

STAMFORD PLANNING BOARD
REGULAR MEETING MINUTES #3609
TUESDAY, APRIL 12, 2011
7th FLOOR LAND USE CONFERENCE AREA
888 WASHINGTON BLVD., STAMFORD, CT

Stamford Planning Board Members present were: Theresa Dell, Roger Quick, Jay Tepper, Zbigniew Naumowicz and Dudley Williams. Present for staff was Todd Dumais.

Regular Meeting

The chair, Mrs. Dell, opened the regular meeting at 7:30 PM and announced that both Zbigniew Naumowicz and Jay Tepper would be seated as regular, voting members for tonight's meeting.

Supplemental Appropriation Request:

*****NFWF Mill River Storm Water Grant 10/11 Infrastructure upgrades to improve water quality and restore and protect degraded riparian areas in the Mill River Watershed.*****

Mr. Dumais introduced a Supplemental Appropriation Request for NFWF Mill River Storm Water Grant 10/11 to be added to the agenda and explained that items not on the original agenda require a 2/3 vote to be placed for discussion and consideration. Mr. Quick moved to add the item to the agenda. Mr. Tepper seconded the motion and it passed unanimously with the eligible members present voting, 5-0 (Dell, Tepper, Williams, Quick and Naumowicz).

Mr. Dumais explained the grant was described to him as a grant with zero tax implications for the City. After a brief discussion, Mr. Tepper moved to recommend approval of the requested supplemental appropriation. Mr. Williams seconded the motion and it passed unanimously with the eligible members present voting, 5-0 (Dell, Tepper, Williams, Quick and Naumowicz).

Zoning Board Referral:

ZB 211-05 – RBD STAMFORD, LLC, Special Exception request pursuant to Appendix B, footnote 7, to construct a new entrance canopy and modify the existing sidewalk at the Holiday Inn located 700 East Main Street in the C-G district.

Mr. Dumais explained the special exception application referred from the Zoning Board. He noted that the application was essentially for front yard setback relief and more of a modification to a previously granted application. This specific by RBD Stamford, LLC is to change the façade and a small modification of the streetscape but no additional changes to the building.

After a brief discussion, Mr. Naumowicz moved to recommend approval of the requested application. Mr. Quick seconded the motion and it passed unanimously with the eligible members present voting, 5-0 (Dell, Tepper, Williams, Quick and Naumowicz).

*****Application 211-08 – ORCHARD K&G ASSOCIATES, LLC, 275 Greenwich Avenue**, Special Exception pursuant to Article III, Section 7.3, Uses for Historic Building to restore and preserve existing 2-1/2 story building and construct an additional 3 residential townhouses in an R-MF district.***

Mr. Dumais introduced the Special Exception referral application to the Board. He noted that again, this item was not on the original agenda requires and 2/3 vote to be placed for discussion and consideration. Mr. Quick moved to add the item to the agenda. Mr. Tepper seconded the motion and it passed unanimously with the eligible members present voting, 5-0 (Dell, Tepper, Williams, Quick and Naumowicz).

Mr. Dumais explained the revised special exception application. He noted that a few months ago the Board reviewed of and recommend approval for a 1 unit larger version of this current Historic Bonus project, however, the application was turned down by the Zoning Board. Mr. Dumais then explained that the current application is for 1 less unit and as a result does not need the parking, setback or coverage requests of the previous application. He noted that there is now more parking and green space provided. Several Board members commented that it is an improved version of the previous project in which they already recommended approval. After a brief discussion, Mr. Williams moved to recommend approval of the special exception application. Mr. Tepper seconded the motion and it passed unanimously with the eligible members present voting, 5-0 (Dell, Tepper, Williams, Quick and Naumowicz).

Zoning Board of Appeals Referrals:

ZBA APPL. #012-11, Florence Ray Revocable Trust, requesting variances of building area (% coverage) and side yard setbacks to construct a proposed two story addition to and existing single-family home located at 30 Grandview Avenue in a R-7½ district.

Mr. Dumais explained the application referred from the Zoning Board of Appeals.

Mr. Tepper expressed concern about building coverage and the parcel having no real hardship which, in his opinion, would set a precedent for others wanting a coverage variance of this magnitude. Mr. Tepper recommended that the Board deny the request with an invitation for applicant to return with a better explanation regarding their hardship.

Mr. Tepper moved to recommend denial of ZBA Application 012-11. Mr. Williams seconded the motion and it carried unanimously with the eligible members present voting, 5-0 (Dell, Tepper, Williams, Quick and Naumowicz).

ZBA APPL. #013-11, Rosemarie Lupinacci, et al, requesting variances of building area (% coverage) and front yard setbacks to allow an existing single-family structure to remain located at 45 Albin Road in a R-7½ district.

Mr. Dumais explained the application referred from the Zoning Board of Appeals.

