jessica Poland

Alternate Members Seated:

Electronically: Bonnie Potocki
Teresa Ike

Alternate Members:

In Person: Julian Stoppelman

Absent: Eric Prause, Chairman
Mike Stebe, Secretary

Also Present:

In Person: Gary Anderson, Director of Planning
Megan Pilla, Senior Planner

Electronically: David Laiuppa, Environmental Planner/Wetlands Agent
Nancy Martel, Recording Secretary

The Vice Chairman opened the Public Hearing at 7:00 P.M. Ms. Scorso read the legal notice when the call was made.

JOSE D. CORREIA – Development of a 1.01-acre lot into four 0.25-acre lots and installation of sanitary sewer, water services, and natural gas lines as necessary to serve four new single-family homes at 55 Parker Street. – PRD Zone Change and Combined Preliminary and Detailed Plan of Development (2021-041)

Mr. Jose Correia introduced himself, stating that he proposes to develop the property at 55 Parker Street.

Mr. Jerry Hardisty, CES Engineering, introduced himself. Mr. Hardisty stated that he and Mr. Correia have been working together and, in fact, had previously presented a preliminary drawing before the Commission. They felt it was responded to favorably, so they have put together plans to subdivide the essentially one-acre lot into four quarter-acre lots. The lots would be similar to surrounding properties. In addition, the homes will have Town water, sewer and gas lines. There will be very little disturbance, he added, other than extending the existing sanitary sewer in Parker Street.

Review comments from Town Staff have been received, according to Mr. Hardisty, and most have been addressed. However, more review comments were just received recently, which appear to be mainly bookkeeping matters which can be easily remedied.

Mr. Stoppelman asked whether there will be sidewalks for the lots.

Mr. Correia remarked that there are no sidewalks along Parker Street.

Mr. Hardisty stated that it was determined that sidewalks are not called for on this particular area of Parker Street.

Ms. Potocki questioned the number of bedrooms in each single-family home. Additionally, she questioned whether there will be accessory buildings, which Mr. Correia said there will not be. Ms. Potocki assumed that parking will be underneath the homes and Mr. Correia responded that the garages will be two-car.

Mr. Kennedy observed that the developer will be paying a fee in lieu of curbing.

Ms. Pilla clarified the sidewalks and curbing questions and explained that sidewalks are not shown on Parker Street in the Town of Manchester sidewalk plan, which is why they are not being required. Furthermore, granite curbing is standard for new developments in accordance with the Town's revised Public Improvement Standards. However, because there is no other granite curbing in the area, the Town will accept a fee in lieu of the curbing. Ms. Pilla informed Mr. Correia that the fee will be calculated by Public Works after approval. She noted Mr. Hardisty's statement that there are a couple of outstanding comments from Engineering, which are minor and technical in nature.

In the Manchester Plan of Conservation and Development, the neighborhood is in a character area described as traditional suburban, which is defined as having a density of 3 to 10 units per acre of primarily residential single family homes, duplexes and an occasional multi-family home. Ms. Pilla explained that the other lots in the area are generally in the range of a quarter acre at the most to about 0.15 acre on the low side, with a couple of exceptions. They average about 50 ft. of frontage. Other than those outstanding technical comments, which are recommended to be a modification of a potential approval, there are no major Staff concerns or outstanding issues.

Ms. Potocki questioned Staff whether adjustments need to be made for side or rear yards, and Ms. Pilla responded that it appears there is enough room for the most part, and there is nothing currently in the plan suggesting any projections.

Ms. Potocki asked if a variance would need to be sought in the event that the zone change was granted and there were to be projections, which Ms. Pilla confirmed.

Mr. Ron Cote, 37 Academy Street, adjacent to the south property line of the parcel, introduced himself and reported that he has several questions and a couple of comments. He noted a letter

Ms. Pilla composed dated July 14 describing the process. He inquired whether there will be any changes to the letter which would require a new hearing. It is important to him that the proposed building sizes do not impact the value of his home. He also questioned the anticipated selling price of the houses. He reported that he is okay with granting a zoning change for this property as long as the conditions stated in Ms. Pilla's July 14th letter remain the same. There is rock ledge on that property which he described in detail. He questioned whether the developer will have insurance that would protect the surrounding homes.

