

STAMFORD PLANNING BOARD
REGULAR MEETING MINUTES #3753
TUESDAY, JULY 24, 2012
7TH FLOOR LAND USE CONFERENCE AREA,
GOVERNMENT CENTER
888 WASHINGTON BLVD., STAMFORD, CT

Stamford Planning Board Members present were: Theresa Dell, Chairperson, Claire Fishman, Roger Quick, Dudley Williams, Michael Totilo and Jay Tepper. Present for staff was Todd Dumais.

Mrs. Dell called the meeting to order at 7:10pm and introduced the Board Members. She seated Alternate, Mr. Tepper. Mr. Williams change the order of the Agenda and take Application 212-18 first. Mr. Totilo seconded the motion and it passed unanimously with the eligible members present voting, 5-0 (Dell, Quick, Totilo, Williams and Tepper).

Regular Meeting

Zoning Board Referrals:

APPL. 212-18 – TRINITY STAMFORD, LLC and THE CITY OF STAMFORD URBAN REDEVELOPMENT COMMISSION, 100 Summer Street and 0 Washington Blvd, Special Exceptions, requesting approval of seven Special Exceptions including Section 7.5 approval of large scale development; Section 7-S conversion of commercial floor area to residential units; Section 7.4 BMR fee-in-lieu of payment; Section 7-Q reduction in open space; Section 12-D parking at one space per unit; Appendix B increased density and coverage and decrease in setbacks all associated with redevelopment of three parcels of a proposed multi-phase development to include two new apartment buildings creating 417 residential units, 10,838 s.f. of retail space, an expanded parking garage and associated improvements in the CC-N zone.

Mrs. Dell read the request into the record. Attorney William Hennessey, on behalf of Trinity Financial, introduced some members of the development team. They want to do this in reverse order which makes sense since the agreements all relate to the plans before the Board tonight. He overviewed the entire project, discussed terminology of the agreements before the Board and described the various Phases of the project.

Richard O'Dwyer, project architect walked the Board briefly through each site. He explained that the Phase II building fronts Summer Street with a main lobby entrance, restaurant on the NE corner, wrapped with professional live/work or artist spaces. Phase 4 building, extension of parking garage, explained floor by floor in each building. Sizes are 550 sf, 730 sf, 1000 sf for studio, one and two bedrooms respectively.

Mrs. Dell asked if broadening the sidewalk was considered where the Phase 4 building meets Washington Boulevard? Mr. O'Dwyer said they designed it to move just back from their property lines. Mrs. Dell asked about the setbacks from the Washington Blvd.

Attorney Hennessey noted that no one studied this or deemed there to be a traffic problem; no new curb cuts or entrances to the garage have been proposed.

Mr. Tepper had a question on the piece of property between Phase 3; will they need access to the garage? Attorney Hennessey explained how Phase II is a unique building with 4 sides and that the project before you is a referral on a special exception basis set as previously approved. These are all self-park spaces on a 1 to 1 ratio. An alternative method of compliance with fee-in-lieu payments began the conversation with the City.

Mrs. Dell asked if they could speak a little about the extra 93 spaces? Attorney Hennessey said there are 482 spaces presently in the garage; will create an extra 24 spaces in the garage by restriping some of the existing spaces. Mr. Williams asked for an explanation on the creation of the new spaces? Attorney Hennessey said they'll re-strip.

Mrs. Dell asked if spaces would be designated? Attorney Hennessey said correct. Mrs. Dell asked if they'd open Pandora's box to other developers in the City who want to do this? Attorney Hennessey said the difference here is that a public garage is on their land. They were always going to develop for private developments and he'd argue that's the reason.

Attorney Hennessey said there's an enormous amount of unused parking on this block and that he expects capitalism to work and someone to lease out the spaces.

Mrs. Dell expressed concern that the parking spaces not be too small; what spaces will be shrunk and on what floor? The Board took a 5-minute break to look at the model. Mrs. Dell noted that the architect discussed a way to soften the corner of the building. She asked when would this project be started? Attorney Hennessey said they expect to close before the end of December; Phase II Bldg would go in the ground with a two year construction timeline. At the 1 year mark the garage would start and around that time the building in Phase 4 would exist. They expect about one year for all the construction.

Mrs. Dell asked if this would be coordinated with Tom Rich's building so that all of the construction would not disrupt the Block. Attorney Hennessey said yes, that's an absolute requirement of zoning to have a detailed construction management plan in place prior to a building permit.

Attorney Hennessey said they have construction level documents to build Phase II bldg. and don't have to wait the 4 to 6 months to construct. They are going to know if this is a go or not by August 13.

Mr. Quick had a financial question: the City is taking back a \$4.6 million note for purchase of the land. Has this been done before? Rachel Goldberg said Stamford hasn't done this before.

Donald Gustufson, Shipman Goodwin, Representing the City on LDA answered the question. They have a first mortgage on the garage units and that part of the purchase price will be a repayment back. Under URC documents, construction lender is only on the residential building; and the City is the only ones on the note for the parking garage. They had to look at what it would cost for the City to borrow money today.

Mr. Quick asked if this would go before the Board of Finance? Mr. Gustufson said yes, tomorrow night. Part of the deal is a release of any claims by Corcoran against the City/URC. Phase III not close on the property but will put a non-refundable deposit against this parcel.

