



Planning & Code Enforcement

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PLANNING & CODE ENFORCEMENT

WESTBROOK PLANNING BOARD

Tuesday, April 7, 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	Absent
Nancy Litrocapes	Absent
Jason Frazier	Present
Karen Axelsen	Present
Kevin Price	Present
Lucas Schrage	Present
Oriana Farnham	Absent
Vice Chair – John Turcotte	Absent
Chair – Larry McWilliams	Present

Staff: **Jennie Franceschi**; Director of Planning and Code Enforcement, **Becca Spitella**; Senior Planner, **Irlando Lobo**; Planning and Code Office Coordinator.

2. Approval of Minutes

Motion by Lucas Shrage
2nd by Kevin Price

Roll Call Vote

Jason Frazier	Yes
Karen Axelsen	Yes
Kevin Price	Yes
Lucas Schrage	Yes
Chair – Larry McWilliams	Yes

NEW BUSINESS

3. **Becca read into the record:** 26-000106 – Conditional Use – 33 Elmwood Ave – Redeemer Church: The applicant is requesting a Place of Workshop conditional use be located in the front suite located at 33 Elmwood Avenue adjacent to the existing restaurant use. Tax Map: 056 Lot: 036 Zone: Highway Services Use: Place of Worship

Applicant Presentation

Joel Miller, Pastor of Redeemer Church, presented a proposal to use 33 Elmwood, Suite 2 as a place of worship for Sunday services and weekly meetings. The applicant has coordinated with the Planning Committee and Code Enforcement on required site improvements, including installation of a double-door entrance to meet egress requirements (pending permits). Additionally, the applicant proposes constructing an approximately 18.5' x 15' room at the rear of the building for use as a childcare space during services. Plans were submitted to Code Enforcement. No other improvements were noted. The applicant expressed appreciation for the Board's assistance and support.

No Staff Comment

No Public Comment

No Board Comment

Motion by Kevin Price
2nd by Lucas Shrage

Roll Call Vote

Jason Frazier	Yes
Karen Axelsen	Yes
Kevin Price	Yes
Lucas Schrage	Yes
Chair – Larry McWilliams	Yes

4. **Becca read into the record:** 25-000758 – Site Plan, Subdivision, Conditional Use – 112 Pierce Street – Craig Holman: The applicant is requesting a 10-unit multifamily structure and an additional single-family residence located behind an existing duplex located at 112 Pierce Street for a total of 11 new units. Tax Map: 038 Lots: 147 & 108 (to be merged) Zone: Residential Growth Area 1 Use: Dwelling, Multiple-Family

Applicant Presentation

Dustin Roma of DM Roma Consulting Engineers, representing Craig Holman (GOPI LLC and Weld LLC), presented the application for 112 Pierce Street. The project was previously reviewed at sketch plan and during a site walk. Updates include completed architectural plans, stormwater management design, and utility layout. The proposal retains the existing two-unit structure near Pierce Street, with minor modifications and partial removal to accommodate a new access driveway. A new parking area will be constructed behind the existing building. A single-family home is proposed along the driveway, with a 10-unit multifamily building at the rear of the site, including associated parking, turnaround area, dumpster enclosure, and landscaping. Design revisions since sketch plan include consolidating building access to a single front entrance and eliminating side and rear unit entrances. Exterior walkways will provide access to storage and utility areas. Outstanding items addressed prior to permitting include final sprinkler system design and verification of the existing sewer line condition. The

applicant addressed neighbor concerns, noting prior project experience, no known outstanding financial issues, and a willingness to enhance buffering if needed. Regarding drainage, the applicant stated the project is designed to avoid negative impacts and manage stormwater appropriately, while noting existing drainage issues on adjacent properties are beyond the scope of this project.

Staff Comment

Jennie Franceschi provided clarification on drainage review standards, noting that the City's authority is limited to ensuring post-development stormwater flow does not exceed pre-development conditions. Off-site drainage issues, including potential obstructions on neighboring properties, are outside the applicant's responsibility and Planning Board jurisdiction, and may require coordination among affected property owners. She also confirmed that previously noted liens on the property have been resolved. The Board was directed to the staff memo, including a proposed motion (page 4) and findings of fact, conditions, and conclusions (pages 5–10), for consideration.

