

**MINUTES OF THE ZONING BOARD
REGULAR MEETING, HELD MONDAY,
FEBRUARY 3, 2014, 7:00 P.M., 7TH FLOOR, LAND USE
CONFERENCE AREA, GOVERNMENT CENTER
BUILDING, 888 WASHINGTON BLVD,
STAMFORD, CT 06901**

Present for the Board: Thomas Mills, Barry Michelson, William Morris, Rosanne McManus and Joanna Gwozdzowski. Present for staff: Norman Cole, Land Use Bureau Chief

Chairman Mills called the meeting to order at 7:07 p.m.

Mr. Michelson made a motion to change the order of the agenda to take up Appl. 210-16 first, seconded by Ms. McManus and unanimously approved 5 to 0 (Mills, Michelson, Morris, McManus and Gwozdzowski).

REGULAR MEETING

OLD BUSINESS

1. **APPL 210-16 – FINAL Development Plan (GDP) and Coastal Site Plan Review – GATEWAY, Washington Blvd.** (*General Development Plan and Site Plan Modifications*).

Mr. Mills thanked Mani Poola, Traffic Engineer for the City of Stamford, for attending the meeting and invited him to explain how the construction changes to the garage happened.

Mr. Poola said that BLT's traffic consultant sent an email on May 1, 2013 with a copy of the new driveway plans, while he was away on vacation. On May 15, 2013 he met with the consultant and discussed operations at the intersection to improve traffic flow and prevent queuing on Henry Street and Washington Boulevard. He said that he was under the impression that the site plan changes had been approved by the Zoning Board and proceeded to focus on improving the signal plan. In August 2013 application was made to the State Traffic Commission requesting approval of the revised traffic signal change, superseding the signal plans approved in 2010. Mr. Poola pointed out that the signal timing would be controlled by the City's computerized signal control system to keep City streets clear.

Discussion ensued about how the approved 3-lane driveway worked compared to the six-lane configuration. Mani suggested that it would be a good idea to require "do not block the box" stripping of the intersection.

Mr. Michelson asked if a traffic analysis was done to compare the 2010 plan to the six-lane plan. Mr. Poola answered that it was clear that the additional entrance lane will reduce queuing on Henry Street and Washington Blvd. and that a traffic study was not needed to demonstrate this. He added that a temporary signal will be necessary to operate the initial four lanes (2 in, 2 out) and will take 60 to 90 days to install. The permanent signal to operate all six lanes will require

six months lead time to order signal mast arms and signals. Mr. Poola said that he believed the BLT traffic consultant did perform a traffic analysis for the six lanes. Attorney Freeman said that it was his understanding that a Synchro software analysis was run and the data submitted to the STC, although no written report was prepared. He added that when the initial 500 commuter spaces are opened that there will be only one lane entering from Washington Blvd and no exiting traffic to Washington Blvd.

Mr. Cole asked Mr. Poola if he knew when the driveway ramps were constructed. Mr. Poola answered that the P1 parking deck was built in May 2013 and the driveway ramps were built later, probably in June or July, 2013.

Mr. Morris asked Mr. Poola if he agreed with the January 27, 2014 memo from Mark Vertucci, BLT's traffic consultant? Mr. Poola said yes, that he had worked with Mr. Vertucci until the signal revision application was filed with the STC in August 2013 and then continued to work with the STC until the signal plan was eventually approved.

Mr. Mills asked Board Members if they thought the change in driveway configuration was a significant change in the GDP and final site plan. Ms. Gwozdzowski said she did. Ms. McManus said she does too, but doesn't think it will affect traffic. Mr. Morris said yes, the changes are significant. Mr. Michelson said yes.

Mr. Mills asked Mr. Cole if he felt there was a need for a public hearing on this matter. Mr. Cole said yes, amendments to a General Development Plan normally require a public hearing.

