

February 15, 2012

**Planning Board
Meeting Minutes**

The meeting was called to order at 7:09 PM

1. Roll Call

In attendance: Dan Bowie, Paul Dahn, Sue Grolnic, Jim McCarthy, Bonnie Sontag and Don Walters

Absent: Henry Coe and Anne Gardner

Andrew Port of the Planning Office was also present.

2. General Business

a) Approval of the minutes

Minutes of February 1, 2012 Meeting

Paul Dahn made a motion to approve the minutes from February 1, 2012.

Chairman Dan Bowie seconded the motion.

The motion passed unanimously.

Minutes approved.

Minutes of January 18, 2012 Meeting

The draft was red-lined and hard to read. The note taker didn't know how it happened but will correct the problem.

Bonnie Sontag made a motion to defer approval of the January 18, 2012 minutes to the next meeting.

Don Walters seconded the motion.

The motion passed unanimously.

Motion Approved

b) WWTF Request for Minor Modification to an Approved site Plan (addition of a radio tower)

The WWTF request is being withdrawn for further design alterations.

c) 16 Russia Street Lot Line Adjustment

There was no discussion.

Bonnie Sontag made a motion to approve the ANR, subject to a notation on the plan.

Paul Dahn seconded the motion.

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The motion passed unanimously.

Motion Approved

Votes Cast:

Dan Bowie: approve

Paul Dahn: approve

Sue Grolnic: approve

Jim McCarthy: approve

Bonnie Sontag: approve

Don Walters: approve

3. Old Business

4. New Business

a) Institution for Savings

68 Storey Avenue

Major Site Plan Review

Chairman Bowie read the public notice for the Institution for Savings Site Plan Review. Michael Jones, President, Institution for Savings was present with Charles (Chip) Nutter, Woodman Associates architect, who showed three images of the new building.

A second story and front vestibule are meant to accommodate a lending officer for the bank's clients, to enhance the appearance of this 'gateway' building and to improve working conditions for the employees. The rendering doesn't show windows with divided lights, but with clear glass. A clock tower is set into a Mansard roof. Minor changes to the landscaping design include removing the brick sidewalk along Woodman Way, replacing it with planting beds, resulting in a net increase in pervious surface. There are no changes to the site access, parking layout, or site lighting. There will be only one additional employee. A new sign will require a variance at a later date. The sign will be similar to signs at all other Institution for Savings locations.

A member asked if slate shingles were considered. Asphalt similar to slate was chosen because \$50-60,000 for slate was not feasible, Mr. Nutter said. Another member asked why the sidewalk was removed on the Woodman Way side. Nobody used the sidewalk; removing it presented an opportunity to improve landscaping, Mr. Nutter said. Also, the wide brick sidewalk at the front entrance on Story Avenue has been narrowed to add more plantings.

Mr. Nutter studied all costs and the building is over budget. He's considering replacing the cast stone arch entryway with brick surrounds, keeping the cast stone around the windows. A member asked how the plan submitted to the Board is designated. The plans submitted show a stone belt course, panel and window trim. The cast stone panel would also be replaced with brick, Mr. Nutter said. Approval is tied to plans submitted to the Board, the member said, and

any deviation must be noted on the plans. The change is a minor modification not involving another public hearing, and something that could be addressed at any Planning Board meeting.

A member asked for an explanation of the tower construction. The material is PVC painted to look like wood so that it is maintenance free, Mr. Nutter said, with copper roofing at the top of the cupola and at the second and first tiers of the tower. Another member asked if the sign was a one-for-one replacement; Mr. Nutter responded yes.

Public comment was opened.

Joseph Vitale, 6 Woodman Way, was concerned about the work schedule, noise and duration of construction. Construction will take about six months and work hours will not exceed what is allowed, Mr. Nutter said. A member said hours of construction are 7 AM to 4 PM, Monday-Friday. Mr. Vitale said he was hoping for a schedule that started after 8 AM and no weekends. We will probably ask for permission to work construction on some weekends, Mr. Nutter said, because the bank will remain open during construction, resulting in the need to schedule some weekend work when the bank is closed. Mr. Vitale said 20 families in his building face the construction site. The bank will be a good neighbor and respect the families that live around them, Mr. Nutter said, adding, "We're not looking to jackhammer at 7 AM."

