



**CITY OF BRIDGEPORT
PLANNING AND ZONING COMMISSION
REGULAR MEETING
JUNE 25, 2018**

45 Lyon Terrace, Room
210
Bridgeport, CT 06604
(203) 576-7217 Phone
(203) 576-7213 Fax

ATTENDANCE: Melvin Riley, Acting Chairman; Anne Pappas Phillips, Secretary, Reggie Walker, Robert Filotei, Tom Fedele, Cesar Cordero

STAFF: Dennis Buckley, Zoning Official

CALL TO ORDER.

Commissioner Riley called the meeting to order at 6:32 p.m. He then introduced the Commissioners seated and reviewed the hearing protocols with those present.

CITY BUSINESS

C-1 (17-44) Text Amendment – Petition of the Office of Planning & Economic Development (OPED) – Seeking to establish a comprehensive approach to all establishments serving or selling liquor within the City limits excluding full service restaurants under Sec. 12-10 of the City of Bridgeport Zoning Regulations.

Mr. Buckley came forward and said that Ms. Haig was not able to be present at the meeting. However, she had told Mr. Buckley that the City Attorney had recommended that the item be presented to the full Planning and Zoning Board. Since there were only 6 Commissioners present, Mr. Buckley requested that the item be tabled.

Commissioner Filotei asked if the Commissioners could get a copy of the proposed amendment before it comes to the Board. Mr. Buckley said that he would ask for a copy and get it to the Commissioners.

DEFERRED BUSINESS

D-1 (18-26) 167 Steuben St. – Petition of Waltersville Development Group, LLC – Seeking an adaptive reuse and special permit to convert the former school building into a 74-unit apartment building in an R-C zone.

Mr. Francis Vacca and Mr. Paul Dailey from the Development Group came forward. Mr. Vacca turned in the green mailing receipts.

Mr. Vacca said that they had made some modifications to the original design after their previous presentation. He displayed an aerial photo of the area showing Metro North Railroad and Interstate 95 and the location of the school building. He noted that the garage that is currently on the site would be demolished.

Commissioner Walker had several questions about the orientation of the photo. Mr. Vacca rotated the photo to help with the orientation.

Mr. Vacca said that the building was on the historic register and under the adaptive reuse regulations, the developers have provided 67 parking spaces and can waive the remain 40 parking spaces.

Currently, almost all of the site is either pavement or concrete. Trees and greenery will be allied along the drive. There will be an ornamental fence and some fencing to prevent the general public from wandering through the parking area. Mr. Vacca indicated where the dumpster would be located and where the trees would be in the parking area. The fire lanes have been added as requested by the Fire Marshal. A patio will be included for the tenant space.

A letter was submitted on May 3rd with some zoning concerns.

Commissioner Walker asked if this would be senior housing. Mr. Vacca said that he did not think it was. Mr. Dailey came forward and said that it would be affordable housing and seniors would be not excluded.

Commissioner Walker said that he did not believe that there would be enough parking if the units had families living there. Mr. Vacca said that they had added 14 additional trees and the parking requirements were waived because of the adaptive reuse. Commissioner Walker said that there was basically no street parking in that part of town.

Mr. Dailey said that the only way to make this project viable was to have 71 units.

Commissioner Filotei asked about the previous plan that had rooms with windows. Mr. Dailey said that they had redesigned the interior so that all the rooms had windows.

RECESS

Commissioner Riley declared a recess at 6:53 p.m. Commissioner Riley called the meeting to order at 6:56 p.m.

D-1 (18-26) 167 Steuben St. – CONT'D.

Commissioner Phillips asked if there were sprinklers included the plan. Mr. Dailey said that there were.

Commissioner Riley said that the Design Coordinator had suggested removing the dumpster and keeping it in the building. Mr. Vacca said that they couldn't do that. He said that there was an additional 25 parking spaces on street. Commissioner Cordero asked if it would be assigned parking. Mr. Vacca said it would not be and added that one possible option was having a gate at the entrance to the parking lot for the residents.

Commissioner Walker suggested speaking to the church across the street about parking there when services are not in progress.

Commissioner Phillips said that the other buildings that had been adaptively re-used and the residents are always having issues with parking. Mr. Dailey said that there would also be public transportation available. Mr. Vacca said that the bus line that runs on East Main Street was only a block away.

Commissioner Riley asked if anyone would like to speak in favor of the project.

Mr. William Coleman of OPED came forward. He said that the Economic Development Office has become a court of last resort and this time it is a surplus school building. One of the previously proposed projects never came to fruition. This building has been a challenge and the roof is falling apart. It's a rehab build and will have many interior changes.

Mr. Coleman said that the adaptive reuse regulations were created with historic buildings in mind. He said that there are often buildings that have the same issues. He reminded everyone that they are four spaces shy of the 71 spaces needed for one unit to one parking space requirement. Mr. Coleman said that the City does not have to protect consumers from themselves.

Commissioner Riley asked if anyone would like to speak in opposition to the project. Hearing none, Commissioner Riley closed the hearing on 167 Steuben Street.

