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PLANNING & CODE ENFORCEMENT

WESTBROOK PLANNING BOARD

Tuesday, May 19, 2026, 7:00 P.M.
Westbrook High School – Room 114
125 Stroudwater Street

MINUTES

1. Call to Order

This meeting will be offered as a hybrid meeting, accommodating both in-person and remote participation. Where public comment is permitted, members of the public attending remotely will have the opportunity to provide remote oral testimony. If you wish to speak during a Public Hearing or Public Comment, use the "Raise Hand" function through Zoom (or dial *9 on your phone) when instructed by the Planning Board chair.

Zoom Link: https://us02web.zoom.us/j/81700741385

Dial-in (audio only): 1-646-558-8656 **Webinar ID:** 817 0074 1385

Roll Call Attendance

Robin Tannenbaum	**Present**
Nancy Litrocapes	**Absent**
Jason Frazier	**Absent**
Karen Axelsen	**Absent**
Kevin Price	**Absent**
Lucas Schrage	**Present**
Oriana Farnham	**Present**
Vice Chair – John Turcotte	**Present**
Chair – Larry McWilliams	**Present**

Staff: Rebecca Spitella; Director of Planning and Code Enforcement, Irlando Lobo; Assistant Planner

WORKSHOP

2. **Irlando read into the record: 26-000274 –** Site Plan, Subdivision – Rock Row South Campus Building SG & SR – Dirigo Center Developers, LLC: The applicant is proposing the construction of a mixed-use building within the Rock Row South Campus on Lot 8. The development includes a seven-story structure featuring ground level retail with a parking garage and residential development above. Tax Map: 042B Lot 14I Zone: Contract Zone 12 – Rock Row Contract Zone Use: Mixed, Retail

Applicant Presentation

Ian McKinnon (Jones and Beach Engineering): provided an overview of the proposed Phase III development, noting that the master plan remains substantially unchanged. A key feature is a planned pedestrian connection linking Phase III to existing Phase I and Phase II development areas. The application includes two buildings: Building SR, a six-story mixed-use residential building, and Building SG, a seven-story parking garage. The

garage will include ground-floor retail space, a transit hub, bicycle facilities, and parking to support Phase III development. The transit hub is intended to serve future public transportation needs within Rock Row. Mr. McKinnon described the project site as a previously developed amphitheater parking area that has remained stabilized since prior site improvements and stream restoration work. The site encompasses approximately 3.4 acres and requires limited demolition before construction. The residential building will include ground-floor commercial space, residential support areas, upper-floor residential units, rooftop amenities, and an interior courtyard. Streetscape improvements, including sidewalks, landscaping, and public spaces, are proposed and will establish the design template for future Phase III development. He reviewed utility and stormwater infrastructure plans, explaining that services will connect through the private roadway network currently under review by the City. Coordination has occurred with applicable utility providers and municipal departments. Mr. McKinnon noted that the project requires subdivision and site plan approval, amendments to existing MaineDOT traffic movement permits, and a major amendment to the DEP stormwater permit for Phase III. A master stormwater application for the entire Phase III area is anticipated to be submitted in July.

Amanda Sanders (Arrowstreet): presented the proposed streetscape and landscape design for the site. The development is bordered on three sides by a retail-oriented streetscape featuring tree-lined sidewalks along Rock Row Boulevard and Quarry Drive. She explained that the design accommodates existing grade changes while maintaining ADA-accessible pedestrian routes, with sidewalk slopes not exceeding 2%. The streetscape will incorporate a combination of concrete and decorative paving patterns to create visual interest and gathering spaces. A raised crosswalk is proposed along Quarry Drive to enhance pedestrian safety and traffic calming. The crosswalk will connect to a future parklet and trail connection leading toward Nathan's Brook, supporting integration with the broader Rock Row trail network and future Phase III development. Ms. Sanders reviewed several site sections, noting the relationship between the building, service road, and adjacent rail corridor. The design includes a seven-foot sidewalk and landscaped buffer along the service road. Around the remainder of the building, a minimum 18-foot pedestrian zone is provided between the building façade and curb line, incorporating landscaped buffers to separate pedestrian and vehicular areas while accommodating site grade changes.