Mr. Fred Balicki, 19 Green Hill Street, introduced himself, noting that their home is four houses away from the proposed development. Mr. Balicki noted that the plan depicts the houses facing Parker Street. He stated that he saw a development plan that clearly shows the houses being sideways on the property. Mr. Balicki stated that the zoning should not be changed because it is not consistent with the surrounding neighborhood. He said he has concerns about the size of the lots and that four houses will be an incredibly tight fit. The proposal is in stark contrast to the present residential building patterns. The value of surrounding homes will definitely be affected: house sizes, house value, property values, etc. Property owners in the area invested in their homes and expected a return on their investment, he said. In addition, the proposal will change traffic patterns and traffic safety concerns in the neighborhood with no sidewalks. He noted that vehicles speed on Parker Street. Mr. Balicki commented on the loss of open space and noted that there is a great oak on the property.

Mr. Stephen Singer, 22 Green Hill Street, stated that he was drawn to the neighborhood because of its quiet character. In his opinion, this development would ruin the character of the neighborhood, which currently has nearly 100-year-old homes. It will replace grass and trees with asphalt and cars. He added that people buy their homes knowing the zoning regulations and he felt that this change would negatively affect area homeowners' property values after they made, and continue to make, improvements.

Mr. Mark Tobin, at the corner of Green Hill and Parker Street, introduced himself. He said the change will definitely affect him and Ms. Wilson who lives on the other side. He questioned the reason for applying for a zone change and speculated on whether these will be primary residences or rentals, which would affect the whole makeup of the neighborhood. He commented that he is grossly opposed to the zone change, as it will affect the appearance of the neighborhood. He reiterated others' comments about the lack of parking and traffic issues.

Mr. Tobin made the observation that, since the property was purchased from the church, it has sat idly for a number of years. There is an abundance of trash and bottles all along the road. He noted that he approached Mr. Correia about picking up the trash, and he felt that Mr. Correia's response was rude. He also mentioned that the property is rarely mowed.

Ms. Pilla read written comments from:

- Chrystal Balicki, who felt that the building of four houses on such a small plot of land will dramatically and adversely affect the surrounding neighborhood and will negatively change the residential character of their homes.
- Eugene DeJoannis, who commented that Mr. Correia plans to install gas connections. He feels that burning gas is damaging our climate system and it makes no sense to install

new connections. The State has committed to a reduction in CO2 emissions within 10 years, less than the lifetime of the gas appliances. He added that the approval should be contingent upon installing air or water source heat pumps, or all electric homes.

- S. J. Burke, 20 Green Hill Street, who commented that the proposal calls for a 1.01-acre parcel to be divided for four single-family residences which would be a quarter acre each. She said the houses will be less than 1,000 sq. ft., which is under both the minimum lot size and square footage for new construction in the Residence A zone. She listed her concerns: The increased traffic on Parker and Green Hill Streets, as she felt Green Hill Street will be a cut-through because of the light at the end of Parker Street; the addition of four driveways entering onto the crest of this section of Parker Street; the lack of sidewalks on Parker Street with the potential for more pedestrians and bikes poses a risk; the reduction of green space in the area; the houses built perpendicular to Parker Street making the end of the house on Parker Street; the proposed homes are raised ranches which are not in keeping with the area home styles; smaller homes and lots will negatively impact the property values in the area. She stated that, as a homeowner in the area, she is opposed to the proposal.
- Gary Cesca, 21 Green Hill Street, who expressed his concerns about the proposed development of what is currently an open space at 55 Parker Street. The area has been natural and undeveloped, and includes a very old oak tree which stands on the property. He felt it was difficult to imagine four homes on the space, and the proposal is in stark contrast to the existing styles of homes in the area. Mr. Cesca felt it would dramatically change the character of the neighborhood, which includes the historic Pitkin Glass Works. He understands the developer seeking a return on his investment, but not at the expense of the area homeowners. In his opinion, the Town of Manchester should purchase the property and keep it as open space.
- Barbara McCooe, 13 Munro Street, who noted that she grew up in the neighborhood and recalls sitting on the property watching the church steeple being raised. She stated that she is concerned about the size of the lots at 900 sq. ft., and also feels that four driveways with no sidewalks would be dangerous. Ms. McCooe stated that traffic will come from the Porter Street end at a high rate of speed, with a small crest near Academy Street which will make it difficult for cars to slow for vehicles exiting the driveways. She reminded the members that years ago there was a fatal accident in the area of 55 Parker Street. Ms. McCooe is very concerned about her walks with daycare children. She is especially concerned about the beautiful oak tree. Her suggestion is that the Commission allow two houses to be built rather than four.

