



**Stratham Planning Board Meeting Minutes**  
**January 19, 2022**  
**Stratham Municipal Center**  
**Time: 7:00 pm**

Member Present: Tom House, Chair  
David Canada, Vice Chair  
Mike Houghton, Selectmen's Representative  
Pamela Hollasch, Member  
Joe Anderson, Alternate Member

Members Absent: Chris Zaremba, Alternate Member  
Robert Roseen, Member

Staff Present: Mark Connors, Town Planner

**1. Call to Order/Roll Call**

Mr. House called the meeting to order and took roll call.

**2. Approval of Minutes**

a. January 5, 2022

Mr. Anderson made a motion to approve the minutes of January 5, 2022. Ms. Hollasch seconded the motion. Motion passed unanimously.

**3. Public Hearing**

- a. **Stratham Retail Management, LLC (Owner), Request for site plan approval to construct a 10,260 square-foot medical office building and associated improvements at 23 Portsmouth Avenue (Tax Map 4, Lot 13), Zoned Gateway Commercial. Applicant's representative is Stonefield Engineering and Design, 92 Park Avenue, Rutherford, NJ 07070.**

Mr. Connors stated this is the first public hearing on this site plan application. The siting, size, and architectural design of the structure are very similar to what was reviewed during the preliminary consultations at previous meetings. The applicant is proposing a 10,260 square foot dermatology center. Mr. Connors noted that he has shared emails with the board from Jim Hewitt, from NH DOT who stated the driveway access is conceptually approved; Police Chief King stating that he has no concerns; and from Fire Chief Larrabee who indicated a preference that traffic not be allowed to exist onto Portsmouth Avenue and only exit onto McInnis Avenue

44 behind the facility. Mr. Anderson asked Mr. Connors if he understood the reason for Chief  
45 Larrabee's concern. Mr. Connors said not fully. He received the e-mail only today and had  
46 reached back out to the Chief for more information but had not heard back. He said that he could  
47 speculate that in some right-only turn configurations, there is concern that traffic will make  
48 illegal left-turns which would present a safety concern, but he said he couldn't speak for Chief  
49 Larrabee in this case.  
50

51 Max Puyanich of Optima Dermatology thanked the Board and stated the applicant's engineer is  
52 running late. He briefly introduced some of the team behind Optima Dermatology. Jake  
53 Modestow, of Stonefield Engineering and Design, introduced himself as the representative for  
54 the applicant, property owner, and current tenant for the property, Optima Dermatology and  
55 apologized for his late arrival. Mr. Modestow gave an overview of the site and application. The  
56 property is a 1.4 acre parcel with frontage on Portsmouth Avenue (Route 108) and McInnis  
57 Avenue that is a private road in the back of the property. There is a reciprocal easement  
58 agreement which gives rights to McInnis Avenue. Mr. Modestow stated there is a 15 foot grade  
59 change from the north of the property to the south of the property. Mr. Modestow stated this  
60 property is part of the Gateway District, which is the entrance to the town and the corridor with  
61 the goal to have a vibrant, mixed use district. The applicant is proposing the structure to be  
62 pushed to the front of the property along Portsmouth Avenue and to provide architectural  
63 characters that fit the district. The structure will be a single-story medical office 15 feet from  
64 Portsmouth Avenue to comply with the intent of the use and location. The applicant is proposing  
65 additional square footage for the front sidewalk area and it has been doubled in size from the  
66 main entrance that faces Portsmouth Avenue. The traffic flow will be left and right turns into the  
67 property and right turn only for exiting the property. A traffic generation memo was submitted  
68 to NH DOT and in the application to explain this proposed use is considered "low traffic  
69 generator". During peak hours there is no more than one car every two minutes. Sixty-six (66)  
70 parking spaces are being proposed, eleven (11) above the fifty-five (55) spaces required by code.  
71 There are two areas dedicated for snow storage. There will be two (2) proposed retaining walls  
72 for the grade change on the east and west side of the property. The applicant is proposing an  
73 underground chamber system for storm water. Mr. Modestow gave an overview of the building  
74 elevations and proposed materials. There will be two (2) tower unit components that will have  
75 wood and concrete looking materials to bring it together with the 110 Grille neighboring  
76 property. The roofs will be sloped with arches away from the central entrance. Metal awnings  
77 will be installed to break up and define the building on all elevations. The landscaping will  
78 incorporate different elements against the building to provide texture between the building and  
79 the green space/open space of the property. There will be six (6) area lights that are LED  
80 modern fixtures that will be down lit and dark sky compliant. The applicant is requesting a  
81 waiver for lighting beyond the property line that will only be located at the driveway locations.  
82 Mr. Puyanich gave an overview of the interior design for the proposed structure.  
83

