

**STAMFORD PLANNING BOARD
APPROVED MINUTES - TUESDAY, JUNE 25, 2024
REGULAR MEETING
VIA THE INTERNET & CONFERENCE CALL
6:30 P.M.**

ZOOM WEBINAR
<https://us02web.zoom.us/j/83654081321>

Webinar ID: 836 5408 1321
Passcode: 483149

Stamford Planning Board Members present were: Voting Members: Theresa Dell, Chair; Jay Tepper, Vice Chair and Michael Totilo. Absent: Jennifer Godzeno, Secretary & Voting Member; William Levin, Alternate and Stephen Perry, Alternate. Present for staff: Lindsey Cohen, Associate Planner.

Ms. Dell called the meeting to order at 6:30 p.m.

Ms. Dell introduced the members of the Board and staff present and introduced the first item on the agenda.

PLANNING BOARD MEETING MINUTES:

June 11, 2024: After a brief discussion Mr. Tepper moved to recommend *approval* of the Planning Board Regular Meeting Minutes of June 11, 2024; Mr. Totilo seconded the motion, and passed unanimously with eligible members present voting, 3-0 (Dell, Tepper and Totilo).

REQUEST FOR AUTHORIZATION

SUPPLEMENTAL CAPITAL PROJECT APPROPRIATION REQUESTS:

- 1. WEST SIDE NEIGHBORHOOD CONNECTOR PROJECT - PROJECT #001396 - TOTAL REQUEST \$17,000,000.00:** Between Richmond Hill Avenue and Pulaski Street, final design, permitting and construction of a 12 ft. wide neighborhood greenway with associated pedestrian safety improvements to connect residents of the economically disadvantaged West Side Neighborhood past Interstate 95, the 4-track Metro-North Railroad main line and South State Street to the Downtown and South End Neighborhoods as well as direct access to the Stamford Transportation Center. This project is 100% funded through a Federal grant.

Frank Petise, Transportation Bureau Chief and Luke Bittenwieser, Transportation Planner, made a presentation and answered questions from the Board.

After a brief discussion, Mr. Totilo recommended *approval* of the West Side Neighborhood Connector Project - Project #001396 with a Total Request of \$17,000,000.00. This request has been reviewed pursuant to Connecticut General Statute Section 8-24 and the City Charter Section C6-30-13 and finds this request to be consistent with CGS Section 8-24, and the City Charter Section C6-30-13, as well as consistent with the adopted 2015 Master Plan; Mr. Tepper seconded the motion and passed unanimously with eligible members present voting, 3-0 (Dell, Tepper and Totilo).

- 2. TRANSFER STATION - CANAL WALL REPLACEMENT - PROJECT #001356 - TOTAL REQUEST \$12,685,000.00:** This project is for the long-term repair of the existing bulkhead wall based on the 2019 condition assessment which determined the bulkhead was in poor condition. The long-term repair includes a new steel sheet pile bulkhead in front of the existing bulkhead. The City Grants Department intends to submit a grant application to the Department of Economic Development (EDA) for this project. If the application is successful, EDA will fund 80% of the eligible project costs. EDA indicated the City's share needs to be authorized prior to submitting the grant application. The City's cost share is 20%. Based on the inspection report and the Steel Sheet Pile Bulkhead - Alternatives Evaluation dated January 16, 2024, as prepared by Tighe & Bond, concept engineering alternatives and budget-level cost estimate has been completed to support a grant application. The amount requested is for design, permitting, and construction. This project is 80% Federal grant / 20% funded by the City.

Lou Casolo, Engineering Bureau Chief/City Engineer, made a presentation and answered questions from the Board.

After some discussion, Mr. Tepper recommended *approval* of the Transfer Station-Canal Wall Replacement - Project #001356 with a Total Request of \$12,685,000.00. This request has been reviewed pursuant to Connecticut General Statute Section 8-24 and the City Charter Section C6-30-13 and finds this request to be consistent with CGS Section 8-24, and the City Charter Section C6-30-13, as well as consistent with the adopted 2015 Master Plan; Mr. Totilo seconded the motion and passed unanimously with eligible members present voting, 3-0 (Dell, Tepper and Totilo).