Attorney Freeman said they would like to open 500 spaces on the P1 level to address the need for commuter parking, limited to one lane in from Washington Boulevard, while they are going through a public hearing process to amend the plans. Mr. Mills said opening the garage would prejudice their review of the six-lane configuration change. Attorney Freeman said that this issue could be addressed by limiting all vehicle access to Pulaski Street driveway. Mr. Morris questioned whether the Board should ask Mr. Poola to confirm that the Pulaski Street entrance alone can handle this volume of traffic. Mr. Mills suggested that the Board table further discussion until February 10, 2014, to allow time for Mr. Poola to comment on this latest proposal and for staff to confirm a revised bond amount for landscaping and fencing. Staff will also evaluate a potential public hearing date of February 24, 2014, to consider an application to amend the GDP and Phase One final site plan.

2. **APPLS. 211-23 & 211-24 – PROCUREMENT, LLC** – 816 – 820 High Ridge Road (*administrative approval of site plan modifications*).

Mr. Cole explained that plans submitted for building permit included some changes in the approved architectural plans for the two buildings. Because of the sensitivity and amount of public scrutiny that this project has received, he felt it advisable to present the changes for approval by the Board before signing off on the building permit. He described the changes to the northerly 10 unit residential building (building 2) and said that while the overall height and dimensions of the building are unchanged, that the third floor is now used as additional living space for the units on the second floor. Exterior architectural design has also evolved with changes in window and door placement and height of dormers. Mr. Cole then proceeded to

explain the original design of the daycare/residential building (building 1) and noted that a terrace originally located on the southwest corner of the second floor has been eliminated and in its place a fitness/amenity room has been placed in the middle of the second story residential floor. Mr. Mills said that he recalled during the public hearings that comments had been made that the terrace might be unwelcome by a child daycare operator because it directly overlooked the outdoor playground area. Ms. McManus questioned whether steps had been removed from the front entrance to Building #2, and Do Chung, project architect, replied that the stairs had to be removed to make the first floor units ADA accessible.

The Board members discussed the approved plans and the proposed changes. Mr. Michelson was opposed to any modification of the approved plan. He noted that there were extensive public hearings and comments on this application. The applicant should adhere to the plan submitted to and approved by the Zoning Board. The proposed revisions were not an enhancement to the project.

Mr. Cole confirmed that use of the third floor for Building #2 had been reviewed by the Zoning Enforcement Officer and complied with a “half story” as permitted in the RM-1 zone.

After further discussion, Ms. Gwozdzowski made a motion to approve the plan architectural plan modifications to applications 211-23 and 211-24, seconded by Ms. McManus. Mr. Morris requested modification of the motion to require that the original 4 over 1 residential window grid be used. The motion as amended carried on a vote of 4 to 1 (Mills, Morris, McManus and Gwozdzowski in favor; Michelson opposed).

3. **APPLS. 210-35 & 36 – General Development Plan, Charter Oak Communities** – The third phase in the redevelopment and replacement of the below market rate units at Vidal Court. This is the first phase of the on-site revitalization and incorporates 3.23 acres of land along Merrell Avenue, including land behind Stillwater Avenue. The project proposes 45 new homes distributed in a mix of two / three story buildings offered at a 60% affordable, 40% market rate split (*administrative review of architectural materials*).

Mr. Cole read condition #2 of the Board’s approval requiring final approval of architectural designs, materials and colors by staff. He said that the Board had expressed strong opinions about the project’s architecture and that the applicant had agreed to make a presentation to the full Board. Ray Mazzeo, of Redniss & Mead, represented the applicant and presented drawings and materials showing the final architectural design. The consensus of the Board was that the final design changes were appropriate and that the overall design was satisfactory.

Mr. Michelson made a motion to approve the architectural designs and materials as presented, seconded by Mr. Morris and unanimously approved 5 to 0 (Mills, Michelson, Morris, McManus and Gwozdzowski).

4. **APPL. 212-02 – STAMFORD EXIT 9, LLC, Site & Architectural Plan, 1 Blachley Road**, (*extension of time request*).

After a brief discussion, Ms. McManus made a motion to approve the extension of time, seconded by Ms. Gwozdzowski and unanimously approved 5 to 0 (Mills, Michelson, Morris, McManus and Gwozdzowski).

Mr. Mills adjourned the meeting at 8:57pm.

Respectfully submitted,

Barry Michelson, Secretary
Stamford Zoning Board