

**STAMFORD PLANNING BOARD
APPROVED MINUTES - TUESDAY, DECEMBER 14, 2021
REGULAR MEETING
VIA THE INTERNET & CONFERENCE CALL
6:30 P.M.**

JOIN ZOOM MEETING

<https://us02web.zoom.us/j/87676440958>

Meeting ID: 876 7644 0958

Passcode: 939609

Web & Phone Meeting Instructions

- *If your computer/smartphone has mic and speaker then:
Type in, paste or click the following link: <https://us02web.zoom.us/j/87676440958>; **OR***
- *If not, then **Call-in** using the **phone number & password** provided above.*
- *Sign-up for Planning Board meeting updates by emailing lcapp@stamfordct.gov.*

Web Meeting Ground Rules:

- *The meeting shall be recorded and the video shall be posted on the City of Stamford website http://cityofstamford.granicus.com/ViewPublisher.php?view_id=8*
 - *The Planning Board shall moderate the audio for attendees.*
 - *Attendees shall be on mute and will be unmuted when called to speak by the Planning Board members.*
 - *Applicants will have 20 minutes to make their presentation.*
 - *Any applicant wishing to submit written testimony can send it prior to the meeting to lcapp@stamfordct.gov or submit through a Chat message to the Planning Board Chair during the meeting.*
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Stamford Planning Board Members present were: Voting Members: Theresa Dell, Chair; Jay Tepper, Vice Chair; Michael Buccino and Michael Totilo. Alternates: William Levin and Stephen Perry
Absent: Jennifer Godzeno, Secretary & Regular Member. Present for staff: Vineeta Mathur, Acting Principal Planner.

Ms. Dell called the meeting to order at 6:30 p.m., introduced the members of the Board and staff present.

Ms. Dell introduced the first item on the agenda.

PLANNING BOARD MEETING MINUTES:

December 7, 2021: After a brief discussion, Mr. Levin moved to recommend approval of the Planning Board Regular Meeting Minutes of December 7, 2021; Mr. Totilo seconded the motion, and passed unanimously with eligible members present voting, 5-0 (Dell, Buccino, Levin, Tepper and Totilo).

ZONING BOARD REFERRALS:

1. **ZB APPLICATION #221-24 - OLD TOWN SQUARE, LLC - 160 ATLANTIC STREET - Site & Architectural Plans and/or Requested Uses and Special Permit:** Applicant is proposing to maintain the existing building (formerly used as a bank) and add eight (8) additional stories for a ten (10) story hotel containing 77 rooms and 14 suites with a ground floor restaurant, banquet/meeting rooms and a roof-top patio.

This is an application for a Special Permit and Site & Architectural Plans and/or Requested Uses to allow the construction of a 10-story hotel at 160 Atlantic Street. The property is in the Center City district and the Applicant requests a Special Permit pursuant to Appendix B, Footnote 23 to allow a hotel subject to special standards. The Applicant also requests Special Permit approval pursuant to Appendix B, Footnote 7 to allow modified setbacks and a Large Scale Development Review pursuant to Section 19E. The proposed development incorporates the existing building formerly used as a bank. The Applicant has proposed off-street parking arrangements for the development. The proposal will potentially help activate Veteran's Park and the east side of Atlantic Street.

Ms. Dell stated that the Historic Preservation Advisory Commission (HPAC) had reviewed this application and sent a Resolution of their discussion and decision to the Planning Board. Ms. Dell read, in part, the following from that Resolution:

- 1. The Commission commends the owners for proposing to retain the historic structure and its materials and details, with the understanding that some minor corrections may be required. It is also understood the back (northeast side) of the building will be revised so it can be incorporated into the new structure.*
- 2. The Commission requests that the south facing façade windows of the main hall be restored pending an investigation of the original openings. It also encourages placing new windows (that match the windows on the north side) at those locations, if it proves to be feasible.*
- 3. The Commission requested, and the owner agreed to provide, "full width" brick in lieu of the proposed "thin" brick. This correction also requires the owner's architect to revise the proposed materials and details for cornice lines, pilasters, window heads and sills. It was also noted the façade, including window placement, needs to be corrected to match the plans that were presented.*
- 4. The Commission requested that the materials used in the new construction match the brick shape and color, and the Limestone color that is on the historic façade. It is understood that these materials are difficult to match. The Commission further offers to review the material selections onsite to confirm the compatibility.*