Timothy Reagen (Amenta Emma Architects): presented the architectural design for the six-story mixed-use residential building. The ground floor includes retail space along Quarry Drive, with corner locations designed to accommodate food and beverage uses and potential outdoor seating. A recessed plaza area between the retail and residential components is proposed to create an active public gathering space. The residential component includes primary and secondary lobby entrances, residential amenities, building service areas, and five loft-style units along the north side of the building. Upper floors contain a mix of studio, one-bedroom, and two-bedroom apartments, totaling approximately 276 units. A rooftop deck overlooking the quarry is proposed as a resident amenity. Mr. Reagen explained that the building’s massing and architectural character draw inspiration from the quarry setting. Design features, including façade recesses, material transitions, and vertical architectural elements, are intended to reduce the perceived scale of the building and create a more pedestrian-oriented appearance. The proposed material palette consists primarily of charcoal and wood-tone finishes, reflecting natural Maine landscapes and the site's quarry context. Retail storefronts are framed with a distinct architectural treatment to provide flexibility for future tenants while maintaining a cohesive building design. Renderings illustrated active street frontages along Quarry Drive, residential entrances, rooftop amenities, and pedestrian-oriented retail spaces. Elevations demonstrated the use of façade articulation, material variation, and vertical design elements to create visual interest and break up the length of the building.

Amanda Sanders: presented the design of the seven-story parking garage, noting that the structure includes ground-floor retail space along Quarry Drive and a primary garage entrance adjacent to the residential building. The garage and residential building are connected only at the ground floor, allowing the structures to function independently and accommodate site-specific foundation conditions. The garage also incorporates a public transit hub along Rock Row Boulevard. Proposed amenities include indoor waiting areas, bicycle storage, restrooms, vending services, and potential ticketing facilities. The transit hub is intended to serve both Rock Row users and the broader public, supporting access to the site and regional trail connections. A primary vehicular entrance is proposed from Rock Row Boulevard, with a potential secondary access point from the service road still under

evaluation. Ms. Sanders reviewed the garage architecture, explaining that the design incorporates vertical elements and patterned precast materials inspired by the adjacent residential building and the quarry setting. Ground-floor retail façades will utilize a mix of materials, including wood, fiber cement, brick, and metal accents, to create visual interest and activate the streetscape. Architectural renderings illustrated the garage's relationship to Quarry Drive and Rock Row Boulevard, highlighting the retail frontage, transit hub, pedestrian experience, and a prominent stair tower intended to serve as a visual landmark along the boulevard.

Staff Comment

Rebecca Spitella: stated that the project represents an important first step in the implementation of Phase III of the Rock Row master plan and expressed support for its continued progress. Rebecca explained that the South Campus of Rock Row has been subdivided into multiple parcels, each requiring separate site plan review and approval. Additional Phase III applications, including a subdivision amendment to adjust lot lines, are expected to come before the Board in future meetings. Rebecca noted that while the various site plans will be reviewed independently, they contain interconnected infrastructure and development elements. Coordination among the applicants, staff, and the Planning Board will be necessary to address the relationship between individual approvals and the overall Phase III development.

No Public Comment

Board Comment

John Turcotte: commented on the challenges associated with evaluating the project within the context of phased development. He noted that the current orientation of the proposed buildings may make it difficult for the public and the Board to understand how the site will function once surrounding parcels are developed. He observed that portions of the building currently perceived as service or rear areas will ultimately be screened or integrated into future development on adjacent parcels. John also inquired about the function of the proposed parking garage and asked whether it is intended to serve the residential building and associated development within the area, and if it will be free parking.

Amanda Sanders: responded that the proposed parking garage will provide approximately 700 parking spaces and is intended to serve the residential building, ground-floor retail uses, and future development within Phase III. She noted that the garage is planned to accommodate parking demand for additional office and retail uses anticipated on nearby parcels and is expected to function as the primary parking facility for the Phase III development area. Pricing for the parking garage is still to be determined.

John Turcotte: commented favorably on the architectural design of the residential building, particularly the use of façade articulation and massing elements to reduce the perceived scale of the structure. He noted that the building is substantial in size and expressed appreciation for the efforts made to break up its mass and create a more visually appealing design.

Lucas Schrage: commended the applicant for the inclusion of the transit hub, noting the commitment of significant square footage to a public amenity and expressing support for the proposal. He also raised a general comment regarding residential parking management and encouraged consideration of complementary parking strategies for residents, noting that similar developments in other urban contexts often implement separate parking arrangements, particularly within higher-end residential projects. He acknowledged the potential balancing effect of the proposed transit hub in addressing transportation needs. Lucas further expressed support for the proposed material palette, specifically the use of wood-tone elements in combination with charcoal finishes, stating that the variation provides visual interest and differentiation from other comparable developments.