Public Comment

Rothana Chap (34 Mayberry Road) presented photos showing current ponding conditions in his backyard, noting that standing water can remain for weeks or months during wetter seasons. He expressed concern that the proposed development, which sits approximately 14–16 feet higher in elevation, could worsen existing drainage issues. He noted his property relies on a septic system and raised concerns about potential impacts to the leach field due to increased soil saturation. While acknowledging the purpose of the proposed detention pond, he questioned where stormwater would ultimately discharge and whether it could contribute to prolonged saturation in his yard. Rothana emphasized that his property is located in a low-lying area and questioned whether sufficient analysis has been conducted to ensure the project will not exacerbate existing drainage problems.

Anna Wrobel (24 Mayberry Road) read a statement into the record expressing concerns about existing drainage issues and the potential for the proposed development to increase water runoff due to additional impervious surfaces. She emphasized the importance of preserving existing trees, particularly large maples, to help absorb water, support wildlife habitat, and provide visual and sound buffering. The commenter also referenced prior drainage problems associated with nearby development and supported concerns raised by neighbors regarding stormwater impacts. She suggested maintaining or enhancing tree buffers along the property boundary. Additional concerns included long-term maintenance, sanitation, and management of the proposed multifamily development, as well as overall project density.

Jim Donnelly (24 Mayberry Road) expressed support for prior comments regarding drainage concerns. He noted a significant increase in water retention over time, attributing some changes to shifting conditions such as climate patterns. He described the topography of neighboring properties, indicating that lower-lying areas experience greater impacts, and shared observations of past water-related issues, including a sump pump failure at a nearby property during a heavy rain event. The commenter emphasized that, based on long-term observation, drainage and water accumulation in the area have become more pronounced and remain a significant concern.

Elizabeth Bullett (118 Pierce Street) raised concerns regarding the applicant's financial history, citing multiple past municipal tax liens and questioning the developer's capacity to successfully complete a project of this scale without risk of delay or incompleteness. She also expressed concern about limited on-site green space for residents, including children and pets, and noted the distance to nearby recreational areas. Additionally, she questioned the calculation of the in-lieu fee, stating it appears to account for fewer units than proposed. Overall, the commenter emphasized concerns related to project viability, site design, and adequacy of supporting amenities.

Board Comment

Dustin Roma addressed concerns regarding tree removal and drainage. He noted that while some trees—particularly along the proposed roadway—will need to be removed, efforts will be made to retain select trees, including some maples near the dumpster and adjacent green space. Regarding drainage, the applicant acknowledged neighborhood concerns and observed that existing conditions appear to have worsened over time. He identified off-site factors contributing to ponding, including an elevated culvert and nearby fill and retaining walls that restrict natural drainage flow, creating a static water level in the area. He stated that the project is designed to maintain existing runoff rates and not exacerbate current conditions. While expressing sympathy for affected residents, he indicated that meaningful improvement would likely require modifications to off-site obstructions, which are beyond the scope of this project.

Larry McWilliams requested clarification on the project's stormwater management system, specifically the proposed detention basins. He noted the application indicates the system is designed to retain water for approximately 24 hours before it drains. He asked the applicant to explain how this timeframe was determined and how the system will function to ensure water is properly managed and discharged without worsening existing drainage conditions on neighboring properties.

Dustin Roma explained that stormwater calculations are based on comparing pre-development and post-development site conditions. He noted that the existing site already generates runoff that contributes to downstream ponding in nearby backyards. He stated that development will increase runoff speed due to added impervious surfaces and reduced infiltration, so the design uses detention basins to collect and temporarily store stormwater. The basins are designed to slowly release water over time—approximately within a 24-hour period—through controlled discharge, with the goal of mimicking existing drainage rates rather than increasing peak flow. He further explained that the system maintains overall drainage patterns while managing runoff in accordance with standard state Department of Environmental Protection (DEP) practices commonly used for similar developments.

Larry McWilliams asked City Staff whether or not the existing property is on private property

Jennie Franceschi clarified that the drainage infrastructure in question is located on private property, including a culvert beneath a driveway serving adjacent duplexes, and is not within the public right-of-way or City-owned land. She explained that observed drainage issues appear to be associated with alterations to a former ditch line, including installation of a retaining wall and placement of fill, which have restricted natural flow and contributed to ponding in the area. These changes are believed to have occurred around 2019. She noted that removal of the fill and restoration of the ditch line could improve drainage, but that any issues involving the culvert and its function between private properties would need to be addressed directly between the affected property owners, potentially through legal or cooperative agreement.