84 Mr. Canada and Mr. Anderson voiced concern with the location of the structure so close to  
85 Portsmouth Avenue. Mr. Modestow stated the structure is 15 feet from the right of way and  
86 moved back an extra five (5) feet per the board's request. Mr. House questioned the  
87 inconsistencies between the architecture and the site plan. Mr. Modestow explained the  
88 elevations were updated and provided in the presentation to the board this evening. Mr.  
89 Anderson asked for clarification of the snow storage areas. Mr. Modestow confirmed the snow  
90 storage areas on the plan submitted before the board this evening. Ms. Hollasch questioned the  
91 setback of 110 Grille. Mr. Connors stated 110 Grille setback is approximately 25 feet back from

92 Portsmouth Avenue. The board recommended the structure be set back five (5) extra feet. The  
93 applicant explained the structure was designed with many architectural features to be attractive  
94 from either direction of travel. Mr. Modestow stated there may be room to move the structure  
95 another five (5) feet away from Portsmouth Avenue and they do not want to be too close to the  
96 septic and the well at the rear of the property. Ms. Hollasch stated her approval with the current  
97 location of the structure as it follows current requirements. Mr. Anderson asked for clarification  
98 of the septic and well location. Mr. Modestow confirmed location on the plan before the board  
99 this evening. Ms. Hollasch approved all aspects of this project and would like to recommend the  
100 applicant provide pedestrian connectivity with a sidewalk in the front of the property. Mr.  
101 Modestow stated a connection from the front to the back of the property is harder than it seems  
102 from the grading standpoint and may be intrusive. The sidewalk is will be required to be ADA  
103 compliant that the applicant will need to adhere to. Ramps with a handrail would be required. A  
104 sidewalk may be added with proper approvals and signoffs. Mr. House asked if the application  
105 had been through peer review. Mr. Connors stated no. Mr. House asked Mr. Connors to move  
106 forward with third party peer review. Mr. Connors stated the existing structure is over 50 years  
107 old so a demolition permit and process will be required. Mr. Houghton stated this is a great  
108 project that has come a long way and likes that there is no parking in the front of the property  
109 which enhances its visual appeal. Mr. Houghton understands the applicant's challenges with  
110 timelines and recommends the board list items of concerns as "conditions of approval" and final  
111 approval as per the town planner. Mr. Houghton stated he will not approve a waiver for the  
112 lighting and lighting needs to follow the current standards. Mr. Connors asked for clarification  
113 whether the plans submitted, dated January 10, 2022, have been changed. Mr. Modestow stated  
114 any changes were listed in the response letter to the town dated January 6, 2021.

115  
116 Mr. Canada made a motion to open the hearing up for public comment. Mr. Anderson seconded  
117 the motion. Motion carried unanimously.

118  
119 Dr. Brian Connolly, of Chisholm Farm Drive, stated his excitement to be a part of the Optima  
120 team. He noted that he is a Board-certified dermatologist who would be seeing patients at the  
121 new Stratham facility. Mr. Connolly stated that Stratham is a great community to live in, noted he  
122 was looking forward serving the community as a physician, and asked the board to approve the  
123 site plan application.

124  
125 Mr. Anderson made a motion to close the public hearing. Mr. Canada seconded the motion.  
126 Motion carried unanimously.

127  
128 Mr. Connors recommended the following conditions and the board discussed.

- 129  
130 1) The applicant shall move the structure back five (5) feet further from Portsmouth Avenue.

131  
132 Mr. Modestow stated the applicant would like to keep the location of the structure as they are  
133 following current zoning district regulations. Mr. Canada and Mr. Houghton stated the  
134 applicant is following current regulations and agreed with the structure's location. The  
135 majority of the board agreed with the current location so the building will remain in the  
136 location presented to the board this evening.

