

MINUTES OF PLANNING BOARD - REGULAR MEETING #3281
JANUARY 2, 2001
7th FLOOR CONFERENCE ROOM, GOVERNMENT CENTER
888 WASHINGTON BLVD., STAMFORD, CT

Present for the Board were: Duane Hill, Chairman; Marggie Laurie; Donna Loglisci; and Claire Fishman. Present for staff were: Robin Stein, Land Use Bureau Chief; and Carol Davis, Senior Planner.

Mr. Hill opened the meeting at 7:40 pm.

Supplemental Capital Project Appropriation Request for Mill River Pedestrian and Bicycle Route, \$761,440

Mr. Stein said this appropriation is fully funded by the Federal government and that this is the first grant the City has received under TEA21 for multi purpose trails. He said the City's 20% share was previously appropriated. He showed the plan for a trail from West Broad Street to the train station and explained that crossings at Tresser Boulevard and Main Street are under investigation.

On a motion by Mrs. Laurie, seconded by Mrs. Loglisci, the Board voted unanimously to recommend approval.

Pending Applications:

MP-372 The Connecticut Light & Power Company and The Strand/BRC Group LLC to amend the Master Plan from Land Use Category Designated 12- Industrial, General Manufacturing & Light Assembly, to Land Use Category Designated 10D Shorefront Development for 8.5 acres at the southwesterly corner of Atlantic Street and Washington Boulevard.

Mr. Stein distributed a summary of the December 19 public hearing. He explained that the project is moving in a favorable direction but that there will be additional reviews from the Department of Environmental Protection and the Zoning Board. He said the project must meet federal and state standards for hazardous waste. He explained the City role in the ferry terminal and said the ferry owner must determine if he can tolerate speed restrictions and other issues regarding the terminal location.

Mr. Hill said in a perfect world there would be more detailed plans to review but that the Board can weigh in as the project evolves. Mr. Stein said the applicant should work with NRZ and Pitney Bowes to encourage home ownership.

On a motion by Mrs. Laurie, seconded by Mrs. Fishman, the Board voted unanimously to approve the application.

Zoning Board Referrals:

APPL. 20-028 - Hines GS Properties requesting Special Exception pursuant to Article III, Section 7S and Table IV, Appendix B, Footnote 13, for public amenities to allow a premium FAR of 2.5 and premium height of 350 feet for property at 425 Atlantic Street in the CC-N Central City North Zoning District.

Mr. Stein explained that the next three referrals are similar to three applications made to the Zoning Board three years ago. He said it is a complicated site and there have been some adjustments to the plans with the elimination of the trading floor and improvements to the north of the post office but that some key issues remain. He said the post office is of architectural and historic significance and while the applicants have made attempts to make the new façade on Federal Street compatible they do not propose to save the new section of the building. He suggested that the Zoning Board should consider the presentations by Mr. George and Mrs. Kahn and hire an outside expert to review the Federal Street facades. He also recommended that the applicant submit an updated traffic analysis to be reviewed by Tom Bruccoleri.

Mr. Stein explained that four amenities [(1) historic preservation of the post office; (2) public parking; (3) ground floor retail; and (4) pedestrian connection to the station] have been proposed and that the amenities exceed the bonus requested.

In answer to Board members Mr. Abadan said handicapped access to the post office will be through the new park and that it will be possible to place communication equipment for the City on the tower.

Mr. Hill asked if given the concerns expressed the architects have reflected on the Federal Street façade. Attorney John Freeman, Ceci Saunders and a representative from the post office spoke in support of demolition of the 1939 addition to the post office building. Ms. Saunders said façade-ectomy is not acceptable to preservationists. Mr. Abadan said the 1939 addition distracts from the earlier building. He said the new building façade integrates design elements from the old building. There was discussion about the loading dock, how much it will be used and for how long. Mr. Stein asked if there are plans for the lower level of the post office building and suggested that if community usage is an option the Youth in Art program might be considered. The applicants stated that the post office will remain at this location indefinitely and Mr. Freeman said that having a third party review the design is most unusual but he has already discussed this with Mr. Cole. He noted that David Woods, an architect, has approved the design. Mr. Freeman submitted Mr. Woods' written comment for the record.

Mrs. Laurie asked if it is possible to pump water from the site into the Mill River. Mr. Stein said this may not be feasible but the applicants might explore other City objectives such as sustainable ("green") design.

On a motion by Mrs. Loglisci, seconded by Mrs. Fishman, the Board voted unanimously to recommend approval of Appl. 20-028 with appropriate comments relating to use of a third party for design review, review of new traffic information by the City transportation planner, consideration of the City's telecommunication needs and the importance of sustainable ("green") design, construction and management principles in the implementation of the project design.

APPL. 20-029A - Hines GS Properties requesting Special Exception pursuant to Definition 39.2 “Floor Area” to exclude up to 6 levels of above grade parking from FAR.

On a motion by Mrs. Loglisci, seconded by Mrs. Fishman, the Board voted unanimously to recommend approval of this application

APPL. 20-029B - Hines GS Properties requesting Special Exception pursuant to Definition 39.2 to waive 10% open space requirement related to Floor Area Ratio and above grade parking.

