



*Town of Richmond, Rhode Island*

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Building / Planning / Zoning Department  
5 Richmond Townhouse Road, Wyoming, RI 02898  
www.richmondri.com

To: Richmond Planning Board

From: Talia Jalette, MPA, Town Planner

Date: 7/18/24

RE: Master Plan – **Public Hearing** – **Gardiner Apartments Mixed Use Development** – Shoreline Properties, Inc., 400 South County Trail, Suite A-207, Exeter, RI 02822 for a mixed-use development including a 4-unit apartment building, located at 102 Kingstown Road, Plat 5C, Lot 9.

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**Details of the Subject Site:**

Plat and Lot: AP 5C, Lot 9

Address: 102 Kingstown Road

Zone: Planned Development (PD)

Acreage: Approximately 0.95 acres

Owner/Applicant: Shoreline Properties, Inc.

**The Subject Property:**

Shoreline Properties, Inc., appeared before the Board on June 13, 2023 to present their Pre-Application submission for 102 Kingstown Road. The Master Plan Public Hearing was opened on July 9, 2024.

The subject property features an existing commercial structure, which, per the applicant, was once used as a woodshop. This structure will be renovated, and potentially redeveloped, as part of this application. The application also includes a proposal for a four-unit, 2,080 sq. ft. apartment complex. Each unit within the complex will have two bedrooms. The existing structure, as well as the proposed apartment complex, will require new OWTS systems and connections to the Town water service. Per the applicant's engineer, utilities will be connected to the existing commercial structure and the proposed apartment building.

The site is accessed by an existing driveway off Kingstown Road, which the applicant will retain. A new curb cut has not been proposed as part of the application. A paved parking area with 12 spaces, including one ADA-compliant space, has been proposed between the existing commercial structure and the proposed apartment building. Stormwater runoff treatment areas and site landscaping are proposed for the site. Some vegetative clearing has already taken place. The applicant's engineer stated that the stormwater management system will consist of a

sediment forebay and a water quality infiltration basin in the northwesterly portion of the site, and a water quality basin in the southeasterly portion of the site.

The subject site is abutted by single-family residential lots, as well as a portion of the previously proposed Richmond Commons development. Much of the surrounding property is zoned Planned Development, or Planned Unit Development – Village Center. Per Chapter 18.40, Section 18.40.010, the purpose of the Planned Development zone is to “establish a zoning district in which the development of innovative non-residential and mixed-use projects is encouraged.”

### **Waivers Sought:**

The applicant sought, and was granted, a waiver from Article 13, Section 13.1.2 of the Land Development and Subdivision Regulations to:

1. Replace the current windows, roof, and garage doors,
2. Paint and reside the exterior of the building,
3. Upgrade the electrical service,
4. Complete the plumbing and mechanical systems of the inside of the business,
5. Rebuild the existing stone wall,
6. Grade the lot without any elevation changes, and
7. Install the OWTS for the building.

This waiver request was granted by the Planning Board at the January 11, 2024 Planning Board meeting.

The applicant also sought, and was granted, a waiver from Article 13, Section 13.12.1(a). This waiver was granted on June 11, 2024.

### **The Board’s Task:**

At the July 9, 2024 meeting, Board members and residents alike had questions for the applicant’s design team.

- Vice Chair Dan Madnick asked the applicant to provide a “sight line study”, “to confirm that someone pulling out of this development has enough time and space to make” a left-hand turn onto Route 138. The applicant’s engineer, Patrick Freeman, stated that that was “addressed during DOT approval”, and that another engineering firm had reviewed the sight lines. Further, he stated that he would provide that information to the Planning Board. Other members concurred that that information would be helpful.
  - I called Mr. Freeman directly to ask for the requested sight line study, so that it could be provided to the Planning Board. Per Mr. Freeman, a traffic count was completed, but a sight line study was not. He suggested that requiring a sight line study could be a condition of approval for the Master Plan. I expressed that I did not think that making that a condition of approval would be a problem, but that it would really be up to the Board to make that kind of determination. He stated that he would appear before the Board to discuss it further.
- Pete Burton expressed that the applicant had provided a “really well-developed plan”.

- Andrea Baranyk asked if the applicant was going to provide “a concrete step or something, and not a sidewalk” for the rear entry doors to each apartment. Mr. Freeman stated that, “at the moment”, they were not proposing sidewalks in those areas. There was some discussion of sidewalks generally. Mr. Freeman noted that there is a “very limited rear yard” for the site.
- Chair Phil Damicis said that the proposed lighting was “dark-sky friendly”, as opposed to “dark-sky compliant”. He asked the applicant to ensure that “there’s no light trespass or glare, especially out onto the street over there.” He noted that, typically, the Board would require underground utilities, but as there would only be a “short overhead electric service across the road to the building”, it would not be “worth it in this case.” The rest of the Board seemed to be amenable to allowing overhead utilities.
- Members of the public who commented on the project were: Mark Trimmer and Jonathan (J.P.) Nikodem. Mr. Trimmer asked about site lighting, site access, and landscaping. Mr. Nikodem spoke in opposition to the residential component of the application.
  - Mr. Nikodem submitted his written comments to this Department. They are included in your packet.

The Planning Board continued the Master Plan Public Hearing to the July 23, 2024 meeting. There may be additional comments from members of the public. As noted above, Mr. Freeman intends to speak to the requested sight line study.

I will have a draft motion prepared, in the event that the Board feels that the Master Plan is ripe for a decision. As the Master Plan application was certified complete on June 18, 2024, the Board has until September 16, 2024 to render a decision (unless the applicant agrees to “a further amount of time” for review, which is allowed under § 45-23-39(c)(5)).

J. Nikodem prepared statement recited at Richmond Planning Board meeting held 7/9/24 in response to development proposed at 102 Kingstown Road:

Good evening. My name is JP Nikodem and my residence directly abuts the property being discussed tonight. I have lived in Richmond for over 23 years. The rural character of Richmond originally drew me to this area. A character which I feel will be negatively impacted by granting approval to construct a 4 unit apartment building on the subject property.

Apartment buildings are constructed to increase housing density by combining multiple residences into one building. This sharply contrasts with the surrounding community comprised of single-family dwellings occupied by families. Apartment buildings do not blend into the rural landscape and are typically used to provide affordable rental housing to families. I do not know if low income housing is being suggested for this location, but Map 11 of the 2021 Richmond Comprehensive Community Plan indicates that the location has a low score (1-3) for potential affordable housing, meaning it is not well suited for this use.

To quote the Richmond Comprehensive Community Plan “Richmond is a rural town located in Washington County in southern Rhode Island. Historically it has been a farming community with small mill villages along its waterways. Today, residents value its open spaces and natural features. They choose to live here because of its small-town feel and quiet streets. Its abundant natural areas, historic villages, scenic views and vistas of forests, fields and farms, and active agricultural businesses define Richmond’s rural character. Residents envision Richmond as a community that encourages development to expand the property tax base while protecting its rural characteristics.

Furthermore, the cost of services provided to families residing in the proposed apartment building would most likely exceed their contribution to the Richmond real estate tax pool. Richmond needs increased commercial tax revenue to reduce the burden on current Richmond residents.

In closing, I ask the board to reject the applicant’s request to build a 4 unit apartment building and encourage continued commercial use of the location in a way that preserves Richmond’s rural heritage and positively contributes to our tax base.

Thank you.