Larry McWilliams stated that the Planning Board's review focuses on whether the proposed development will result in equal or reduced stormwater runoff compared to existing conditions, based on engineering analyses included in the application. He noted that the submitted design indicates compliance with stormwater standards for multiple storm events (including 2-year, 10-year, and 25-year conditions), and appears to demonstrate a reduction in runoff rates from the site despite increased impervious surfaces. He acknowledged ongoing neighborhood drainage concerns but indicated that off-site conditions contributing to existing ponding are outside the applicant's control. He emphasized that the Board's role is to ensure the project does not worsen downstream impacts, as shown in the submitted engineering materials.

Dustin Roma stated that, in addition to meeting standard stormwater design requirements, the project team reviewed downstream conditions to better understand existing drainage issues. He noted that based on field observations, there appears to be sufficient elevation and capacity in the downstream drainage system that could allow for improved flow if existing obstructions are addressed. He suggested that resolving these off-site constraints could potentially improve current drainage conditions in the area, though such work would be outside the scope of the proposed development.

Jennie Franceschi asked Dustin to clarify, for the record, the maintenance of the stormwater facility.

Dustin Roma confirmed that the project will include a long-term stormwater maintenance plan as part of the site plan approval. He stated that the property owner will be responsible for ongoing maintenance of the stormwater system, including maintaining vegetation cover, conducting regular inspections, and repairing any deficiencies as needed. He noted that these maintenance obligations are outlined in a submitted stormwater housekeeping and maintenance plan that is part of the official record, and will be enforceable over the life of the apartment development.

Lucas Shrage asked whether the proposed stormwater detention system could potentially improve existing drainage conditions, given current saturation levels and controlled release of water. He questioned whether the engineered system might perform better than current conditions, which rely on natural absorption and existing tree cover, while acknowledging that no guarantees can be made.

Dustin Roma explained that while standard stormwater models do not typically account for fully saturated or frozen ground conditions, the proposed detention system could potentially improve drainage during certain times of the year. He noted that under existing conditions, water can flow quickly over frozen or saturated ground, contributing to increased runoff and ponding. In contrast, the proposed system would capture and detain stormwater, requiring it to infiltrate through the ground before being released. As a result, he indicated that during periods such as early spring, the post-development condition may perform better than existing conditions by reducing rapid surface runoff and promoting more controlled infiltration.

Kevin Price requested clarification on how the performance guarantee and release process relates to inspection of the stormwater system. He asked for an overview of the City's role during and after construction, including how compliance with the approved stormwater maintenance plan is verified, the requirement for maintaining a maintenance log, and the process for addressing any deficiencies or issues that may arise.

Jennie Franceschi explained that during construction, staff conducts inspections to ensure the project is built in accordance with approved plans. Final inspections are completed as construction concludes. If issues arise, the City coordinates with the applicant and engineer to evaluate conditions and determine whether corrective actions are needed. She noted that performance guarantees remain in place until the City is satisfied that all site improvements, including stormwater systems, are functioning as intended. Ongoing requirements, such as maintaining a stormwater maintenance log, are part of long-term compliance. She added that projects of this scale typically do not create downstream drainage problems and may, in some cases, improve existing conditions. However, she reiterated that known off-site drainage issues would need to be addressed by affected private property owners.

Jason Fraizer reviewed the pond design details, noting the outlet control structure and anticipated water retention depth, with drainage expected over approximately 24–48 hours. He also observed that the overflow pipe elevation appears lower than many abutting yards, suggesting it may not significantly contribute to upstream flooding concerns. He acknowledged ongoing neighborhood drainage issues and encouraged continued communication between the applicant and neighbors to better understand and potentially address existing problems. The member also asked staff whether Public Works has recently inspected or maintained nearby catch basins on Pierce Street, noting that clogged or filled structures could contribute to drainage issues.

Jennie Franceschi stated that catch basins are maintained on a rotating schedule, with cleaning performed regularly, though not every basin is serviced each year.

Becca Spitella noted that Pierce Street underwent a water main replacement project the previous summer, during which catch basins in the area were fitted with silt sacks and subsequently cleaned at the completion of the project.

Karen Axelsen shared personal experience with drainage impacts following a nearby development, noting that water conditions on her property changed after construction. She expressed concern that projects of this scale can displace water and potentially contribute to ongoing drainage issues, regardless of design intent. While acknowledging the applicant's position, she cautioned that such developments may still have unintended impacts and emphasized the importance of carefully considering these concerns.

