



PLANNING BOARD STAFF REPORT

To: Auburn Planning Board
From: Douglas M. Greene; AICP, RLA
City Planner
Re: 411 Center Street- Site Plan Review and Variance Request
Date: June 14, 2016

I. PROPOSAL- George Bouchles, an agent for PDB Rancourt Realty, LLC, is seeking approval of a Site Plan Review application to construct a 2,400 sf commercial building at a property located at 411 Center Street (PID #271-064) pursuant to Section 60-1277 (Site Plan Review), 60-1278 (2) (Applicability) and, Section 60- 1312 (Review of Planning Board Needed for Variance) of the Auburn Code of Ordinances.

The property is a corner lot located at 411 Center Street and East Dartmouth Street, currently has a residential structure on it and is zoned General Business (GB). The applicant wants to demolish the residence and garage and build a 2 unit 2,400 sf commercial/office type building with 12 parking spaces. Due to the size of the lot and the setbacks of the General Business zone, the applicant is submitting a site plan to the Planning Board and seeking a variance, which is allowed in the zoning ordinance (Section 60-1312, "Review of Planning Board needed for Variance"). Because this is a corner lot, there are 2 front yards and 2 side yards.

The setbacks in the General Business Zone are as follows:

Table with 3 columns: Yard Type-, Setback Requirement, Applicant Provides/Requests. Rows include Front Yard (Center St.), Front Yard (E. Dart), Side Yard (opposite Center), and Side Yard (opposite E. Dart).

In addition, Section 60-500 Dimensional Requirement of the General Business Zone, allows front yard setbacks to be no deeper than the average depth of the adjacent building. The applicant is choosing to not use that provision. There is also an old, abandoned 10 inch water line along Center Street. The applicant is keeping with the 25 foot setback to avoid impacting that large water line.

- II. DEPARTMENT REVIEW- The Plan Review Committee reviewed this application at its May 18, 2016 meeting.
- a. Police- No Comment
  - b. Auburn Water and Sewer- Will want to review the sewer and water hookup plans.
  - c. Fire Department- No comments.
  - d. Engineering- This proposed project intends to replace an existing single family dwelling with a two unit retail/office building on property at the corner of Center St and East Dartmouth. The site plan shows the water and sewer connections to the new proposed building going to lines in East Dartmouth. It is not clear if these are proposed new service connections or they intend to use the existing service lines to the existing house due to East Dartmouth being under a Street Excavation Moratorium until July 1, 2018. Given the age of the existing house and use by the same family for more than 50 years, I question the capacity and integrity of the existing service lines to handle the proposed use. Should the applicant need, or want, to excavate into East Dartmouth St for these utility connections prior to the end of the moratorium, than a more extensive restoration as allowed under M.R.S.A. §3351-A will be required.

The existing curb opening on East Dartmouth St is approximately 62 feet, which was the width of the existing driveway when the street was reconstructed in 2013. The new access should be restricted to a curb opening of 32 feet. The excess 30 feet needs to be closed with the addition of matching granite curb. This work, together with any other work done within the street right of way will require bonding and inspection fees as per Chapter 46, Article 5, Sec. 46-299 of the City's Code of Ordinances.

The application material does not indicate how solid waste disposal will be handled.

One of the proposed grading contours in front of the proposed building appears to be mislabeled, should be 210 instead of 212.

- e. Public Services- No comments.
  - f. Planning and Development- The Planning Office wants to make sure that there will be adequate screening of the property at 17 Dartmouth Street. The applicant is proposing a 6 foot tall fence.
- III. PLANNING BOARD ACTION- The Planning Board is asked to consider this Site Plan using Section 60-1312, "Review of Planning Board needed for Variance". The Planning Board should evaluate the variance request based on how it meets (A) the **purpose** and (B) **objectives** of the Site Plan Review Law and to include findings justifying the decision.

**"Site Plan Review Law-**

(A) Sec. 60-1276. **Purpose.** *The purpose of site plan review is to ensure that the design and layout of certain developments permitted by special exceptions, or other*

*developments noted herein, will constitute suitable development and will not result in a detriment to city, neighborhood or the environment.”*

Will granting the variance to the front yard along East Dartmouth Street (25 feet to 15.4 feet) and the side yard on the southern boundary (25 feet down to 15 feet) cause the design and layout of the project to be detrimental to the city, neighborhood or environment?

**Staff Opinion-NO**

**(B) Sec. 60-1277. Objective.**

*In considering a site plan, the planning board shall make findings that the development has made provisions for:*

*(1) Protection of adjacent areas against detrimental or offensive uses on the site by provision of adequate surface water drainage, buffers against artificial and reflected light, sight, sound, dust and vibration; and preservation of light and air;*

**Staff agrees the variance will allow for the provision of number 1.**

*(2) Convenience and safety of vehicular and pedestrian movement within the site and in relation to adjacent areas;*

**Staff agrees the variance will allow for the provision of number 2.**

*(3) Adequacy of the methods of disposal for wastes; and*

**Applicant will need to address this issue at the meeting.**

*(4) Protection of environmental features on the site and in adjacent areas.*

**Staff agrees the variance will allow for the provision of number 4.**

- IV. STAFF RECOMMENDATION- The Staff recommends APPROVAL of the Site Plan and the request for a variance as per Section 60-1312, Review of Planning Board needed for Variance, as it meets the purpose and objective of the Site Plan Law Section 60-276 and 1277 as listed in Section III. Planning Board Action, of the staff report.

Should the Planning Board approve this request, the approval will be subject to the following conditions:

1. No development activity until any bonding or inspection fees is determined by the Auburn Engineering Department.
2. Approval of adequate disposal of solid waste by Planning and Public Services.

  
Douglas M. Greene, A.I.C.P., R.L.A.  
City Planner