SUBDIVISIONS:

1. **SUBDIVISION #4048 (MODIFICATION) - RAYMOND MAZZEO, REDNISS & MEAD representing STUDIO 503, LLC - 503 WIRE MILL ROAD (2 LOTS):** The applicant is requesting to revise the approval conditions of Subdivision #4048 to reduce the number of lots from three (3) to two (2) and change access to one lot from Studio Road to Wire Mill Road.

The Planning Board approved a three-lot subdivision of this property on August 29, 2023. The property was recently sold, and the new owner is applying for changes to the approval conditions to reduce the number of lots and change access. The property is in Master Plan Category #1 (Residential - Very Low Density Single-Family). The requested changes do not significantly change the existing conditions or intent of the subdivision and, as such, are still aligned with the following Master Plan policies:

- Policy 6A: Maintain residential neighborhood character.
- Policy NS1: Preserve and protect [North Stamford] neighborhood character and quality of life.
- Policy NS3: Preserve and enhance parks, open space and the natural environment.

Ms. Cohen made some brief comments and introduced Mr. Mazzeo.

Raymond Mazzeo, Redniss & Mead, representing the applicant, made a presentation and answered questions from the Board.

After some discussion, Mr. Totilo recommended *approval* of the modifications to *Subdivision #4048* and found this request to be in general harmony with the neighborhood and consistent with Master Plan Category #1 (Residential - Very Low Density Single-Family); Mr. Tepper seconded the motion and passed with eligible members present voting, 3-0 (Dell, Tepper and Totilo).

ZONING BOARD REFERRALS:

1. **ZB APPLICATION #224-23 - McPHERSON TAYLOR representing VOLTA CHARGING, LLC - Text Change (TABLED from the June 11, 2024 Meeting):** Applicant is proposing to amend Section 12.L by adding a new Subsection 12.L.3 to add standards for charging stations with electronic displays.

The Text Change would permit Electric Vehicle (EV) Charging Station Display Kiosks as an as of right accessory use on lots in commercial and industrial zoning districts subject to certain design requirements. Examples of design limitations include setbacks from residential property lines and public right of ways, overall size and screen size limitations, no moving images or audio effects and automatic dimming. The revenue from advertising on the displays directly benefits EV owners who charge vehicles at a subsidized rate. The Text Change is not location specific, however, if approved, the applicant would install two displays at the Stop & Shop in the Ridgeway Shopping Center. This Text Change is aligned with the Master Plan implementation strategy 7I.4 to encourage private applicants to install vehicle charging stations and the Master Plan objective of promoting alternative modes of transportation to support cleaner air and reduce fuel consumption. The application also recognizes the importance of separation from residentially zoned property, protecting residential neighborhoods from intrusion of advertising and light, which goes towards the preservation of the residential character.

Ms. Cohen made some comments and introduced Mr. Fisher.

Christopher Fisher, Cuddy + Feder, LLP and Dean Apostoleris, Project Engineer, Kimley-Horn & Associates, Inc.; made a presentation and answered questions from the Board.

After considerable discussion, Mr. Totilo recommended *approval* of **ZB Application #224-23** with a recommendation the number of EV Charging Station Display Kiosks be limited to a maximum of four (4) depending, that the panel lights are time to turn on/off in accordance with store hours, and the timing of panel lights at 24-hour facilities be looked at for hours operation. The Board found this request to be in general harmony with the 2015 Master Plan; Mr. Tepper seconded the motion and passed unanimously with eligible members present voting, 3-0 (Dell, Tepper and Totilo).

2. ZB APPLICATION #224-21 - JASON KLEIN, CARMODY TORRANCE SANDAK HENNESSEY, LLP representing 492 GLENBROOK ROAD, LLC - 37 & 41 PARKER AVENUE - Map Change:

Applicant is proposing a Map Change to 37 & 41 Parker Avenue properties from the current R-6 (One- and Two-Family) Zoning District to the proposed V-C (Village Commercial) Zoning District.

