

PLANNING AND ZONING BOARD MINUTES FOR MEETING HELD TUESDAY, 21 FEBRUARY 2023, 7:00 PM

The meeting of the Planning and Zoning Board came to order at 7:00p.m.

A. PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE AND MOMENT OF SILENCE

B. ROLL CALL

Members Present: N. Austin, J. Castignoli, E. Hirsch, B. Kaligian, J. Mortimer, J. Quish, M. Zahariades

Not Present: J. Kader, C.S. Moore, R. Satti

Staff: D. Sulkis, City Planner; M. Greene, Rec. Sec'y

Chairman Quish announced that.

C. NEW BUSINESS

VOTE BY APRIL 27, 2023

- 1) **17 Melba Street** (Zone R-5) Petition of Kevin Curseaden, Esq. for a Coastal Area Site Plan Review to construct a single-family dwelling on Map 029, Block 587, Parcel 005, of which Sachin (Sonny) Anand is the owner.

Mr. Anand, 17 Maddox Avenue, addressed the board. He said he had demolished an existing house and planned to replace it with another single-family home. He said it conforms to all the zoning regulations and received departmental approvals.

Mr. Sulkis read his summary, stating that there were no adverse coastal impacts expected.

Mr. Mortimer moved to approve as presented the Petition of Kevin Curseaden, Esq., for a Coastal Area Site Plan Review to construct a single-family dwelling on Map 029, Block 587, Parcel 005, of which Sachin (Sonny) Anand is the owner.

Second: Ms. Austin seconded.

Discussion: None.

Vote: Motion carried unanimously.

- 2) **38 Golden Hill Street** (Zone MCDD) Petition of Paul Stowell for a Coastal Area Site Plan Review to construct a 2 Family dwelling on Map 44, Block 390, Parcel 8A of which Grand Village, LLC is the owner.

Mr. Nadeem Khalid, 38 Golden Hill Street, addressed the board. He said the plan was to construct a duplex on the site.

Mr. Sulkis read his summary, stating that no adverse impacts to coastal resources were expected.

Mr. Mortimer moved to approve as presented the Petition of Paul Stowell for a Coastal Area Site Plan Review to construct a 2 Family dwelling on Map 44, Block 390, Parcel 8A of which Grand Village, LLC is the owner.

Second: Mr. Castignoli seconded.

Discussion: None.

Vote: Motion carried unanimously.

- 3) **553 West Avenue** (Zone DO-25) Petition of Christopher Smith, Esq. for a Minor Amendment to a Special Permit and Site Plan approval granted on December 5, 2017, on Map 42, Block 335, Parcel 1, of which Metro 553, LLC is the owner.

Blake Smith, Director of Real Estate Development for Metro 533 LLC, 41 Cherry Street, addressed the board. He provided detail on the changes requested amendment, most notably a substantial reduction in the size of the project. The new proposal now consists of 189 units reduced from the previously approved 342, and 261 parking spaces down from 503. He said the revision eliminates large multi-level garages and seeks to protect and enhance the appeal of the site's natural environment. He introduced the project team.

Chris Smith, Esq., Alter and Pearson, 701 Hebron Avenue, Glastonbury, said the requested amendment was to a site plan approved on 10/2/2017 with an affordable housing component. He said the modified plan for 189 units will feature 30% of units at 80% of median income and 10% at 60% of median income. He said the Affordability Plan (under 8-30g) had been submitted to staff, and changed to incorporate staff comments. He noted an Inland Wetlands Agency (IWA) approval granted in 2016 but stated that the applicant went back to IWA in December 2022, and that the agency approved the plan due to the substantial reduction in size. He emphasized that the current plan is within the scope of previous approval with no adverse impacts to a substantial public interest. He noted the city's current moratorium on 8-30g and that it expires 8/19/23. He said that the moratorium doesn't prohibit because

this amendment, however, because the previous approval predates it.

Dave Golebiewski, ASLA, TPA Design Group 85 Willow Street, New Haven, said he was the lead landscape architect for the project. To demonstrate the reduction in the size of the project, he displayed 2 images of the relative footprint of project's iterations, pointing out a reduction of about 50% that respects the site's unique natural assets. He described details of the project with entrance and exiting via West Avenue and a Fire Department-approved turning radius. He noted that there is no longer any traffic access onto Schoolhouse Road. He described a robust landscaping plan with 40 species of trees, shrubs and other plantings, 95% of which were native. He said careful grading and siting will preserve much of the current canopy over Beaver Brook. He noted that the lighting plan would be programmable for dimming and dark sky compliance and that the electric vehicle (EV) spaces comply with the recently updated statute for a total of 17, or 10% of total spaces.

Dave Sacco, PE, civil engineer, also of TPA Design Group, reviewed the drainage plan with its goal of maintaining the existing flow of water into Beaver Brook and managing storm runoff using subsurface retention systems. He said soils in the area are very sandy, precluding feasible retention ponds. He said that most of site drains from I-95 toward a low-lying area near the brook, separated by a berm, and that mostly this runoff will infiltrate into ground. **Mr. Hirsch** commented on the flood zone in the area and asked if Beaver Brook would overflow its banks; **Mr. Sacco** said that this wouldn't occur because the Base Flood Elevation is 39' and all buildings will be above this level per building code. He said part of West Avenue near the entrance is subject to flooding, but a small amount of filling-in will occur, to be offset by excavation in another area.