- 137  
138 2) The applicant shall revise the plan to eliminate the need for a lighting waiver.

- 140 3) The applicant shall add a sidewalk to cross the front setback of the building.

141  
142 Mr. Canada asked for clarification of the material to be used for the sidewalk. The applicant  
143 stated concrete.

- 144  
145 4) The applicant shall revise the driveway onto Portsmouth Avenue from 20 feet back to 14 feet.

146  
147 Mr. Modestow explained this request is from NH DOT as part of their requirement. The  
148 board requested the applicant to request the change with NH DOT and if they are not in  
149 agreement then it will remain at 20 feet wide exit aisle. Mr. Modestow stated there will be  
150 signage to direct traffic to and from the property.

- 151  
152 5) The applicant shall have third party peer review of the storm water plans, address any  
153 comments from the third party engineer, and pay all related fees.

- 154  
155 6) The applicant shall provide ready-block or a suitable alternative to be administratively  
156 approved by the Town Planner.

157  
158 Mr. Canada made a motion to approve this application based on the submitted plans dated  
159 January 6, 2022 with the conditions listed below. Mr. Anderson seconded the motion. Motion  
160 carried unanimously.

161  
162 Conditions of Approval:

- 163  
164 1) The exterior lighting plan shall be revised to eliminate the need for any waiver from the  
165 town's Site Plan requirements.
- 166 2) The applicant shall obtain NH DOT driveway permit and the permit number shall be noted  
167 on the plan. If NH DOT agrees to reduce the exit aisle to 14 feet in width, the exit aisle  
168 shall be reduced to that width.
- 169 3) The storm water report and plan shall be subject to a third party engineering review. The  
170 applicant shall be responsible for the cost of the third party review. The applicant shall also  
171 be responsible to respond to any technical comments that the third party engineer provides  
172 to the satisfaction of the Planning Department.
- 173 4) The plan shall be revised to include a detail for the retaining wall in ready-block. The Town  
174 Planner may administratively approve a change in material for the retaining wall if  
175 necessary.
- 176 5) The applicant shall obtain NH DES septic permit approval and the approval number shall  
177 be noted on the plan.
- 178 6) The applicant shall provide an operations and maintenance manual for the storm water  
179 facilities and an affidavit stating that the owner shall be responsible to obtain the storm  
180 water system in good working order. This document shall be recorded and the recording fee  
181 shall be the responsibility of the applicant.
- 182 7) The site plan shall be recorded and recording fees shall be the responsibility of the  
183 applicant.
- 184 8) The town's third party engineer shall conduct at least one (1) inspection of the site during  
185 construction to ensure that the storm water facilities are installed according to plan. The  
186 cost of the inspections shall be the responsibility of the applicant.

- 187 9) The applicant and the Town of Stratham shall enter into a development agreement and  
188 provide a performance guarantee to ensure the site is developed according to plan.  
189 10) Prior to the issuance of a Certificate of Occupancy, all improvements depicted on the plan  
190 shall be installed.  
191 11) Within 90-days of the issuance of the Certificate of Occupancy, the applicant shall provide  
192 a certified as-built plan to the town.  
193 12) The plan shall be revised to provide a sidewalk in the front setback, across the property  
194 line, as per the red-lined plan revisions dated January 19, 2022.  
195

196 **b. The Planning Board held a public hearing on the proposed zoning amendments outlined**  
197 **below. The full text of the amendments is available at the Planning Department and on the**  
198 **Town website at [www.strathamnh.gov](http://www.strathamnh.gov).**  
199

