

STAMFORD PLANNING BOARD
REGULAR MEETING MINUTES # 3591
TUESDAY, OCTOBER 5, 2010
7TH FLOOR LAND USE CONFERENCE AREA
888 WASHINGTON BLVD., STAMFORD, CT

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

Regular Meeting

The Chair, Mrs. Theresa Dell, called the meeting to order at 7:30 p.m.

Master Plan Amendment:

Sustainable Master Plan Amendment

Robin Stein passed out at the last meeting a draft “work in progress” amendment. The process started two years ago and the Mayor’s task force felt this kind of amendment would be proactive. Staff got the green light to do this, did in-house without hiring a consultant. Erin McKenna on staff played a major role in preparing this. Sue Levi-Itel, helped. The amendment is different because it comes from Staff, format is similar to what is in the Master Plan and we have added Charts and Maps and additional materials and set up accountability and a metrics to quantify progress. Process on Board approval with any changes would be to schedule a Public Hearing.

Mr. Stein reviewed section by section briefly. Board is used to Land Use and Transportation and similar to 2002 Master Plan. What’s here is the Master Plan sets policy guidelines, nothing mandates anything. Some new terms/jargon (if clarification is needed – request from Staff).

Mrs. Dell said things like description are good because it defines what the specifics are. Interesting about streets, bikes/buses – having better systems to help reduce parking demand.

Mrs. Fishman noted that nowhere is it mentioned there is no proper taxi system in this town. It would help, and something to be looked at. Mr. Stein stated this could be a long range plan and could have a designated area for taxi services.

Mrs. Fishman questioned parking pricing strategies and those could be discriminatory against people who need to drive. Mr. Stein said that was not the intention, don’t have absolute details.

Mrs. Fishman asked why there was no bus route down Stillwater Road? Doesn’t the bus go up to West Hill High School?

Mrs. Dell said the Plan should say there should be more bus service in the City.

Mr. Stein noted that with the Charts and Maps, it might be a good idea to have an annotated index.

Mr. Tepper asked if the document was on-line, particularly the maps?

Mrs. Fishman had a question about the Census chart and Todd Dumais answered the question about the American Community Survey.

Mrs. Fishman asked a question about Carbon Trading. Mr. Stein said he would have to do more research on the issue but gave an example of offsetting a plane ride.

Mr. Stein continued to go through the document sections.

Mrs. Dell stated they should put something about restricting paving of yards in single-family zones.

Mr. Tepper asked if the Board amends the Master Plan with something not in the Zoning Regulations – what's the process to amend those? Mr. Stein answered.

Mr. Stein mentioned recycling rates in the City and as of September 2010 up to 25%. Mrs. Dell noted households do a much better job of recycling versus multifamily apartments and condos which tend to have lower rates.

Mr. Stein fine tuned the numbers on asthma cases for that map in the materials.

Mrs. Dell stated this was quite a commendable project and excellent job.

Mr. Stein said with the Board's involvement and comments, Staff would rework and get out the next iteration and when Board was comfortable with final product, could vote to go to a hearing.

Mrs. Dell tabled discussion for this evening and asked Board members to get their comments back to Staff for editing.

Zoning Board Application Referrals:

1. **APPL. 210-35 – General Development Plan, Charter Oak Communities;**
APPL. 210-36 – Special Exception , Charter Oak Communities

Mr. Stein briefly introduced the applications and described them as a revitalization of Vidal Court. Some complicated factors because people are living in units which are substandard and economically disadvantaged. By Board of Rep ordinance, there's to be a one-to-one replacement. Stamford Health Systems is also involved

Mrs. Dell asked if we know how many people from Vidal Court want to remain?

Vin Tufo, Stamford Housing Authority, said they are in the process of doing surveys and anticipate a large number will want to remain in new properties.

Rick Redniss, Redniss & Mead, described they'd been before the Board a number of times in the past years about Vidal Court. This is Phase III. Mr. Redniss explained the units and affordability split of single family and two family and multi-family going down Merrell Avenue. The Applicant has submitted a Master Plan change and Zone Change for Progress Drive Phase I and II, Palmer Square and street discontinuances. 40%

market rate and competes with the Market. Replaces all of the housing for people there now.

Mr. Tepper asked what the market rate for rental units is? Mr. Tufo stated \$1,500 - \$1,800/month with utilities for a one bedroom. Floor of \$700/month for BMR units.

Mrs. Fishman asked about any Section 8 units? Mr. Tufo said they will use Section 8 vouchers to cover rents of families at the lowest end.

Mr. Dell stated there was an order for Palmer Square and Progress Drive which allows Vidal to be taken down. Mr. Redniss said these concerns are very important. There is a park across the street and to some extent your success is related to the park. Help with the park as an idea.