Dave Sullivan, traffic engineer, SLR Consulting, summarized the current traffic study versus the analysis from the 2018 approved plan, which featured significantly more traffic. He said data collected during peak commuter periods concluded that 70 more morning trips and 74 afternoon trips were expected. He said sight lines for 35 mph mandate 390' of visibility, that the site exceeds this requirement and that no change in the level of service was anticipated. He said the traffic generated can be handled by area roadways and that if the plan is approved, the previous approval from the CT DOT would be revisited.

Paul Santos, AIA, Associate Principal, Newman Architects. 265 Church Street, New Haven, reviewed the mix of studios, 1 bedroom, 1 bedroom+, and 2 bedrooms units. He described the arrangement of the units into 5 buildings and the location of a ground-level parking garage, club house, and administrative offices. He said exterior materials reflect a farmhouse-type style with a material palette that includes horizontal siding, board and batten, cement plaster, some stone, asphalt and metal roofs. He said the color palette was meant to complement the landscaping plan.

Joe Versteeg, Versteeg Associates, 86 University Drive, Torrington, said he had been hired to review compliance with building code, fire safety codes and fire prevention codes. He said the project complies in all respects with no adverse effects anticipated on public safety.

Mr. Sulkis read his administrative summary. He reviewed reduced statistics of the current plan versus the previous Special Permit and Site Plan approved on 12/5/2017.

Board members **Hirsch** and **Mortimer** received information about the driveway and flood area; **Mr. Sacco** said the elevation of the roadway would be raised in that area. **Chairman Quish** asked if the applicant would be amenable to installing solar for common areas, **Mr. Smith** said such consideration was already underway. He also said that the single accessway has Fire Marshall approvals. **Mr. Mortimer** confirmed that no septic system would be used.

Mr. Mortimer moved to approve as presented the Petition of Christopher Smith, Esq. for a Minor Amendment to a Special Permit and Site Plan approval granted on December 5, 2017 on Map 42, Block 335, Parcel 1, of which Metro 553, LLC is the owner.

Second: Mr. Castignoli seconded.

Discussion: Mr. Hirsch commended the project team on a great job.

Vote: Motion carried unanimously.

- 4) **44-64 River Street** (Zone MCDD) Petition of Robert Smith Jr. for an Amendment to Site Plan approval granted on May 18, 2021, on Map 54, Block 322, Parcel 4, of which Metro TOD, LLC is the owner.

Blake Smith, Director of Real Estate Development for Metro TOD, LLC, addressed the board. He said the request was to amend the previous approval to construct 2 buildings instead of 1. He reviewed details, including a change in architecture to better complement adjacent properties. He said that the 2 building design provides emergency access via Darina Place. He said the reason

for the revision was that obtaining approval for easements from the relevant state agencies would take too long to secure.

John Wicko, AIA, 58 Prospect Street, said reviewed changes to the architectural character of building. He noted entrance in and out via Darina Place and via city property. He noted a reduction in the overall massing, height, and size of the 2 proposed buildings versus the previous plan. He pointed out that a smaller scale as the design moves up Darina Place. He said the new plan uses a coastal urban style like Portland, NH, and Newport, RI, with flat roofs and brick facades in harmony with the context of River Street, including the post office, the courthouse, and other nearby sites. He reviewed façade materials and color palette, noting that the front retained the entrances from the River Street side. Discussion ensued about accessing the train station. Mr. Wicko said the municipal garage has same entrance as previously and that off-street surface parking is also the same. He said all city departments had approved the changes. Surface parking would be open with the municipal parking lot underground.

Ron Wassmer, PE, 158 Research Drive, said the amended application is similar to the previously approved application. He pointed out the incorporation of EV charging stations and that the entire lower level is under the control of the city. He said the 77 parking spaces on grade are open to the public but that the lower level is meant to provide substantial parking for downtown area. He confirmed that residents don't have dedicated parking spaces. He said the project poses no adverse impacts to coastal resources, but that a CAM is required for sites within 1500' of the coast. He said that aside from the elimination of the driveway from Railroad Avenue, the majority of site's attributes are the same. He reiterated that all approvals had been received and that the reason for the amendment had been the lengthy time frame for getting state easements for access via Railroad Avenue. He noted that there is slightly more green space and reiterated that the underground parking lot is under city control via a 99-year lease.

Mr. Sulkis read his administrative summary, noting that this plan is substantially like the previous plan and is substantially zoning compliant.

Mr. Mortimer *moved to approve as presented* the Petition of Robert Smith Jr. for an Amendment to Site Plan approval granted on May 18, 2021, on Map 54, Block 322, Parcel 4, of which Metro TOD, LLC is the owner.

Second: Mr. Castignoli seconded.

Discussion: None.

Vote: Motion carried unanimously.

D. PUBLIC HEARINGS: None

E. OLD BUSINESS—None.

F. LIAISON REPORTS—None.

G. SUBCOMMITTEE REPORTS—None.

H. APPROVAL OF MINUTES—2/7/2023 minutes were approved unanimously.

I. CHAIR'S REPORT – None.

J. STAFF REPORT - None.

K. ADJOURNMENT was at 8:15.

Attest:

M.E. Greene

New Business, not on the Agenda, may be brought up by a 2/3's vote of those Members present and voting.

ANY INDIVIDUAL WITH A DISABILITY WHO NEEDS SPECIAL ASSISTANCE TO PARTICIPATE IN THE MEETING SHOULD CONTACT THE DIRECTOR OF COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT, (203) 783-3230, FIVE DAYS PRIOR TO THE MEETING, IF POSSIBLE.