The property is in Master Plan Category #6 (Commercial - Neighborhood Business). The property is adjacent to an area zoned V-C (Village Commercial) District. Current uses of the site are office and parking. Parker Avenue hosts a mix of uses from multifamily to commercial service offices and one- and two-family homes. The purpose of the V-C District is to promote preservation and development of sustainable, transit-oriented and pedestrian friendly “Main Streets” for neighborhood centers. This is aligned with MP #6 that “is intended to provide for and promote pedestrian-scaled “Main Street” environment...” The V-C District requires new structures and uses to conform to standards such as the sidewalks and street tree requirements to ensure they are in context with the architecture and character of existing neighborhoods. This is aligned with MP #6 that talks about compatibility with adjacent residential areas, superior design, “Main Street” amenities.

Expanding the V-C District zoning is also aligned with the vision for Glenbrook discussed in the Master Plan (Pg. 147) which states that since the 2006 plan, the vision has been to provide for redevelopment opportunity...priority has been placed on creating “village centers” at the Glenbrook... train station.” See Strategy BGS1.1: Encourage higher-density, mixed-use and pedestrian-friendly development around the Glenbrook...train station...and Glenbrook Road.

Re-zoning underutilized and vacant sites such as those in this Application takes development pressure off sites with existing buildings and single-family neighborhoods by incentivizing development elsewhere.

If the Map Change is approved, redevelopment of the site will be reviewed by the City again by way of a Special Permit for development, including referral to Transportation, Traffic & Parking (TTP) for any impact of development on local traffic and the Planning Board for compliance with the Master Plan.

The proposed Map Change is aligned with the Master Plan in that both envision a “Main Street” environment around the Glenbrook train station, and both hold redevelopment to higher design standards.

Ms. Cohen made comments and introduced Mr. Klein.

Jason Klein, Carmody Torrance Sandak Hennessey LLP, made a presentation and answered questions from the Board.

After some discussion, Mr. Tepper recommended *approval* of **ZB Application #224-21** and found this request to be in general harmony with Master Plan Category #6 (Commercial - Neighborhood Business); Mr. Totilo seconded the motion and passed unanimously with eligible members present voting, 3-0 (Dell, Tepper and Totilo).

3. ZB APPLICATION #224-26 - RICHARD W. REDNISS, 22-1st CORP. - Text Change: The purpose of this Text Change is to limit the intensity of certain C-G (General Commercial) District uses north and south of Downtown to help keep higher intensity C-G uses centralized in and around the Downtown while allowing for the modernization and adaptive reuse of other properties in proximity to Downtown.

Since this is a Text Change application, it is not site-specific, however the only C-G Zoned property north of North Street is 1600 Summer Street, which is in Master Plan Category #9 (Urban Mixed-Use). The Planning Board recommended approval of ZB #224-08 Zoning Map Change of 1600 Summer Street to C-G District at its regularly scheduled meeting on February 27, 2024.

This Text Change would require a Special Permit for certain uses greater than 10,000 sq. ft. if located north of North Street and would limit existing density bonuses to C-G zoned property south of North Street. These changes direct higher-intensity commercial activity Downtown because they are allowed as-of-right in the C-G District and could possibly get bonuses. The Application is aligned with the Master Plan in that it directs higher intensity uses Downtown (Strategy 3B.1).

Raymond Mazzeo, along with Richard Redniss; Redniss & Mead, made a presentation and answered questions from the Board.

After some discussion, Mr. Totilo recommended *approval* of **ZB Application #224-26** and found this request to be in general harmony with the 2015 Master Plan; Mr. Tepper seconded the motion and passed unanimously with eligible members present voting, 3-0 (Dell, Tepper and Totilo).