Mr. Hardisty reported that the lots are somewhere between the size of the lots on Green Hill Street, which are typically between 0.15- and 0.2-acre lots with approximately 50 ft. of frontage. The current zoning requires much bigger lots, and will make a nice transition. In his opinion, the value of homes in the neighborhood will increase.

Mr. Correia addressed the concerns about ledge. He stated that they picked raised ranches to avoid a full basement. Before coming to this meeting, he drove on Green Hill Street and cars were parked all along the road. In his opinion, gas is wonderful and he has it in his own home.

Ms. Potocki questioned both the applicant and Staff in regard to the memo. She noted that, in the memo from Ms. Pilla on July 14, there is a reference to storm water and rain gardens. In addition, she asked about the depth of ground water and questioned why rain gardens were proposed for each lot. She questioned whether there are storm water connections on Parker Street.

Mr. Correia replied that, with ledge on the property, they did test holes and at 3ft. depth there is ledge. The rain gardens were added to allow the rain water to seep into the ground. He added that there are no storm drains on the road to tap into.

Ms. Potocki questioned whether Engineering Staff found any issues regarding sightlines.

Ms. Pilla said she did not receive any comments from Engineering regarding sightlines or any other matter.

Ms. Potocki further inquired whether the Engineering Department actually reviewed the plans. Ms. Pilla reported that she could not say for sure.

Ms. Potocki asked whether the oak tree has been listed as a historical tree, and whether the tree warden evaluated it.

Ms. Pilla stated that the tree warden has not evaluated the tree and she was not aware that the oak tree has historic significance.

Ms. Potocki questioned whether the basement design would require sump pumps and Ms. Pilla reported that there was no requirement for that, as these are slab on grade. Ms. Potocki further asked whether there will be any blasting required and Ms. Pilla deferred to the applicant and his engineer.

Mr. Correia reported that he has no plans to remove the oak tree. He added that he trimmed the tree 4-5 years ago. In terms of slab on grade, he has no plans to hammer or blast. However, he noted that, if he must, he will blast. He expressed that he does not know what is underground and what he will run into until he commences the project.

Ms. Potocki assumed that no test pits were done for the preliminary design.

Mr. Correia responded that he and his son did the test pits when they planted trees, and the ledge is 30-36" deep.

Ms. Potocki commented that there was no PE involved in the depth of ledge.

Ms. Chrystal Balicki respectfully disagreed with Mr. Correia's comment about the street. She reported that Green Hill Street is much wider, with parking on both sides of the road, and Parker Street is very narrow without a lane for pedestrians or bicyclists. She is very concerned about where people will park on Parker Street, not only residents, but for deliveries.

Mr. Cote stated that he wants assurance that Ms. Pilla's letter is in line with what will be done. He reiterated his question about the selling price, which had not been answered. Mr. Cote reported that, as he owns the largest house in the area, he will be most affected by this development. He is still concerned about whether it will be hammer drilled and whether there is adequate insurance.

