

STAMFORD PLANNING BOARD
REGULAR MEETING MINUTES #3608
TUESDAY, APRIL 5, 2011
7th FLOOR LAND USE CONFERENCE AREA
888 WASHINGTON BLVD., STAMFORD, CT

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

The chair, Mrs. Dell, called the regular meeting to order at 7:30PM.

Zoning Board Referrals:

ZB 211-04 - Zoning Map Amendment – Joseph Galluzzo, to rezone approximately 12,358 s.f. of land currently zoned R-6 (One & Two Family Residence) to V-C (Village Commercial District).

Mr. Dumais introduced the application. He briefly explained the history of zoning as it applied to the parcel. Mr. Dumais noted that since at least the mid-1960's until the early 1980's the parcel was zoned M-L, Light Industrial. During the comprehensive rezoning of the 1980's the parcel was changed to R-6, with the portion that fronts on Glenbrook changing C-N. He then explained that recently, as part of the City's rezoning of the Springdale and Glenbrook, the C-N portion was changed to Village Commercial. Mr. Dumais also noted that the property's Master Plan Land Use category is Category 6, which is consistent with the requested rezoning to V-C.

Raymond Mazzeo, Redniss & Mead, for the applicant. He oriented the Board to the property using several orthophotographs parcel maps. Mr. Mazzeo echoed some of Mr. Dumais comments stating that historically the property was industrial but his client would like to bring it into V-C District. He then presented a demonstration plan of what could be developed if the property was entirely zoned V-C but stated that there are no specific development plans at this time.

Mrs. Dell asked if there were any objections from Parker Avenue residents. Mr. Mazzeo said he was unaware of any. Mrs. Dell then stated that the demonstration plan was exactly the type of development envisioned during the Glenbrook Village Commercial District rezoning.

Mr. Quick said he had history with this area as he used to own a property on Parker Avenue. He said that the neighbors were concerned that commercial could be developed along Parker Avenue and wanted to ensure that the use of this portion of the parcel be a residential buffer.

After a brief discussion, Mrs. Fishman moved to recommend approval of the requested zone change. Mr. Williams seconded the motion and it passed unanimously with the eligible members present voting, 4-0 (Dell, Fishman, Williams, and Quick).

ZB Appl. 211-02 - GDP Amendment, Walter Wheeler Drive SPE, LLC and the Strand/BRC Group, LLC to amend the previously approved General Development Plan by combining Blocks C5 & C6 by removing the approved road separating them in order to develop 645 residential units with associated parking and to reallocate 2 residential units to Block C8, increasing the residential units in Block C8 to 497 units.

John Freeman, representative of Harbor Point Development, presented the application. He began by orienting the Board to the Southend development and explained what has been constructed to date, Commons Park, S1 and S2, Waterside School, C7 and how the next phase for 645 units for C5 & C6; is currently before the Board. Mr. Freeman commented that the site was a challenging space to build with open space and active street fronts, the layout of old Crosby Street, 225' height on C8, topography and other challenges. He noted that because of these challenges, they were able to better design a set of buildings with a different footprint compared to the GDP but one which allowed them to lower the parking garage to two stories and mass the buildings more appropriately for the park. The expanded the footprint to allows for three towers to be developed which creates more light and air for the neighborhood. Mr. Freeman added that this was done within the 225' height limit. He next showed a rendering of the three buildings, with 12 story and then 8 story heights as they tried to step down the mass and noted that the shadow study shows a 15% reduction in shadows during winter months on the park and surrounding properties.

Mrs. Dell asked that he show where the street closing would be. Mr. Freeman said it would be near the old driveway on the street to Pitney Bowes.

Mrs. Fishman suggested they focus efforts on getting people down to the park and out to the water. Mr. Freeman said the idea is to draw people from the neighborhood to the waterfront.

Mrs. Dell stated that she felt it was important to have a link from the new school into the park and that by closing this street with the new building massing it would be a negative to the neighborhood.

Mr. Dumais commented that it was very important that in the future, especially around the so called P-Park and Blocks that the street and pedestrian connectivity be kept open to keep the neighborhood and waterfront connected. He added if the Board agreed to send a message in its transmittal letter that this would not set a precedent.

Mrs. Dell agreed with staff that preference is for streets not to be closed off – want a connection from neighborhood down to the park. It's important to have water access and accessibility for everyone.

Mr. Williams asked about garage screening – any brick face? Mr. Freeman explained that the garage would be screened with metal louvers.

Mrs. Dell asked about BMR's and if that could be discussed. Mr. Freeman described the history of BMR's and offsite housing. He explained that six properties were purchased by BLT with the goal to shift some of the required BMR units offsite. He stated that it was very important to rehab and dedicate these offsite units as BMRs to help stabilize the neighborhood. Several Board members asked questions regarding the parking for the units. Mr. Freeman said that some of the units would utilize on-street parking and that they are working with the neighborhood and City to find solutions for the parking needs of the offsite BMR units. Mrs. Dell asked to what extent are the units refurbished, are the comparable to the new units being built? Mr. Freeman said that's what they are attempting to address, they are refurbished but don't have granite counters.

The Board agreed that they would like more information prior to making any recommendation on the BMR request and asked if Mr. Freeman would come back to further discuss this issue.

Mr. Williams moved to recommend approval of the requested General Development Plan amendment. Mrs. Fishman seconded the motion and it passed unanimously with the eligible members present voting, 4-0 (Dell, Fishman, Williams, and Quick) with the noted comments.

Lease Agreement:

Re-submission of a Proposed Lease Agreement between the City and Congressman Jim Himes for Office Space on the 10th Floor of the Stamford Government Center.

Mr. Dumais explained the lease agreement to the Board. Mrs. Dell commented that when lease agreement terms expire and should it be renewed, the City should adjust the level of rent to match that of the previous Congressman's agreement.

Mr. Quick moved to recommend approval of the requested lease agreement. Mrs. Fishman seconded the motion and it passed unanimously with the eligible members present voting, 4-0 (Dell, Fishman, Williams, and Quick).

Planning Board Meeting Minutes:

Meeting of 3/15/11 - Mrs. Dell tabled approval of the minutes until a future meeting.

Old Business

Subdivision #3933, 114 Pond Road, request a modification of condition 14 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 11, 2016.

Mr. Dumais briefly explained the request. Mr. Quick moved to recommend approval of the subdivision condition modification. Mr. Williams seconded the motion and it passed unanimously with the eligible members present voting, 4-0 (Dell, Fishman, Williams, and Quick).

New Business

Mr. Dumais explained that the DSSD and URC would like to present their study on the Downtown to a combined Zoning Board and Planning Board but did not yet have a date for the meeting.

There being no further business to discuss, Mrs. Dell adjourned the meeting at 8:46 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.