**Motion by Kevin Price
2nd by Lucas Shrage**

Roll Call Vote

Jason Frazier	Yes
Karen Axelsen	No
Kevin Price	Yes
Lucas Schrage	Yes
Chair – Larry McWilliams	Yes

**Motion to move into Workshop by Kevin Price
2nd by Lucas Shrage**

Roll Call Vote

Jason Frazier	Yes
Karen Axelsen	Yes
Kevin Price	Yes
Lucas Schrage	Yes
Chair – Larry McWilliams	Yes

WORKSHOP

5. **Becca read into the record:** Planner's Business – Rock Row Phase 3 Master Plan: Presentation from Dirigo Center Developers, LLC and Jones & Beach Engineers of Rock Row Phase III Master Plan

Applicant Presentation

Josh Levy, representing Waterstone Properties Group and Dirigo Center Developers, presented a conceptual master plan for the next phase of the Rock Row development. Team members, including engineers and architects, were introduced. He provided background on the project, noting the property—formerly the Blue Rock Quarry—was acquired approximately eight and a half years ago and was previously approved for a large retail development. The current vision shifted to a mixed-use development following community engagement and national research into similar projects. Phase One (retail) and the medical campus have been completed, with significant regional draw and visitation. The proposed next phase focuses on development between these areas and includes a mix of residential units (apartments and townhomes), retail, restaurant space, loft-style office space, and integrated green space with trail connections along Nason's Brook. The applicant stated that future submissions will be brought forward as individual components for review, but the conceptual plan was presented to provide an overview and gather feedback to guide upcoming phases.

David Boyce, master planning architect with Arrow Street, presented an overview of the design approach for Phase 3 of the Rock Row development. He explained that his role is to coordinate multiple design teams to ensure a cohesive overall layout, consistent urban design elements, and integration with future phases. Phase 3 was outlined within the broader master plan, including connections to future development areas. The plan incorporates

a transportation network with primary access points from Larrabee Road and arterial routes, as well as coordination with regional transit providers to enhance bus service. The design emphasizes pedestrian-oriented features, including wide sidewalks, tree-lined streets, on-street parking for traffic calming, bike infrastructure, and trail connections. Public spaces such as parklets and activity nodes are also integrated throughout the development to support a walkable, mixed-use environment.

Wayne Morrill presented the engineering overview for Phase 3, including the master plan, infrastructure, and site layout. Plans incorporate access to existing utilities, including a lift station, and coordination of private roads under review by City staff and relevant agencies. The proposal includes internal roadways, utility systems, and integration with Nason's Brook as a recreational and buffering feature for residential areas. Fire access has been evaluated to ensure adequate emergency vehicle circulation, with further coordination planned during individual site plan reviews. Design elements also include screened or enclosed trash and loading areas, and designated snow storage, with some snow anticipated to be relocated off-site due to site density. The development approaches, but does not exceed, allowable building coverage under Rock Row zoning. Upcoming submissions will include detailed plans for specific buildings, including a mixed-use structure with approximately 267 residential units and structured parking over retail.

David Boyce provided an overview of the Phase 3 land use program and site design. Ground-floor uses are primarily active, pedestrian-oriented spaces, including retail, restaurants, and small-scale grocery or specialty vendors. Residential components include a 267-unit apartment building and a smaller townhome development along the brook. A hotel with a limited ground-floor lobby is also proposed, along with an entertainment/recreation space. Upper floors include residential units, office space, and hotel accommodations, while a structured parking garage (approximately 700 spaces) is designed to centralize parking and reduce on-street demand. The layout emphasizes a mix of building scales and active streetscapes, with key public spaces such as Brookside Park near the hotel and a central plaza anchoring the development. The design prioritizes pedestrian experience, connectivity, and integration with surrounding phases, with additional architectural details to be presented during future site-specific reviews.

Staff Comment

Jennie Franceschi noted that Phase 3 has been in development for an extended period and represents a desired mix of residential and commercial uses for the site. She expressed support for the project's progression and noted alignment with long-term planning goals for the area. She explained that the conceptual presentation is intended to provide a comprehensive overview, while individual components will return to the Board for separate review and approval. The Board was invited to offer high-level feedback or ask questions regarding the overall concept or project timeline.

Public Comment

Mark (??) asked if the proposed entertainment center is still going to be the movie theatre.