Mrs. Fishman said she was saddened about what happened at Southwood Square and hopes its not going down this way.

Mr. Tepper asked about the last phase around the hospital? If they have the location for final/final phase of redevelopment? Mr. Redniss stated the Special Exception site plan is where it is.

Mrs. Fishman moved to approve Application 210-35. Mr. Totilo seconded the motion, and it passed unanimously with the eligible members present voting, 5-0 (Dell, Fishman, Tepper, Totilo, and Naumowicz).

Mr. Naumowicz moved to approve Application 210-36. Mr. Totilo seconded the motion, and it passed unanimously with the eligible members present voting, 5-0 (Dell, Fishman, Tepper, Totilo, and Naumowicz).

2. APPL. 210-19 – PROCUREMENT, LLC, 826 High Ridge Road, Special Exception

Mr. Stein briefly introduced the application and said it'd been before the Board as part of a Master Plan. Mr. Stein highlighted the map and existing zoning boundaries. As for history, the application had failed it's Master Plan attempt and had more recently succeeded in getting a Category 3 and RM-1 zoning approved. Traffic impacts from professionals say no impact is anticipated. Mr. Stein noted the quality of architecture is outstanding with a residential character.

Mrs. Dell requested discussion from the Board.

Mr. Tepper said he was uncomfortable with Mr. Poola's traffic statement; uncomfortable with the amount of traffic – extra cars at peak times. Also concerned about length of driveway, number of cars and kids being dropped off.

John Leydon, Attorney for Applicant, introduced a brief letter from Traffic consultant to supplement the record. He also introduced the development team. Applicant has not changed anything since they went before the Board last year. Mr. Leydon compared the daycare on Long Ridge Road which has a similar number of students.

Mrs. Fishman asked about Hubbard where the old library used to be and did the applicant make a comparison with this?

Mr. Totilo asked what the operational hours would be? Mr. Leydon responded 7a-6:30pm. Estimate one car a minute which would not be a tremendous rush.

Mrs. Dell noted this was a different kind of facility and we're talking about a different kind of pickup and drop off because people have to park cars and bring kids into the building.

Mr. Leydon discussed the site plan.

The Board asked questions about traffic/parking operations.

Mr. Quick had a question about people backing onto High Ridge Road? Mrs. Dell asked about having a one-way flow from High Ridge Road? Mr. Leydon responded to both saying the State mandates how the traffic flow must be.

Mrs. Dell expressed a concern about a lot of asphalt in the back to support lots of parking in the rear. Concerned the lot in the middle will come back. Would like to know there'll be greenspace on the property. Mr. Leydon stated they'd spent a lot of time working with Staff on the design of this project.

Mrs. Dell stated the Board members are all very concerned to change to this type of development and a facility with 120 day care units would be there. Didn't think it was going to be one huge facility. People were concerned about extra piece of property?

Mr. Leydon said as-of-right lot is only 3 units. Applicant bought this as a commercial property; Mr. Osta purchased home which has been depreciating for years. They are concerned about the whole tract of property in next five4 years.

Mr. Tepper agreed with the Chair.

Mr. Quick stated the existing homes on High Ridge Road are a problem caused by the widening of High Ridge Road. A Transition Zone is not a bad idea; the architecture softens the blend.

Mrs. Fishman said her main concern is the unknown parcel.

Mr. Naumowicz expressed he did not have a problem with the traffic.

Mr. Totilo stated the architectural look is a nice transition going down High Ridge Road as he drives by this area every morning. He also has no concern about parking and feels it's a nice transition and not out of character for the neighborhood.

Mr. Stein said it's critical for the traffic signal to work for this project. What happens if the traffic signal doesn't come in when the project opens?

Mr. Tepper asked that a condition be put into the approval that the applicant will pay for the signal if no City capital funding.

Mr. Totilo moved to approve Application 210-19. Mr. Quick seconded the motion, and it passed unanimously with the eligible members present voting, 5-0 (Dell, Fishman, Tepper, Totilo, and Naumowicz) and the provision that it is the opinion of the Board that the proposed traffic signal at Bradley Place is important to the efficient ingress and egress of traffic to this site. Every attempt should be made to insure that this traffic signal

is constructed to coincide, to the extent feasible, with the construction of this development. The City, through its capital budget process, should insure that adequate funds are appropriated, in addition to the \$100,000 committed by the applicant, for this traffic improvement .

Old Business:

None

New Business:

No meeting next week (October 12, 2010). October 19 will be first of four joint public meetings.

There being no further business to discuss, Mrs. Dell adjourned the meeting at 9:50 p.m.

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.