- 200 i. Amendment #3: Amendment #3: Accessory Dwelling Units. To delete Sub-Section 5.4  
201 Accessory Dwelling Units in its entirety and to replace with a revised Sub-Section 5.4  
202 Accessory Dwelling Units to clarify the requirements associated with accessory dwelling  
203 units and to enact additional requirements for detached accessory dwelling units to ensure  
204 that such uses do not create the appearance of two primary residences on a single lot.  
205  
206 ii. Amendment #4: Solar Energy Systems. To delete Sub-Section 5.14.4.2 Setbacks for Solar  
207 Energy Systems in its entirety and replace with a revised Sub-Section 5.14.4.2 in order to  
208 require small-scale ground-mounted solar energy systems to meet the minimum property  
209 setbacks of the applicable zoning district and to increase the front setback requirement for  
210 medium- and large-scale systems.  
211  
212 iii. Amendment #5: Route 33 Legacy Highway Heritage District. To create a new zoning  
213 district, the Route 33 Legacy Highway Heritage District, for parcels with frontages along  
214 the Route 33 corridor from the Town Center District to the Greenland town line. The intent  
215 of the District is to encourage historic preservation and adaptive re-use of structure through  
216 both greater regulation of demolitions and major building alterations as well as through  
217 greater flexibility in land uses.  
218  
219 iv. Amendment #6: Table of Uses. To delete Section 3.6 Table of Uses and Footnotes to Table  
220 3.6 in its entirety and replace with a revised Section 3.6 Table of Uses and Footnotes to  
221 Table 3.6 in order to better clarify permitted and prohibited uses by zoning district.  
222  
223 v. Amendment #7: Definitions. To amend Section II Definitions to provide definitions for land  
224 uses included in the Table of Uses to better define and clarify the permitted nature and  
225 scope of land uses.  
226  
227 vi. Amendment #8: Table of Dimensional Requirements. To amend Section 4.2 Table of  
228 Dimensional Requirements and Section 4.3 Explanatory Notes to clarify the minimum  
229 frontage requirement for residential parcels and properties in the Professional/Residential  
230 District.  
231  
232 vii. Amendment #9: Affordable Senior Housing. To eliminate Section 5.7 Affordable Senior  
233 Housing and re-number subsequent sections of the Ordinance, because the Ordinance

234 already provides for Elderly Affordable Housing and this section is duplicative. This is a  
235 housekeeping amendment to eliminate inconsistencies related to the land use in the  
236 Ordinance.

- 237  
238 viii. Amendment #10: Building Ordinance. To amend Section 16.2.1 of the Building Ordinance  
239 to add a Sub-Section A to prohibit the issuance of building permits for a property if existing  
240 non-inspected permits are outstanding on the property.

241  
242 Mr. House asked Mr. Connors to provide a brief update to the Board regarding the amendment  
243 language if there had been any changes since the previous public hearing. Mr. Connors said that  
244 there had been relatively few languages. Staff had made the changes to the Route 33 draft zoning  
245 language consistent with the Board's directives from the previous hearings. All of those changes are  
246 highlighted in the document. As requested, the Town's legal counsel also reviewed the zoning  
247 language and there were some generally minor changes incorporated based on her suggestions. Mr.  
248 Connors briefly went through all of the changes recommended by the Town's legal counsel. The  
249 Board agreed with the changes that were incorporated.

250  
251 Mr. Canada made a motion to open the public hearing for comment. Mr. Anderson seconded the  
252 motion. Motion carried unanimously.

253  
254 Hearing none, Mr. Canada made a motion to close the public hearing. Mr. Anderson seconded the  
255 motion. Motion carried unanimously.

256  
257 Mr. Anderson made a motion to advance Amendments #3 through #10 to the Town Warrant. Mr.  
258 Canada seconded the motion. Motion carried unanimously.

#### 259 260 **4. Public Meeting**

##### 261 262 a. Discussion of Pedestrian Cyclist Advisory Committee

263  
264 Mr. Connors stated the PCAC is appointed by the Select Board every year. There have been  
265 discussions to move PCAC from a town standing committee to an advisory committee of the  
266 Planning Board. The Planning Board would be responsible to appoint members and give tasks to  
267 complete. After board discussion and approval, Mr. Connors stated he will put together a list of  
268 committee members to be approved at the next meeting. Ms. Hollasch volunteered to be the  
269 Planning Board representative for the committee.

#### 270 271 **5. Adjournment**

272  
273 Mr. Anderson made a motion to adjourn at 9:00 pm. Mr. Canada seconded the motion. Motion  
274 carried unanimously.

##### 275 276 *Note(s):*

- 277 1. *Materials related to the above meeting are available for review at the Municipal Center during normal business hours.*  
278 *For more information, contact the Stratham Planning Office at 603-772-7391 ext. 147.*
- 279 2. *The Planning Board reserves the right to take item, out of order and to discuss and/or vote on items that are not listed*  
280 *on the agenda.*