Public comment closed.

A member asked Mr. Nutter to select the brick color mindful that the building would be completely defined by the color of brick used. Another member asked Mr. Nutter to reconsider the roof material because a 'landmark' building design at the gateway would attract attention, highlighting a faux slate roof. One member noted this was an unusual application -- the site of the addition requires a full site plan review but there's not a tremendous amount of review work to do.

The Secretary read the findings and proposed decision on the remodeling plans. The bank's intention is to improve working conditions for employees and to create a stronger presence in the area. The project, limited to the building itself, is a 3,590 square foot addition with a clock tower and will not affect the site as a whole. The project complies with pedestrian and traffic impact, and does not affect safety. There are no proposed changes to the traffic pattern, the architectural design is consistent with area, and minor landscaping design changes include walkway reductions and additional planting beds, increasing the pervious area. There is no change in storm water run-off or water quality. The site does not include any wetland resources, the plan will not erode any soil, and we've granted a waiver requiring a landscape architect. The Planning Board grants approval of this site plan with one additional condition. The Planning Board requires the developer to submit all approved drawings and as built plans electronically and in accordance with the Board's "Digital Submission Requirement." If there are any changes from the submitted plan, a modified plan must be submitted.

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Jim McCarthy made a motion to approve the Site Plan.
Sue Grolnic seconded the motion.
The motion passed unanimously.

Motion approved.

Votes Cast:

Dan Bowie: approve
Paul Dahn: approve
Sue Grolnic: approve
Jim McCarthy: approve
Bonnie Sontag: approve
Don Walters: approve

During the course of discussion and consideration of this application, plan(s), supporting material(s), department head comments, peer review report(s), planning department comments and other related documents, all as filed with the planning department as part of this application and all of which are available in the planning department, were considered.

5. Planning Office/Subcommittees/Discussion

Andrew Port, Planning Office, announced that the open space meeting tomorrow, Thursday evening, was the one time to offer comments.

The re-zoning of Storey Ave. Public Hearing is at 6:30 PM at our next meeting. Andrew has not changed his position on the re-zoning and was surprised by so much debate. A member emphasized the rezoning itself is simple; it's all the additional matters raised by members of the public and City Councilors that cloud the issue. Another member commented on the high number of curb cuts up and down Storey Avenue. Another member said the connection to Low Street put it over the goal line.

If the re-zoning goes through, Andrew said, securing driveway connections on Low Street will be easier. Tropic Star can't put the driveway connections in now because the re-zoning hasn't gone through. Once the change goes through, abutters will want the driveways connected.

The plan itself, the parcel and the 19 acres of open space, one member said, is the best negotiating position. Andrew said it's in the city's best interest to lock in the open space now because 19 acres could easily get developed under the 40 B process. Vocal residents on Clipper and Woodman Ways are concerned because they're in a commercial area that already has a lot of traffic. There's additional frustration over the maintenance of their street, which is a private way. Their issues are not because of rezoning of these two parcels.

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A CVS or an oil change business could go in there right now and the city would get absolutely nothing, with no mitigation offers, one member said. Leaving two or three properties zoned residential in a commercial area, when the lack of investment would allow them to become dilapidated over time, is missing the larger picture, Andrew commented.

Educating about the benefits of rezoning is important, a member said. Someone has to make the argument that this plan is the most sensible action to take right now. Consider the traffic situation once the 40 B is done. Let's view this as a first step toward doing something to solve traffic control problems.

It's necessary to prevent something egregious from happening, Andrew said. A member added that the Board's responsibility is to do what's right for the whole city. Andrew expressed concern if Tropic Star walks away. The Woodman's can still sell to someone else, with worse results like more fast food, and that still won't solve any traffic control problems. While this is not the perfect plan, a member said, it's a step in the right direction. The property will not be sold again without recouping everything put into it -- the cost of all the studies and conceptual plans -- another member said, and could end up as a Walmart.

A member asked if there were any candidates for the open spot on the board? Andrew will contact one potential applicant who is also known to the Mayor.

6. Adjournment

Paul Dahn made a motion to adjourn.

Jim McCarthy seconded.

Motion approved unanimously.

Meeting adjourned at 8:15 P.M.

Respectfully submitted, Linda Guthrie, Note Taker