

STAMFORD PLANNING BOARD
REGULAR MEETING MINUTES #3724
TUESDAY, OCTOBER 4 2011
7TH FLOOR LAND USE CONFERENCE AREA
888 WASHINGTON BLVD., STAMFORD, CT

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

Regular Meeting

Mrs. Dell called the meeting to order at 7:35 and announced that alternate Jay Tepper would be seated as a full member for this evening's meeting.

ZB Appl. 211-26 Zoning Map Amendment – GB New England 2, LLC & Nine Sixty Nine Associates, to rezone approximately 5,110 s.f. of land currently zoned C-N to R-10 and to rezone approximately 2,890 s.f. of land currently zoned R-10 to C-N located at 955 & 969 High Ridge Road.

ZB Appl. 211-27 Special Exception - GB New England 2, LLC & Nine Sixty Nine Associates, requests approval pursuant to Section 7.5, Large Scale Development to redevelop an existing commercially zoned property located at 969 High Ridge Road with a new 14,568 s.f. CVS building.

Mr. William Hennessey introduced the development team to the Board. He noted that there are currently three applications pending before the Zoning board, a Site & Architectural Plan Application, a Special Exception application and a Zoning Map change Application but before the Planning Board on referral is the Map Change and Special Exception. Mr. Hennessey stated that the objective of these applications is to demolish a 60,000 s.f. non-conforming office building and replace it with a 14,000 s.f. CVS store, which is a permitted use in the zone. He described the site as 3.5 acres in two Master Plan categories and two Zones and it is bounded on the south by the Sleepy's store and on the north by the Citibank retail building and to the west by Turn of River Road.

Mr. Hennessey next explained the zoning history of the site which was developed under the B-D zone in the 1970's and how it is completely out of conformance with modern zoning. In 2005 there was a text change which would permit the redevelopment of the site and the commercial Master Plan and Zoning designations were removed along Turn of River. He noted that in 2008 Special Exception and Site Plan approval was given for a 38,000 s.f. commercial building and that approval is still valid today.

Mr. Hennessey then explained the reason for the zone line change and how it is consistent with the Master Plan and has the net of putting more land into residentially zoned area. Mr. Tepper asked if the piece moving in to CN was currently green space. Mrs. Dell wanted assurance that it wouldn't be used for anything other than green space.

Mr. Hennessey said that it was a good time to show the Board the site plan. He explained how the existing driveway is maintained and how a new traffic signal would serve access to the site.

Mrs. Dell asked if the traffic signal had been approved? Dave Sullivan, traffic engineer, explained that it needs to be resubmitted to the State Traffic commission for re-approval.

Claire Fishman asked how many lights there were between Turn of River and the parkway? She stated five lights and less than a half a mile. Mr. Sullivan answered that he was not sure of the exact amount but that the applicant would pay for the light and it would be adjusted so all signals were coordinated. Mrs. Fishman added that the office building had two peak flows of traffic a day during the week but that CVS will be at all hours seven days a week.

Mr. Hennessey noted that CVS does not plan for this to be a 24-hour store.

Mrs. Dell commented that they need to be very cognizant that this CVS is going to be in a neighborhood and need to be aware of adding as much screening and reduced lighting as possible.

Mr. Williams commented that in looking at the plans he questioned if there was another option on the building design for the CVS. He said that the abutting commercial properties area more understated and this looks much more commercial. Mr. Hennessey said let's have that dialog.

Mrs. Dell said that there is a consensus of the general dislike of the predominately stucco office look of the building. Mr. Williams asked if there was an option for a more traditional looking building. Mrs. Dell also added that there needs to be more green added to the site, particularly in the parking lots and front of the store.

Mr. Hennessey commented that though the project is parked at a rate over what the zoning callas for it is parked at a rate that CVS demands but that there may be room to add additional landscaping. He noted that staff had already raised the concern about more internal landscaping and softening the front of the building and treating the sidewalk to the building from the street in a different material.

Mrs. Dell asked for a rendering of what the building looks like. Mr. Hennessey commented that it looks very much like the building at Bull's Head. Mr. Williams stated that he had a problem with the fact that it looked like the building at Bull's Head.

Mr. Hennessey said that the options for an alternate design include how the material skins the building its color, texture and mixtures and stated that it would help the team to know what the Board likes and doesn't like.

Mrs. Dell said that she did not like the solid stucco and red around the entrance and would like a more neighborhood friendly building with more brick and windows, with less lighting and signage.

Mr. Tepper commented that he would like less Norwalk route 1-ish.

Mr. Williams, also stated that he would prefer more brick and less stucco and a more neighborhood friendly design.

Mr. Hennessey said that their goal is to have people say that the CVS on High Ridge Road looks good.

Mrs. Dell said that she would like the development team to come back before the Board on October 18th and respond to some of the comments raised. Mr. Hennessey said that would be fine and listed the issues as lighting, pedestrian, landscaping and building architecture. Mrs. Dell then tabled discussion on the applications until the 18th.

ZB Appl. 211-30 Special Exception - COLLINWOOD, LLC, 28-30 Spring St. requests approval pursuant to Appendix B, Footnote 7 to reduce rear yard setback to 0' to allow for the expansion of an existing second-story over a legally nonconforming first-story located at 28-30 Spring Street in a C-L zone.

Mr. Dumais briefly introduced the application. Mr. Redniss explained the application as a way to expand over the existing footprint of a nonconforming building. Mr. Tepper asked if there was any change in the footprint? Mr. Redniss answered no.

Mr. Tepper moved to recommend approval of Zoning Board application 211-30. Mr. Williams seconded the motion and it passed unanimously with the eligible members present voting, 5-0 (Dell, Fishman, Quick, Williams and Tepper).

Planning Board Meeting Minutes:

Meeting of 9/20/11 Mr. Quick moved approval of the meeting minutes of 9-20-11. Mrs. Fishman seconded the motion and it passed unanimously with the eligible members present voting, 4-0 (Dell, Fishman, Quick, and Tepper with Williams abstaining).

Meeting of 9/6/11 Mrs. Dell announced approval of the 9/6/11 would be tabled to a future date.

Old Business

The Board asked Mr. Dumais for an update on the Five-Guys restaurant being proposed on High Ridge Road. Mr. Dumais said that he would speak to the Zoning Enforcement Officer and get back to the Board.

Mr. Dumais passed out a schedule for the Capital Budget presentations for the year to the Board.

New Business

Mr. Dumais announced that the next meeting was on October 18th.

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

Respectfully Submitted,

Claire Fishman, Secretary
Stamford Planning Board