After a brief discussion, Mr. Tepper moved to recommend approval of ZBA Application 013-11. Mr. Quick seconded the motion and it passed unanimously with the eligible members present voting, 5-0 (Dell, Tepper, Williams, Quick and Naumowicz).

Planning Board Meeting Minutes:

Planning Board Meeting Minutes of 3/15/11. Mr. Williams moved to approve the minutes as submitted. Mr. Tepper seconded the motion and the minutes were approved unanimously with the eligible members present voting, 5-0 (Dell, Tepper, Williams, Naumowicz, and Quick).

Old Business

Discussion of the Harbor Point Application request to provide 31 Offsite Below Market Rate Units

Mrs. Dell discussed off-site BMR requirements and that this application by the harbor Point Developers was brought before the Board and would be discussed as a courtesy to the applicant. She introduced attorney John Freeman representing the applicant.

Mr. Freeman explained that the overall development in the South End was for 4,000 units of housing and per the regulations, 400 units of which would be affordable. He noted that in this present application they are seeking approval to construct 645 units with 31 off-site BMR units and 34 onsite unites. Mr. Freeman commented that there is a sense that what is affordable today will not be tomorrow and the proposal to rehabilitate and deed restrict these 31 units as affordable is a good for the neighborhood. He added that the neighborhood residents would like use to pursue a home ownership model and that BLT is willing to look into but has not committed to it at this time. Mr. Freeman also noted that there have been many questions regarding parking for the off-site units and that they as the developer, have made a commitment to provide off-street parking on adjacent properties.

Mr. Tepper asked if the properties are occupied and if so what are the rents? Mr. Freeman answered that some of the properties are and they rent for approximately \$1,400 a month.

Mrs. Dell said she didn't see how these proposed off-site BMR units were comparable to proposed, new units on-site and that she couldn't see how they can bring these to the same standard of what the new construction is going to be. Mr. Freeman said that these properties are in bad shape and don't help the neighborhood. Putting people into rehabilitated houses will change the neighborhood for the better and that is the merit of this request.

John Wooten, 50 Stone Street, member of the SENRZ, said he wants home ownership in these units. In order to stand the tide of future gentrification, we need to have islands of affordability and it's essential for us to save the neighborhood and that is why he supports this request.

Terri Adams, South End resident and member of the SENRZ discussed the problem with parking noting that it is going to take awhile to iron out parking and that he wants to support plan but he feels strongly that we need more information on how all of the units will be parked and will impact parking throughout the South End.

Mr. Tepper stated that he would like to have more information on the details of the buildings to be rehabilitated and their parking arrangements before sending a letter to the Zoning Board.

Mr. Quick asked if the BMR units are in anyway differentiated within the project and how the people for the units were selected. Mr. Freeman stated that the units within the project are indistinguishable from the market rate units and people are selected in a lottery of eligible candidates. He added that there are background checks done when the units are anticipated come on-line.

Mr. Williams asked how they can guarantee off-street parking? Mr. Freeman said it will depend on the final locations selected and agreements drafted for each property.

Mrs. Dell asked what if the Zoning Board denies the application? What will the applicant do? Mr. Freeman said he wasn't sure – they have their fingers crossed and at it's heart, he believes that this application is a good idea. He added that they are at a tipping point in the Southend and the best solution is to deed restrict existing offsite units as affordable.

Mr. Tepper said another concern is less value in the building; income qualifications should be considered because they are not comparable units.

Mrs. Dell said this Board takes affordable housing very seriously and they like the concept of providing housing offsite but that this current application lacked sufficient details to support at this time.

Mr. Quick said they definitely need a parking plan.

Mr. Tepper said that the concept sounds worthwhile but on second thought, not so sure; because in no case will we get less than 65 BMR units and suggested that a reduced rental rate be created for these offsite units.

Mr. Williams explained that he had issues with parking, which is an important detail, but that he is torn because they do deserve credit for rehabilitating the buildings, which is worth something and it would be accelerated with their doing that. However, he noted that there should be a high bar set for providing offsite BMR units for new projects.

Mrs. Dell asked Mr. Dumais to prepare a letter to the Zoning Board incorporating the Planning Board's concerns and email it as a draft to the members for edits.

Subdivision #3937, 431 Eden Road & 37 & 57 Old Well Road, request a modification of condition #12 of the subdivision approval to grant a five year extension of time to complete all "work" as defined in C.G.S. §8-26c(b). The new date of completion would be July 28, 2016.

At Mr. Dumais request, Mrs. Dell tabled this matter to a future meeting date.

Mr. Dumais informed the Board that Monday, May 9th has tentatively been selected for a Joint Planning and Zoning meeting to discuss the DSSD and URC's Downtown Study. He noted that at the Board's next meeting he would have additional information.

Mrs. Dell also reminded that Board that May 5th is the date for Robin Stein's retirement party and that it will be held under a tent at the Mill River Park playground.

There being no further business to discuss, Mrs. Dell adjourned the meeting at 9:15 pm.

Respectfully Submitted,

Theresa Dell, Chairman
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.