Mr. Correia responded that, regarding hammering and blasting, all contractors have insurance. Additionally, if there is any blasting, they will perform a pre-blasting survey of every house. Mr. Correia assured the Commission that they will have a real estate agent evaluate the surrounding properties, assuring that they will not build homes that are inferior to the homes in the area.

Mr. Anderson commented about the process. He explained that Ms. Pilla reviews the plans submitted, gathers Staff comments, and writes a memo to the Commission to review prior to the public hearing. If there are outstanding comments, she will mention them in the memo.

Mr. Cote reiterated that Mr. Correia must have an estimate of his cost to build the houses.

Mr. Kennedy reported that setting housing prices is not within the jurisdiction of the Planning and Zoning Commission. He added that this is not an application for a variance. Variances are heard by the Zoning Board of Appeals.

Mr. Tobin wanted to know if this will be turned into rental property. He was also concerned about the asking price of the homes.

Mr. Steven Singer requested a description of the process. He assumed that the Commission either accepts or rejects the proposal and speculated whether the zoning has to be changed before this is approved.

Mr. Kennedy responded that the application is to change the property to a PRD, a Planned Residential Development zone.

Ms. Pilla clarified the application, stating that there is no request for a variance on this property. This is also not a regulation change, she stated, and the applicant is abiding by the regulations. The process is a request for a zone change to a Planned Residential Development; currently it is zoned Residence A. She added that the intent of a PRD zone change is to allow development in a density or a different layout that would not typically be permitted in residential zones. Ms. Pilla noted that, in this particular case, the request for the variance is to accommodate the size of the lots. There is a requirement for a certain lot size and lot frontage based on a zone. The requirements for a Residence A zone, which the property is currently zoned, would not allow the property to be split into a certain number of lots. The intent of applying for a PRD is that it allows smaller lots with smaller frontages.

Ms. Pilla continued that what is being presented is four lots, approximately a quarter acre each, with approximately 75 ft. of frontage for each lot. The Residence A zone currently requires significantly more than that. Each home is required to have 100 ft. of frontage and very few

homes in this area have that much, as they pre-date the zoning regulations. She assured those in attendance that the houses will be facing Parker Street.

Ms. Scorso stated that the Commission is reviewing a detailed site plan and an erosion and sediment control plan, and requested the applicant review those in detail.

Mr. Correia reported that erosion control will be standard practice, explaining that some require silt fencing (as in this plan) and some require bales of hay. He went on to explain that they will strip the surface, put up the silt fencing, connect to water and sewer, etc., which is what he has done for 50 years. Mr. Correia added that he has built many structures in town and noted that this is an easy project, aside from the rock.

Mr. Stoppelman asked about the siding and Mr. Correia replied that they use vinyl siding and occasionally dress the front up with brick or stone. Mr. Stoppelman questioned whether there will be shutters and asked about the construction of the front stairs, to which Mr. Correia replied that there will be shutters, and the stairs will be precast.

Mr. Correia further explained that the garage doors will be insulated vinyl with lights at the door and the garage.

Mr. Fred Balicki commented to the Town committees and those responsible that there have been many concerns mentioned about Parker Street as it is very narrow in this area. Speeding cars pose a great risk as they come over a rise on Parker Street. He inquired why there will be no sidewalks installed. In his opinion, people are at risk in that area, and Parker Street should be widened.

Ms. Pilla addressed the erosion and sedimentation control plan. She stated that there will be silt fencing along the downhill sides of the proposed houses and silt fencing around areas that may be designated for temporary stockpiling of soil. A question arose about whether there is a storm water system on Parker Street and she said there is not. There are no existing catch basins that need to be protected.

MOTION: Ms. Scorso moved to close the public hearing. Ms. Poland seconded the motion and all members voted in favor.

The Public Hearing was closed at 8:20 P.M.

I certify these minutes were adopted on the following date:

August 16, 2021
Date

Eric Prause, Chairman

NOTICE: A DIGITAL RECORDING OF THIS PUBLIC HEARING CAN BE HEARD IN THE PLANNING DEPARTMENT.