It should be noted the Commission will meet at a later date to review the historic property for inclusion in the Cultural Resources Inventory. HPAC also recognizes that the Zoning and Planning Boards may have other considerations for review that are beyond the scope of HPAC approvals. Those may include bonuses, setbacks, parking, and hotel requirements in the zoning code.

Ms. Dell introduced Mr. Leydon.

John F. X. Leydon, Esq., along with Shalinder Nichani and Nagi Osta, Old Town Square, LLC; Sotheby Chung, Do H. Chung & Partners; Leonard D' Andrea, D'Andrea Surveying & Engineering P.C. and Joseph Balskus, VHB (Traffic Consultant), made a presentation and answered questions from the Board. The Board had extensive discussions over the 45 parking spaces requested in the application. Ms. Dell suggested the Board would like to see 60 spaces and the applicant agreed to the increase. The Planning Board felt that upon completion of the project, letters from the Bell Street Garage, Stamford Town Center and the office building state that the hotel can use their parking facilities.

After considerable discussion, Mr. Totilo recommended **approval** of **ZB Application #221-24** with the recommendation that parking be increased from 45 spaces to 60 spaces and that this request is compatible with the neighborhood and consistent with Master Plan Category #11 (Downtown); Mr. Tepper seconded the motion and passed unanimously with eligible members present voting, 4-0-1 (In Favor - Dell, Perry, Tepper and Totilo / Abstain - Buccino).

2. **ZB APPLICATION #221-31 - RAYMOND MAZZEO, 22 1ST CORP. - Text Change:**

Applicant is proposing to amend Section 9.C.5.b.7, relating to signage in the MX-D (Mixed-Use Development) Zone. The purpose is to allow front mounted “blade” signs as a permitted sign (rather than a Special Permit) when located within the property boundaries.

The Applicant proposes a minor amendment to the MX-D zoning district to allow blade signs as-of-right if such signs are within the property signs. Currently, blade signs are only permitted in the MX-D district by Special Permit. While the Special Permit process is appropriate for any sign overhanging public right-of-way, the as-of-right process is more suitable for blade signs on private property. Staff believes the proposed Text Change simplifies the approval process and helps retail and service uses in receiving sign approvals. The building at 523 Canal Street, which is under construction, will benefit from the proposed Text Change for their retail and community space signage.

Raymond Mazzeo, Redniss & Mead, made a presentation and answered questions from the Board.

After a brief discussion, Mr. Tepper recommended **approval** of **ZB Application #221-31** and that this request is compatible with the neighborhood and consistent with the 2015 Master Plan; Mr. Perry seconded the motion and passed unanimously with eligible members present voting, 5-0 (Dell, Buccino, Perry, Tepper and Totilo).

3. **ZB APPLICATION #221-29 - SOUTH END PACIFIC, LLC (Contract Purchaser) - 648, 670, 686 & 690 PACIFIC STREET and 171 HENRY STREET - Site & Architectural Plans and/or Requested Uses and Special Permit:**

The applicant is proposing a redevelopment that will include: (a) preserving and repurposing the historic firehouse with a mix of retail, commercial and/or residential uses; (b) preserving and maintaining the existing two-family home at 171 Henry Street; (c) preserving and maintaining the existing Tabernacle of Grace Church and (d) creating a new six-story residential building with retail, covered parking and 61 new apartments.

The subject Site & Architectural Plan and Special Permit applications will allow for the construction of a new six-story mixed-use building and restoration and preservation of the three historic structures on the property including the house located at 171 Henry Street, the Tabernacle of Grace Church and the South End Firehouse.