4. ZB APPLICATION #224-27 - FIRST NATIONAL JOINT VENTURE, LLC & CANAL STREET FUND, LLC - 18 DOCK STREET - Special Permit: This Special Permit pursuant to Section 7.4.C.1.g requests a modification to the method of Below Market Rate (BMR) compliance by providing larger units at lower affordability levels.

In June 2022, the Zoning Board approved the redevelopment of this property with a mixed-use building. The Planning Board recommended approval of this application package at its regularly scheduled meeting on April 19, 2022. The Board was particularly pleased that all BMR units were being provided on-site. The Planning Board recommended the Applicant consider providing units at a range of affordability levels. This Special Permit application does just that by providing units at 40-45% AMI instead of 50% AMI as originally approved. With the deeper levels of affordability, the Application also includes a reduction in BMR units from 32 to 22 units. While losing 10 units is just that, a loss, making units available to residents at lower AMIs is a win. The Applicant also proposes a greater proportion of two-bedroom units in the unit mix. The Application remains aligned with the original intent of the project recommended for approval in April 2022 due to its alignment with the Master Plan. As noted in the Master Plan (Pg. 129), 46.2% of Stamford residents were housing cost burdened, spending more than 30% of their household income on housing costs based on 2009-2011 data. Providing safe, affordable housing will result in more stable living conditions for those residents. This Application would help reduce housing costs by providing units at deeper affordability levels.

Ms. Cohen made brief comments and introduced Mr. Hennessey.

William Hennessey, Carmody Torrance Sandak Hennessey LLP, made a presentation and answered questions from the Board.

After some discussion, Mr. Tepper recommended *approval* of **ZB Application #224-27** and found this request to be in general harmony with Master Plan Category #9 (Urban Mixed-Use); Mr. Totilo seconded the motion and passed unanimously with eligible members present voting, 3-0 (Dell, Tepper and Totilo).

5. ZB APPLICATION #224-28 - SEABRIGHT PROPERTIES, LLC - 1385 WASHINGTON BLVD. - Special Permit: This Special Permit is to allow the University of Connecticut (UCONN) to use the existing apartment building for dormitory housing. No structural or exterior changes or modifications are proposed.

The property is in Master Plan Category #11 (Downtown). The surrounding land uses reflect that of this Category with high-density residential, institutional and commercial uses intermingling. The Application is to allow the use of an existing residential building for dormitories. The property and building are on the same block as the main UCONN campus building, just north along Washington Boulevard. Dormitories within walking proximity to campus promote a pedestrian-oriented district that is characteristic of Category #11. The Master Plan identifies the Downtown as providing a full array of retail, office, cultural, recreational and residential uses...to assure a desirable mixing and interaction of people and activities. To allow an existing building in the Downtown to be used as dorms is aligned with this definition because it would provide students housing in a centrally located, walkable area where students and their visiting families can support Downtown businesses.

William Hennessey, Carmody Torrance Sandak Hennessey LLP, made a presentation and answered questions from the Board.

After some discussion, Mr. Tepper recommended *approval* of **ZB Application #224-28** and found this request to be in general harmony with Master Plan Category #11 (Downtown); Mr. Totilo seconded the motion and passed unanimously with eligible members present voting, 3-0 (Dell, Tepper and Totilo).

Ms. Dell reminded everyone that the Board is on hiatus for the month of July.

Ms. Dell stated that she and Mr. Totilo will remain on the Board until the August 13, 2024 meeting and that potential replacements will be coming before the Board of Representatives in July to hopefully begin serving at the August 13th meeting.

Next regularly scheduled Planning Board meetings are:

- Summer Hiatus - No Meetings in July
- August 13, 2024 (Regular Meeting)

There being no further business to come before the Board, Ms. Dell adjourned the meeting at 8:32 p.m.

Respectfully Submitted
June 27, 2024

Theresa Dell, Chair
Stamford Planning Board

NOTE: These proceedings were recorded on video and are available for review on the Planning Board website at http://cityofstamford.granicus.com/ViewPublisher.php?view_id=20