On a motion by Mrs. Laurie, seconded by Mrs. Loglisci, the Board voted unanimously to recommend approval of this application.

On a motion by Mrs. Laurie, seconded by Mrs. Loglisci, the Board voted unanimously to consider the following referral which was not on the original agenda.

APP. 20-030 - Carol W. Tusch requesting Text Change to amend Appendix A-Land Use Schedule, Table I - Permitted uses in Residential, Commercial or Industrial Districts, line 30.2 - Personal Wireless Service Facility (74.2) to add Footnote (1) to include as permitted use in Designed Districts.

Mr. Stein explained that the Zoning Board is still reviewing regulations for towers and that these facilities are distinct from towers. He said the Zoning Board inadvertently omitted designed districts when it approved the text amendment for Personal Wireless Service Facility in 1997.

On a motion by Mrs. Fishman, seconded by Mrs. Laurie, the Board voted unanimously to recommend approval.

Zoning Board of Appeals Referrals

ZBA Appl. 006-01- Ofalio and Cleonie Jean-Pierre requesting Variance of Table III, Appendix B, minimum lot area 8,853 sq. ft. in lieu of 9,000 sq. ft. and frontage 45.4 feet in lieu of 60 feet, to add a third unit to a two family residence at 117 Maple Avenue in the R-5 Multi-family Residence District.

Mr. Stein explained that the applicants propose adding a third floor to the existing building. Mrs. Laurie suggested that a runoff study would be needed for the parking area. With that caveat, Mrs. Laurie made a motion, seconded by Mrs. Loglisci, and the Board voted unanimously to recommend approval.

ZBA Appl. 008-01 – David E. and Sally A. Putney requesting Variances of Table III, Appendix B for front setback 50’ in lieu of 55’, garage setback 4.4’ in lieu of 30’/55’, side yard setback 2.7’ in lieu of 6’, and rear setback 20’ in lieu of 30’; (2) Section 6E for reduction of minimum setback between garage and house; (3) Section 6A for accessory building in front yard and (4) Section 7D rear setback to roof overhang 17’ in lieu of 28.5’ to subdivide parcel into 2 lots at 40 Hillside Avenue in an R-7.5 Single Family Residence District.

Mr. Stein reviewed the application and noted that another variance would be needed if the existing garage is not to be removed. Mrs. Davis said that it would be necessary to remove at least one large tree to provide parking in front of the house. Mrs. Laurie made a motion to recommend denial because the variances are too severe. Mrs. Fishman seconded the motion and it carried unanimously.

ZBA Appl. 010-01 – Dominick Rosa, Jr. requesting Variance of Section 10 (A) to expand a legally non-conforming gas station; Variance of Section 4 (AA) and Appendix B to reduce the front setback 12.8' in lieu of 25' and rear setback 20' in lieu of 30'; and Variance of Section 6 (A) to allow an accessory structure in the front yard at 351 Hope Street in the R-6 One and Two Family Residence District.

On a motion by Mrs. Laurie, seconded by Mrs. Fishman, the Board voted unanimously to recommend approval.

ZBA Appl. 012-01 – Southern Connecticut Newspapers, Inc. requesting modification of Variance #023-00 to permit Southern Connecticut Newspapers, Inc. to implement the Variance in stages. Property located at 75 Tresser Boulevard and 68 Clinton Avenue in the C-G General Commercial District and R-5 Multiple Family Design District.

Attorney Michael Cacace, representing the applicant, explained that construction of the garage has been delayed pending sale of the parcel north of Tresser Boulevard to the City. He said that there has been no change in the plans for a garage but that the applicant would like to pave the recently purchased property south of the lot on Clinton Avenue to add ten to fifteen parking spaces. Mr. Stein said he would like a clear message that in some prudent time the garage will be built.

On a motion by Mrs. Fishman, seconded by Mrs. Loglisci, the Board voted unanimously to recommend approval of the modification and to request reaffirmation of the letter of agreement to build the garage when the property is sold.

Correspondence from Arnold M. Karp regarding condition #21 of Subdivision Appl. #3647 – Hunting Ridge Co.

Mr. Stein explained that this subdivision was approved with 22 conditions after being denied because of a neighbor's objections. He said the new neighbors do not want the trees which were required in condition #21. On a motion by Mrs. Laurie, seconded by Mrs. Loglisci, the Board voted unanimously to amend condition #21 to read as follows:

“The existing clay drainage pipe shall be repaired at 592 Hunting Ridge Rd. This condition shall be contingent upon the owner of 592 Hunting Ridge Rd. granting permission to repair the drainage pipe.”

Minutes for Approval:
December 12, 2000 – unanimously approved.

Capital Budget 2001/2002-2008

There was a brief discussion about the budget schedule. It was agreed that in order to red flag the “grey area” (capital versus operating category) items the Planning Board would recommend no appropriations for these projects in the out years. Mr. Stein said the budget must be finalized by January 16 for public hearing on February 6.

Old Business

Mr. Hill said he has been served papers on the Stillwater Road subdivision.

The meeting was adjourned at 10 pm.

Respectfully submitted,
Duane Hill, Chairman
Stamford Planning Board

Note: These proceedings were recorded on tape and are available for review during regular business hours.