

STAMFORD PLANNING BOARD
REGULAR MEETING MINUTES # 3726
TUESDAY, DECEMBER 20, 2011
7TH FLOOR LAND USE CONFERENCE AREA
888 WASHINGTON BLVD., STAMFORD, CT

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

Mrs. Dell called the meeting to order at 7:30pm.

Zoning Board Referrals:

ZB Appl. 211-36 – Text Change, Goldstein (DSSD) to Amend Article III, Section 7-Q and Article IV Section 12-D-1 to add language regarding changes to open space and parking requirement in the C-G and CC-N districts.

Mr. Dell announced that this was a continuation of the meeting held on this text amendment on December 13. Mrs. Dell announced that the Director of Economic Development City of Stamford, Laure Aubuchon, would like to speak on behalf of the administration on this application. Ms. Aubuchon stated that the City is trying to encourage a more vibrant lifestyle, with less cars in the downtown area and the administration supports this application. She said that this application will help to encourage the construction of more downtown housing. Ms. Aubuchon said that this amendment will work because if the economic model doesn't work a builder won't build under the current rules or even these rules.

Mrs. Dell next asked if any Board members had questions for Mr. Redniss.

Mr. Quick asked of the list of projects that didn't get approved, more than five are over 500 feet from a garage which is over a city block away.

Mr. Redniss said 1 to 1, it's a special exception and they have to go to two boards and have a parking management plan. He noted that the Mayor said could really use customers in City parking garages.

Mr. Quick stated the first five on need list were all more than 500 feet from a garage and he questioned if the 500 foot guideline used in these maps was an actual defined proximity? Mr. Redniss answered that it is a relative standard, didn't want to put a hard rule in but could.

Mr. Quick asked if approved and the Board received an application that had parking more than 500 feet away, what would be the rational for approving or disapproving that?

Mr. Totilo said when he looked at this application and had concerns about different things. If a person came home at night, how would we accommodate a night drop-off and specifically cited concerns about safety of off-site parking and walking to / from the buildings at night.

Mr. Redniss said he understood especially involving groceries and that site plans need to have a convenient drop-off, but that it could be valet and could be solved with a parking management plan. Mr. Redniss also noted that safety could also be partially addressed with a parking management plan.

Mr. Totilo asked about feasibility of private garages.

Mr. Redniss showed a chart (9 years old) of parking supply and some of the buildings have used valet parking.

Mrs. Dell asked a question about parking restrictions.

Mr. Williams said he was curious about what other cities do in terms of parking requirements? Mr. Redniss answered that White Plains, New Rochelle all have 1 to 1 parking or less, as well as Yonkers, Bridgeport and New Haven.

Mrs. Fishman asked in the parking management plan she'd like to see places in buildings reserved for elderly people first and she that she was very concerned about this. Mr. Redniss said that's why a parking management plan is so important – it's a critical component of this amendment and any future application.

Mr. Tepper said it seems in order to get people moving downtown, plans need to come before the Planning and Zoning Boards and that these parking issues would be addressed at that time.

Mr. Totilo said we'd look to the market to drive some of this but could preclude some people like the elderly will move in. He noted that any developer will have an economic challenge to provide these customers amenities and was more concerned with the parking management plan and what it provides.

Mr. Tepper also commented that he was concerned about the parking management plans and what happens then with private ground lease?

Mr. Quick said his experience with parking is visitor spots are not included and that delivery vehicles and service trucks have no where to park. Mr. Quick stated that this type of parking should be deducted from what is required.

Mr. Redniss noted that they think it's better planning to reduce the parking regulation as proposed.

Sandy Goldstein, President DSSD, told the Board their questions had been right on target. She said that Jay said a phrase that to us is very important and of course we want to get people downtown and it's because of parking that units are being built downtown. Mrs. Goldstein said that if a 1 to 1 ratio is passed, we still have ultimate control of any building plan through the Planning and Zoning Boards to exert control and safety. She noted that this amendment will save millions in development costs and that she knew of three projects currently relying on this.

Mr. Redniss said there are 51 public spaces available to Park Square West. The value of a unit in the building, you are lucky to get \$40K and that it is hard to overcome economics when you have too many requirements.

Mrs. Dell said in reviewing this, she had been a staunch believer of 1.25 would like to see how the Planning Board in CC-N at 1 per dwelling and that if there are 2 or 3 bedroom units parking should be 1.25. She noted that if this was put into the regulations she could live with this but doesn't like the idea of it being optional. Mrs. Dell also stated that she would like to see it spelled out, would let everyone know that it gives a few extra spaces to a building. She also commented that she did not like the ability to park 100% offsite parking but could live with it. Ultimately she believed that Planning Board should wait and look at this as part of the Master Plan update and perhaps then revisit this 1 to 1 parking.

Mr. Redniss said that whenever the City's consultant is selected, any objective person looking at the Master Plan will get right back to this same parking conclusion. He said that by putting it in now only risked development not getting developed. Mr. Redniss also noted

that he discouraged the Board from making this change temporary because we have 30 years of data that says the current regulation is a mistake.

