

PUBLIC HEARING

Town Hall Meeting Room & Zoom Virtual Meeting Platform
Municipal Building
Minden Street, Greenville, Maine 04441
Minutes
November 15, 2023

NOTE TO PUBLIC: There is a video recording of this Public Hearing meeting available on the Town website: <https://greenvilleme.com/boards/planning-board-meeting-video/>. The video recording is the official record of the Planning Board meeting. These Minutes reflect specific actions taken by the Planning Board (the “Board”) at the meeting and identify the discussions at the meeting.

The Public Hearing was called to order at: 5:00 p.m.

MEMBERS PRESENT: John Contreni, Chair, Lurline Arco, Secretary, Noel Wohlforth, David Case, Brent Ireland, Vacant (Alt. 1), Vacant (Alt. 2)

MEMBERS ABSENT: None

MEMBERS VIA ZOOM: None

ALSO PRESENT: Mike Roy (Town Manager)
Ronald Sarol (Code Enforcement Officer)

GUESTS: Margarita Contreni, President (MLREDC), Mike Wilson, Senior Program Director (Northern Forest Center “NFC”), Edward Blanchon, Carl Henderson

GUESTS VIA ZOOM: Isabella Ronson, Program Coordinator (NFC), Vanessa Farr, Director of Planning (Principle Group)

John said the Public Hearing is for a Multigenerational Housing Overlay District. John opened the Public Hearing with background information. MLREDC owns property on Spruce Street. They sought a developer 5 years ago. No one came forward because of our current standards, only 12 units could be built on site, which is not economically feasible. On June 2022, representatives of NFC came before the Planning Board as potential developers of the Spruce Street site with a goal to provide middle-tier housing for workforce development in Greenville. Greenville currently has 11 land use districts and 3 overlay districts which are Shoreland Overlay District, Scenic Corridor Overlay District and Groundwater Protection Overlay District. The proposed “Multigenerational Housing Overlay District” would be the fourth. Using the standards of the proposed multigenerational overlay district, it would permit the construction of anywhere from 22-28 units (instead of 12 under current zoning), therefore a more economically feasible project that would result in more workforce housing for Greenville. On October 18, 2023, the proposal was endorsed

by the Planning Board, 5-0. On November 1, 2023, the NFC returned with a revised proposal. NFC proposed a reduced footprint for the overlay district, which was approved by the Planning Board, 5-0. That same evening, November 1, the Select Board also endorsed the proposal and scheduled this Public Hearing, which will be followed by a Special Town Meeting. Letters have been sent to abutters, notices have been put up around town and published in the Piscataquis Observer.

John opened the floor to comments and/or questions. John asked Mike Wilson if he would like to comment. Mike said they are a non-profit and work in rural areas of upstate New York, Vermont, New Hampshire and Maine and provide new obtainable work-force housing. There is a lack of and need for work-force housing, which is critical to local people living here as well as businesses attracting workers. There are limited areas in downtown Greenville for appropriate development. The overlay district provides for builders to come in with a specific goal in housing. Margarita, stated that the MLREDC has had two to three meetings with business owners, and there is no question about the need for housing. Some businesses have purchased houses for their employees which has prevented them from advancing their business. Besides businesses, this includes the hospital and school. At our last meeting there were at least 15 businesses present and they all wanted to sign up. Edward asked what the average rent be and how many bedrooms. Mike – no final plans yet but a mix of 1, 2 and 3 bedrooms. Combination of multi-units, mixed use sizes. We have a conceptual site plan. Edward – do you have a builder in mind? Mike – we have spoken to a few. Mike Roy reminded everyone that this Public Hearing is only for a zoning change. Mike Roy – the Town has been awarded a grant for \$991,708 for sewer and water extension, stormwater, new roads and sidewalks. Edward asked does the Town owns the property. Mike Roy – not yet but eventually. Edward asked if it would do anything to the abutter’s property taxes. Mike Roy- it shouldn’t. Noel said he was approached by abutters and his property also abuts the proposed development, and wanted to know if they intended on building houses 10’ from their garages? Mike – the proposed development is not near their property, but the other parcel belongs to the hospital, and they could put something there over time, but I am projecting. Edward asked where the entrance to the development would be. Mike – off Spruce Street. Carl felt that the Town tax dollars should not go for plowing the road. Mike Roy said we already plow Spruce Street. We will be getting tax dollars from the development. John noted that this project will exclude short-term rentals. Renters will be long-term. Mike said not to get too focused on the site plan. It is only conceptual. The overlay brings in additional diversity and allows an organization like ours ease to put together a development property. The grant is for this project only and will enable the Town to extend sewer and water up and down Spruce Street. Mike Roy – when we spend money for the project, we will get reimbursed from the grant. Edward – asked if the Town owns the property. Margarita said MLREDC purchased the property specifically for work-force housing. Right before the pandemic hit, they asked a few builders about developing the property but the way the zoning is currently, it would not be economically feasible. MLREDC was approached by NFC to develop the land. John – hearing no further questions, the Public Hearing was called to a close at 5:26.