Agreements:

Land Disposition Agreement between City of Stamford, Urban Redevelopment Commission, Trinity Financial and Corcoran Jenison

Parking Garage Lease between City of Stamford and Trinity Stamford, LLC

In regards to the parking garage leases, Mr. Gustufson said he worked with Corporation Counsel, paying market rent for public spaces in the garage and a 99 year lease.

Mrs. Dell asked how the 93 leased spaces will affect the lease? Attorney Hennessey said the landlord will pay for the lease and they'll be factored into the lease. Mrs. Dell asked if it were possible to assign the spaces to one floor?

Mrs. Dell asked regarding BMR, the Planning Board will be kept advised on what will be happening with the fee-in-lieu payments because it might not be done on this site. Regarding the street landscaping, they'll look to the Zoning Board to ensure the highest quality for downtown Stamford. They'll also look to the Zoning Board for the corner of Washington Blvd and West Park Place to ensure enough pedestrian friendly space around the structure and ensure access to the garage.

Mr. Totilo moved to approve the Land Disposition Agreement between the City of Stamford, URC, Trinity Financial and Corcoran Jenison. Mr. Williams seconded the motion and it passed unanimously with the eligible members present voting, 5-0 (Dell, Quick, Totilo, Williams and Tepper).

Mr. Quick moved to approve the Parking Garage Lease between the City of Stamford and Trinity Stamford, LLC. Mr. Totilo seconded the motion and it passed unanimously with the eligible members present voting, 5-0 (Dell, Quick, Totilo, Williams and Tepper).

Mr. Williams moved to approve Application 212-18 referral from the Zoning Board. Mr. Tepper seconded the motion and it passed unanimously with the eligible members present voting, 5-0 (Dell, Quick, Totilo, Williams and Tepper).

APPL. 212-14 – GDP Amendment, STAMFORD HEALTH SYSTEM, INC. & THE STAMFORD HOSPITAL, Amend previously approved General Development Plan for Phase II including the expansion of 7 bed floors in the Specialty Building, demolition of existing buildings, the reconfiguration of surface parking and extensive landscape improvements.

APPL. 212-15 – FINAL SITE AND ARCHITECTURAL PLANS AND/OR REQUESTED USES, STAMFORD HEALTH SYSTEM, INC. & THE STAMFORD HOSPITAL, requesting final site plan approval for Phase II of the Stamford Hospital Expansion on its approximately 30 acre campus. Phase II improvements include completion of the new 7 bed floor Specialty Building of approximately 560,000 sq. ft. of floor area and 201feet high along with a new 9,100 s.f. assembly area, demolition of existing buildings, reconfiguration of surface parking lots and extensive landscaping in an HCDD zone.

Mrs. Dell introduced the application and noted Attorney Hennessey had requested to speak. Mr. Dumais explained why this was on referral from the Zoning Board.

Attorney Hennessey, for the applicant, introduced the development team. He said they are before the Board to talk about a small change for GDP and for the next phase of the hospital development site. He explained the history of the application and hospital expansion plan, the land assembled, private property purchases and street acquisitions from the City. In 2010 they came before the Board on referral from the Zoning Board to create a new Hospital Zone in the zoning regulations. They did this and created a new zone that created a two-step development process. He further discussed the new hospital building and the site plan. They are building in one fell swoop which is more efficient, less disturbing to surrounding properties and cost effective. These are good times to build.

Mrs. Dell said she sees a lot of surface parking; is the parking garage gone? Attorney Hennessey said when approved, the Zoning Board didn't really like the location of the garage.

Attorney Hennessey further described this as a five-year construction plan. He also explained that many of the mobility issues of people using the building will be solved by going vertical and then described the traffic and parking plans.

Mrs. Dell noted she liked the landscaping of the new building. She asked if this was a green building? Attorney Hennessey said they are targeting LEED certification.

Mrs. Fishman asked if they'd be building any housing for staff? Attorney Hennessey said no, sticking to being a health care provider.

Attorney Hennessey discussed the helipad; there'll be no copter stationed here; will only come on an as-needed basis pursuant to the ordinance was amended years ago. They expect a copter about 2 to 3 times a year.

Mr. Quick noted they had a significant amount of parking in the southwest corner and asked if that was employee parking? Attorney Hennessey discussed the parking layout plan for the Board.

Mr. Williams said the parking should be monitored so it wouldn't become an issue.

Mr. Totilo moved to approve Application 212-14 GDP Amendment. Mr. Quick seconded the motion and it passed unanimously with the eligible members present voting, 5-0 (Dell, Quick, Totilo, Williams and Fishman).

Mr. Williams moved to approve Application 212-15 Final Site and Architectural Plans with mention of the helipad comments. Mrs. Fishman seconded the motion and it passed unanimously with the eligible members present voting, 5-0 (Dell, Quick, Totilo, Williams and Fishman).

Planning Board Meeting Minutes:

Mrs. Dell tabled discussion on the minutes to next week's meeting.

Old Business

Several members of the Board discussed writing a letter to James Lunney, Zoning Enforcement Officer regarding the Trump building real estate sign requesting that he enforcement the regulations on the matter. and asking them to take down the advertisement.

Mr. Quick also, requested that Staff obtain feedback from the Zoning Board and the Zoning Board of Appeals on matters they issue referral comments on.

There being no further business, Mrs. Dell adjourned the meeting at 9:45 pm.

Respectfully Submitted,

Claire Fishman, Secretary
Stamford Planning Board

Note: These proceedings were recorded on tape and are available for review in the Land Use Bureau located on the 7th floor of Government Center, 888 Washington Boulevard, during regular business hours.