Oriana Farnham: commented on existing transit conditions in the surrounding area, noting that the current bus stop along Brighton Avenue is inadequate, citing limited pedestrian space, lack of seating, and challenging traffic conditions. She expressed support for the inclusion of the proposed transit hub, particularly its covered waiting areas and bicycle facilities, but raised questions regarding how the facility would attract users given its location relative to existing transit demand. She noted that nearby residents may have more convenient access to existing stops than to the proposed hub.

Oriana Farnham: further commented on the character of the proposed development, stating that it appears to be a higher-end residential project, and questioned the anticipated level of transit use by future residents. She encouraged consideration of how the transit hub could be designed and programmed to better serve surrounding neighborhood residents and ensure it is accessible, welcoming, and functional as a broader community amenity.

Nick LaFerriere (Waterstone Properties Group): responded that additional bus stops are planned throughout the Rock Row development to support employees, retail patrons, visitors, and residents. He stated that the intent of the transit hub and related infrastructure is to encourage multimodal transportation options across the site. He noted that providing parking in conjunction with transit and bicycle facilities is intended to support broader access strategies, including allowing users to park and then utilize walking, biking, or transit connections within and beyond the development area.

Oriana Farnham: reiterated support for the proposed transit hub and emphasized the importance of ensuring adequate complementary parking to support its accessibility and intended use. She expressed concern that the facility should be designed to effectively serve its target users and not remain underutilized. She also inquired about the proposed retail program, asking how many retail tenants are anticipated and the approximate extent of retail frontage wrapping around the building.

Nick LaFerriere: responded that the current plan anticipates approximately six retail spaces associated with the residential building and an additional three retail spaces in front of the parking garage. He noted that the final configuration remains flexible and will depend on tenant requirements, including potential adjustments to unit sizes and layouts during the leasing process. He explained that retail space demising is being evaluated to accommodate future tenants, as leasing demand will ultimately determine how the spaces are subdivided or combined.

Oriana Farnham: commented on the importance of tenant mix in the proposed retail program. She referenced the existing Market Basket as an example of an accessible, value-oriented anchor tenant that contributes to the overall inclusivity and broad appeal of Rock Row. She noted that while higher-end or national retailers may be appropriate within the development context, it is important to maintain a balanced mix of tenants to ensure the project remains accessible to a wide range of users and does not become exclusively oriented toward higher-income clientele.

Nick LaFerriere: responded that the applicant team recognizes the importance of including local tenants within the retail program. He stated that maintaining a mix of local and national businesses is a key objective to preserve the character and accessibility associated with downtown Portland and Westbrook.

Oriana Farnham: noted that providing appropriately sized retail spaces may help facilitate participation by local businesses.

Nick LaFerriere: explained that the configuration of different buildings within the development may naturally support a mix of uses, with food and beverage tenants more likely to be located in certain areas and other retail uses situated beneath the residential components. He stated that this approach is intended to create a balanced tenant mix across the overall site.

Robin Tannenbaum: stated that the project is exciting and noted support for the applicant's comments regarding retail diversity, while observing that existing retail within Rock Row is primarily composed of national chain tenants. She expressed mixed views regarding the proposed transit hub, noting support for multimodal

transportation in principle but raising concerns about potential impacts to existing bus route efficiency due to additional stops. She referenced personal experience with bus transit and noted that ridership patterns in the area may differ from larger urban systems. Robin suggested that additional strategies could be explored to encourage transit use, including potential coordination with local bus services to support resident access to nearby amenities such as Market Basket, potentially through fare or service incentives.

Larry McWilliams: commented on existing traffic conditions in the vicinity of Market Basket and Rock Row Boulevard, noting congestion and challenges associated with vehicle circulation in the area. He expressed support for the proposed dual access points to the parking garage, stating that additional ingress and egress options would improve circulation and long-term operational efficiency given anticipated traffic volumes. He noted the importance of effective site access management in light of the scale of the proposed development, including the parking demand associated with approximately 700 spaces and future activity within the quarry area. Larry also raised questions regarding parking management within the proposed garage, including how long-term or unauthorized parking would be prevented and whether a control or monitoring system would be implemented. He further suggested incorporating public art elements, such as murals, into the parking garage design to improve its visual appearance and mitigate the utilitarian character of structured parking facilities.

Robin Tannenbaum: noted that Westbrook has an established tradition of public art, including murals throughout the city. She referenced the annual Jane's Walk event and associated programming highlighting local urbanism and mural installations. She encouraged consideration of incorporating similar public art elements into the project to reflect and connect with the local context and community identity.

3. Planner's Business

City Planner, Rebecca Spitella, delivered a presentation to the Board about community growth and development trends.

Meeting Adjourned.

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