



## Town of Bristol, Rhode Island

*Department of Community Development*

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March 6, 2025

TO: Planning Board

FROM: Diane M. Williamson, Director

RE: **Staff Report – Gooding Hotel “Comfort Inn and Suites”  
Pre-Application Conference**

The following is provided in order to further explain the process and provide some additional clarity to the materials submitted for the Pre-Application Conference on the above project. In further review of the submission and the Planning Board's Subdivision and Development Regulations, I also provide some additional guidance and recommendations for the Board's consideration.

1. As provided in the memo from Solicitor Amy Goins, this type of application will be processed as a major land development project. The pre-application conference is the first step in that process. A pre-application conference is non-binding and there is no vote of the Planning Board taken at a pre-application meeting. All pre-application discussions are intended for the guidance of the applicant and shall not be considered approval or disapproval of a project or its elements.
2. The TRC meeting notes that I provided in your packet were meant to provide some historical context on the hotel proposal; however, these are just to give the Board some sense of previous meetings on this property and reflect the prior pre-application / concept review plans when this was proposed as a Main Stay/Sleep Inn Hotel. Upon the future submission of this Comfort Inn and Suites application, there will be TRC meetings to provide comments and recommendations to the Board as part of the Master Plan and Preliminary Phases of review.
3. The traffic study presented in the packet by the applicant was done based on an earlier iteration of the plan and does not reflect the plans presented as part of this pre-application submission. It is also noted that the traffic study in your packet was done in June 2020 during the COVID-19 pandemic. An updated traffic study, based on current plan, was submitted to me today via email. The Planning Board will also have to commission a

consultant peer review engineer for the traffic study which the applicant will have to reimburse the Town for.

4. Per the Planning Board's Subdivision and Development Review Regulations, the composition of the TRC for Major Land Development Projects shall include an architect and a landscape architect registered in the State of RI to assist the TRC in evaluating specific complex or contextually sensitive submissions. If the Planning Board finds that the existing conditions and proposed changes will not be such that a more detailed level of review are needed, the architect and/or landscape architect may not be required. The Planning Board Engineer, architect and/or landscape architect shall be selected by the Town as a consultant with the fee for same paid for by the applicant per section 7.5C. I recommend that an architect be required for the review of the façade of this building so that it can be designed to fit into the character of Bristol rather than the standard chain facades.
5. The 2018 RIDEM permit provided in the applicant's narrative is extraneous information that was part of the applicant's previous narrative to RIDEM. The 2024 permit is the most recent permit on this property from RIDEM. The 2024 permit was included in your packets; however, I inadvertently omitted the plans that were approved by the RIDEM as part of this permit. These plans are attached and you will see that the proposed development also reflects the Main Stay/Sleep Inn Hotel which is different from this current plan submission. The applicant has presented a request to RIDEM to modify the permit based on the new design. A copy of that request was emailed to my office today and is attached for your information. It is also noted in this 2018 narrative that the Town supports this project; however, the Town Council has not taken a position either for or against this project. In 2023, the Town Council did submit correspondence to the RIDEM on this project requesting careful consideration of the flooding concerns in the area.
6. Per the Planning Board's Subdivision and Development Review Regulations (Section 6.6) a Major Land Development is required to include a narrative describing the proposed project's major elements, potential significant impacts on the surrounding neighborhood and /or community and the means by which these identified impacts shall be mitigated by the project design or otherwise.
7. Also per Section 6.6 of the Subdivision and Development Review Regulations, a Fiscal Impact Assessment is required.
8. As Gooding Avenue is a State Road, a Physical Alteration Permit will be required for this project.
9. A floor plan was not submitted with this pre-application; however, it is noted that the rooms cannot have kitchens per the Zoning Ordinance definition of a hotel.

10. A hotel is a permitted use in the General Business zone, which this property is zoned for. The pre-application does not indicate if any waivers are being requested or whether any variances are needed.
11. The property is in the Silver Creek Watershed and the application will need to be designed for drainage to meet the requirements of the Town relative to any increase in storm runoff volume up to and including the 10-year storm event. (Appendix F – Section I of the Subdivision and Development Review Regulations).
12. Reference is made to the parking lot landscaping requirement in the Zoning Ordinance as well as the parking lot striping.
13. A sidewalk and street trees will be recommended along the street frontage of Gooding Avenue.
14. A copy of the application form is also provided for your information.