Subsequent to the November 16, 2021 presentation to the Planning Board and based on comments from HPAC and discussions with neighborhood residents, the applicant has made several revisions to the proposals including reducing the height of the ‘tower’ elements to be in line with the 6th floor roof, reduction in the size of the windows within the brick façade, reduction of the footprint of the partial 7th floor elements and shifting of these elements away from the façade. The applicant has also provided a detailed description of proposed restoration work to be done to the three historic buildings and made improvements to the traffic circulation pattern. All of these changes have collectively made the proposal a better fit in the community.

Ms. Dell stated that the Historic Preservation Advisory Commission (HPAC) had reviewed this application and sent a Resolution of their discussion and decision to the Planning Board. Ms. Dell read, in part, the following from that Resolution:

- 1. The Commission commends the owners for addressing the informal comments that were provided by the Commission members at the October meeting, including the historic building and site improvements.*
- 2. The Commission supports the improvements to the three historic properties as proposed under Section 7.3 guidelines. There is an additional request for the church property to clean-up PVC pipes and utility connections at the corner facing Pacific Street.*
- 3. The Commission requests a resolution of the design of the top cornice line, and the base/intermediate cornice line - materials and details (as shown in gray tone on the elevation). In addition, the Commission requests the brackets be removed at the inset cornice line, and an alternative be proposed that works with the outer cornice line. The use of a stone or precast masonry product is encouraged.*
- 4. It was agreed that the owner's architect will simplify the materials and details at the base of the building, including coordination of the stone pilasters and their related cornice line.*

It should be noted that the Commission will meet at a later date to review the historic properties for inclusion in the Cultural Resources Inventory. HPAC also recognizes that the Zoning and Planning Boards may have other considerations for review that are beyond the scope of HPAC approvals. Those may include Section 7.3 bonuses, setbacks, and parking.

Ms. Dell introduced Mr. Mazzeo.

Raymond Mazzeo, Redniss & Mead, along with Sotheby Chung (Architect); Andres Hogg (part of applicant team) and Enrico Gessaroli (part of applicant team), made a presentation and answered questions from the Board. The Planning Board suggested they would like the Zoning Board to take note of the driveway on the side of the historic two-story home to make sure the landscaping buffer and adjustment of the driveway to the church-side is safe for the residents of the two-family home as both the church and firehouse mixed-use retail will be using this exit. The Planning Board would also like this driveway to only be used by the new commercial residential building as an emergency exit.

After considerable discussion, Mr. Tepper recommended **approval** of **ZB Application #221-29** with the recommendation the Zoning Board take note of the driveway on the side of the historic two-story home to make sure the landscaping buffer and adjustment of the driveway to the church-side is safe for the residents of the two-family home as both the church and firehouse mixed-use retail will be using this exit and that this driveway is to only be used by the new commercial residential building as an emergency exit and this request is compatible with the neighborhood and consistent with Master Plan Category #9 (Urban Mixed-Use); Mr. Buccino seconded the motion and passed unanimously with eligible members present voting, 5-0 (Dell, Buccino, Levin, Tepper and Totilo).

OLD BUSINESS:

Ms. Dell announced that the Capital Budget will be posted tomorrow for the Public Hearing scheduled for January 11, 2022. Ms. Dell thanked everyone for their work on the budget and for coming in at \$32M, which leaves a \$2M buffer. This will allow consideration of any suggestions for additions to the budget that may be provided at the Public Hearing.

NEW BUSINESS:

Next regularly scheduled Planning Board meetings are:

- January 11, 2022 - Public Hearing-Capital Budget
- January 25, 2022 - Regular Meeting

There being no further business to come before the Board, Ms. Dell wished everyone Merry Christmas, Happy New Year and adjourned the meeting at 8:30 p.m.

Respectfully Submitted,

Jennifer Godzeno, Secretary
Stamford Planning Board

NOTE: These proceedings were recorded on video and are available for review on the Planning Board website at http://cityofstamford.granicus.com/ViewPublisher.php?view_id=20