Mr. Williams said his concern with requiring this is he's troubled by downtown Stamford projects not being economically viable and that he was comfortable with the regulation as proposed.

Mr. Tepper a parking management plan requirement gives the Planning and Zoning boards some limitation to any negative risks.

Mr. Totilo had a question about onsite versus offsite parking and that perhaps there should be a percentage onsite minimum requirement and a defined location.

Mrs. Dell said up to 2 bedrooms is 1:1; over 2 (i.e. 3 bedrooms) needs to be 1.25 ratio. Ask applicant to change amendment language and bring it back to the Board. Mr. Redniss agreed that 3 or more bedrooms should have a 1.25 ratio minimum and that they were agreeable to doing so.

Mr. Quick asked about viability of offsite parking and lender issues. Mr. Redniss answered there are units in downtown without parking but hard to measure the total amount.

Mrs. Dell said she wanted to this a part of the change. Want offsite parking to be designated 24/7 and defined locations.

Mr. Tepper said they should require that buildings provide lease of offsite parking to ensure the parking is there.

Mrs. Dell said offsite parking should be reserved even in a City Garage.

Mr. Redniss said talking about a base of 1 to 1 parking we haven't experienced a lot of zip cars in Stamford and they want it to be flexible because of unknowns in the future.

Mr. Quick said he'd love to rent spaces as a commercial developer.

Mr. Redniss also discussed the open space portion of this amendment and stated that they can't meet a suburban open space requirement in an urban area. There needs to be some flexibility in the regulation.

Mrs. Dell announced that the Board would discuss and vote on this at the January 10, 2012. meeting.

Zoning Board of Appeals Referrals:

ZBA Appl. 003-12 – Huamani requesting variances of front yard setbacks, building coverage and Section 10 Nonconforming uses, to construct a 2-story addition on an existing 2-family structure located at 50 Wardwell Street in a R-5 zone.

Mr. Dumais briefly introduced the application. After a brief discussion of the application, Mr. Williams moved to approve the requested variance. Mrs. Fishman seconded the motion and it passed unanimously with the eligible members present voting, 5-0 (Dell, Totilo, Fishman, Williams and Quick).

ZBA Appl. 004-12 – Marti requesting variances of Section 6 to allow proposed accessory structures to be located in a front yard of a property having an address of 16 Knobloch Lane in a R-20 zone.

Mr. Dumais introduced the application. After a brief discussion of the application, Mr. Totilo moved to approve the requested variance. Mr. Williams seconded the motion and it passed unanimously with the eligible members present voting, 5-0 (Dell, Totilo, Fishman, Williams and Quick).

ZBA Appl. 005-12 – Findeisen requesting variances of rear and side yard setbacks, building coverage and Section 6 Accessory Structures, to construct a proposed 2-story addition and to permit an existing shed to remain on a property located a 90 Ocean Drive East in a R-20 zone.

After a brief discussion of the application, Mr. Quick moved to approve the requested variance. Mrs. Fishman seconded the motion and it passed unanimously with the eligible members present voting, 5-0 (Dell, Totilo, Fishman, Williams and Quick).

Planning Board Meeting Minutes:

Discussion on the acceptance of the meeting Minutes of 9/6/11 and 8/16/11 were tabled to a future meeting date.

Meeting Minutes of 8/2/11

Mr. Williams moved to approve the minutes as submitted. Mr. Totilo seconded the motion and it passed unanimously with the eligible members present voting, 5-0 (Dell, Totilo, Fishman, Williams and Quick).

Meeting Minutes of 7/26/11

Mrs. Fishman moved to approve the minutes as submitted. Mr. Williams seconded the motion and it passed unanimously with the eligible members present voting (Tepper in place of Totilo), 5-0 (Dell, Tepper, Fishman, Williams and Quick).

Meeting Minutes of 7/5/11

Mr. Tepper moved to approve the minutes as submitted. Mr. Williams seconded the motion and it passed unanimously with the eligible members present voting (Tepper in place of Totilo), 5-0 (Dell, Tepper, Fishman, Williams and Quick).

Meeting Minutes of 6/28/11

Mrs. Fishman moved to approve the minutes with modifications. Mr. Williams seconded the motion and it passed unanimously with the eligible members present voting (Tepper in place of Totilo), 4-0 (Dell, Tepper, Fishman and Williams).

Meeting Minutes of 5/24/11

Mr. Tepper moved to approve the minutes as submitted. Mr. Williams seconded the motion and it passed unanimously with the eligible members present voting (Tepper in place of Totilo), 4-0 (Dell, Tepper, Fishman and Quick).

Meeting Minutes of 5/3/11

Mr. Quick moved to approve the minutes as submitted. Mr. Totilo seconded the motion and it passed unanimously with the eligible members present voting (Naumowicz in place of Fishman), 5-0 (Dell, Totilo, Naumowicz, Williams and Quick).

There being no further business to discuss Mrs. Dell adjourned the meeting at 9:35 pm.

Respectfully Submitted,

Claire Fishman, Secretary
Stamford Planning Board