David Boyce responded that at the moment the movie theatre is not anticipated for phase three but is being considered for phase 2.

Board Comment

Lucas Shrage requested an overview of the project timeline and offered initial feedback on the conceptual plan. He acknowledged the positive impact of earlier Rock Row phases, particularly the grocery store and healthcare facilities, noting their importance to the community. He encouraged the development team to prioritize design choices that reflect the character and needs of the local community, emphasizing Westbrook's identity and economic realities. He expressed concern about an overemphasis on luxury housing and suggested incorporating a

broader mix of housing types, including more affordable options. He supported elements such as walkability, homeownership opportunities through townhomes, and overall site layout, while encouraging further attention to architectural character and community integration as the project advances.

Jason Fraizer expressed support for a higher-end, luxury-focused development, noting it could be a positive addition to Westbrook and help diversify the City's offerings. He also commended the inclusion of public transit coordination and bike infrastructure, encouraging continued collaboration with the City to improve connectivity, including potential expansion of bike lanes linking to surrounding areas.

Karen Axelsen referenced earlier community visioning efforts for the Rock Row project and noted the passage of time since initial concepts were presented. She asked whether there are any planned recreational uses involving water features in the development, such as activities that had been previously discussed (e.g., zip lining or direct water access).

Josh Levy responded to Board comments by acknowledging feedback on community character, scale, and affordability, stating the team aims to create a development that is approachable and reflective of Westbrook while avoiding a generic or "cookie-cutter" feel. He noted efforts to vary building scale, incorporate local and regional businesses, and design active public spaces to enhance community integration. He highlighted partnerships supporting community benefits, including food access initiatives and educational programming at the Dempsey Center, as well as coordination with Portland Trails and Metro to improve connectivity through trails, biking, and transit. Regarding the quarry, he described ongoing efforts to transform it into a community amenity, including plans for a one-mile walking trail, event programming, and potential future recreational uses. He noted that public access will depend on resolving safety and access considerations, including emergency egress and site stability, but emphasized continued exploration of opportunities to activate the space.

Kevin Price emphasized the need for "third places" within the development—spaces where people can gather and spend time without the expectation of making a purchase. He noted that while some informal gathering spaces currently exist, they are limited and not intentionally designed for that purpose. He encouraged the inclusion of flexible, community-oriented spaces within the ground-floor layout to support social interaction and everyday use. Additionally, he suggested targeting a mix of tenants that include established local and regional businesses, particularly those currently located in nearby markets, to enhance familiarity and draw while maintaining a unique identity for the development.

Jennie Franceschi referenced a prior question from the Board regarding the project timeline and invited the applicant team to provide additional details on the anticipated schedule for Phase 3 development.

Josh Levy outlined a preliminary project timeline for Phase 3. Private roadway approval is currently underway, with plans to begin installing base utilities within approximately 60–75 days if approved. This work is intended to support upcoming regulatory submissions and provide necessary infrastructure for project partners. The team anticipates submitting a SLOTA amendment to the state later this summer, along with additional required approvals, including traffic permits and site plan review. If approvals proceed as expected, construction could begin in approximately one year, with initial retail openings targeted for late the following year, and subsequent phases—including residential, hotel, and office components—coming online thereafter, extending into 2028.

Larry McWilliams asked for clarification on whether a previously discussed 10,000-square-foot conference / entertainment building remains part of the project, and if so, whether it is included in Phase 2 or incorporated into the currently proposed entertainment components.

Josh Levy clarified that the previously discussed outdoor concert venue, which once occupied the Phase 3 area, has been removed to make way for current development plans. That venue served as temporary proof of concept and demonstrated strong regional draw despite initial operational challenges. He stated that the long-term vision remains to develop a permanent, enclosed entertainment and conference facility as part of a future phase (not

Phase 3). The proposed concept includes an approximately 5,500-seat, ~50,000-square-foot venue capable of hosting concerts, conferences, and year-round events, potentially paired with a conference hotel. The applicant noted that advancing this component would likely require a public-private partnership and continued coordination with City officials and emphasized its potential economic and regional impact.

Meeting Adjourned.

MINUTES MAY NOT BE TRANSCRIBED VERBATIM. SECTIONS MAY BE PARAPHRASED FOR CLARITY.

A COMPLETE RECORDING MAY BE OBTAINED BY CONTACTING PLANNING AND CODE ENFORCEMENT at 207-854-0638 and ilobo@westbrook.me.us