RECESS

Commissioner Riley declared a recess at 7:14 p.m. Commissioner Riley called the meeting to order at 7:20 p.m.

NEW BUSINESS

(18-27) 3255 Fairfield Ave. – Petition David Hennessey – Seeking a special permit and site plan review to establish an “escape room” business in the existing commercial building in an OR zone.

Mr. David Hennessey, a life long Bridgeport resident, came forward and spoke about his application for an "escape room" business. Patrons come into the business and enter a

room that is like a theater. There are three games and each room usually has two rooms associated with it. The clients have to solve the puzzles within the hour. Weekend hours would be from 4 to 9 pm. The rooms will be furnished.

The parking lot has 61 spaces available spaces. There will be monitoring of each of the rooms.

Commissioner Phillips pointed out that it was a multi-level building. Mr. Hennessey said that it was constructed like a split level and indicated where that was shown on the plans.

Commissioner Walker asked about security and Mr. Hennessey outline their plans. The groups are by appointment only.

Commissioner Phillips asked about the ages. Mr. Hennessey said that it would work for those who are about 10 years old and up.

Commissioner Phillips asked about the fire exits. Mr. Hennessey gave an overview of the location of the exits.

Commissioner Riley asked if anyone would like to speak in favor of the project. No one came forward. Commissioner Riley asked if anyone would like to speak in opposition to the project. Hearing none, Commissioner Riley closed the hearing on 3255 Fairfield Avenue.

(18-28) 225-245 Boston Ave. – Petition of Domus Realty Group, LLC – Seeking a zone change for a 1.45 acre lot, as surveyed and described on the land records of the City of Bridgeport, that is partially located in an Residence-B (R-B) zone and partially located in an Residence-C (R-C) zone with an existing commercial building and business to now all be located and changed to the Office Retail-General (OR-G) zone.

Mr. Neil DeLuca a managing member of Domus Reality Group, LLC, came forward and said that they purchased the facility 14 years ago. It is a self storage business. Mr. DeLuca said that when they realized there was a problem, they went to OPED and the staff recommended they come to P&Z to adjust the zone.

Commissioner Riley asked if anyone would like to speak in favor of the project. No one came forward.

Mr. Coleman said that he would like to encourage the Commission to consider the change for consistency.

Commissioner Riley asked if anyone would like to speak in opposition to the project.

Atty. Diane Lord came forward and said that she did not know what was being planned for the property. She spoke about other OR-G properties that were there and pointed out that the property was land locked. The zone was changed a few years ago with many others.

Mr. DeLuca said that they have been operating this as a self storage business and had no plans for anything else. They have a permanent easement from the shopping center for access to the back portion of the business.

RECESS

Commissioner Riley declared a recess at 7:44 p.m. Commissioner Riley called the meeting to order at 7:49 p.m.

(18-29) 427 Brewster St. – Petition of Saint Ann Church Corporation (Black Rock Farmer’s Market) – Seeking a special permit and a site plan review to legalize a seasonal farmer’s market use on a house of worship property in an R-B zone.

State Representative Steve Stafstrom came forward and said that he was present as a trustee for St. Ann’s Church.

Ms. Ann McCrory, Ms. Karen Ledgo and Ms. Michelle Margo who were founding members of the Farmer's Market were also present. He said that the Farmer's Market operates on land owned by St. Ann's Church on Brewster Street. It has become a true gathering place.

A problem has arisen since this is a commercial use and they need a special permit.

Ms. McCrory came forward and said that she was present to represent Father Sosa, who could not be with the group tonight She said that the church supports the Farmer's Market.

Ms. Ledgo came forward and gave a brief overview of the market and said that there is live music and operates from June to October.

Commissioner Riley asked about the live music. Ms. Ledgo said that it is usually an acoustic guitar with a small amp.

Commissioner Riley asked if there was anything else the group wished to say. Ms. Margo read a statement from Mark Hellinger , the property manager for St. Anne's Church listing their reasons why they support this.

State Representative Stafstrom said that the church does use the field for concerts on Tuesday nights and allows the schools to use it for outside activities. Because this is a partnership between the Farmer's Market and the church, they need a special permit.

Commissioner Filotei said that as a member of the church, he knows that the issue is the traffic. State Representative Stafstrom said that the traffic would be a traffic enforcement issue. He said that they had a permit for this market and would like to continue to work with the community and the neighborhood on the enforcement issue.

Ms. Heidi Vanderwal came forward and requested all those who were present to support the Farmer's Market to please stand up. There were approximately 60 people present in support of this market.

State Representative Stafstrom said there were many people present that were vendors. two young girls, Grace and Sophie came forward to speak about how they sell flowers at the market and donate the money.

Mr. Scott Burns, a former City Council Member came forward and spoke about how the NRZ made sure that this market could happen. He said that he felt that this project deserves special consideration.

A Brewster resident came forward and said that she is able to give cooking demos at the Farmer's Market. She said that teaching people how to use the fresh produce is important.

Mr. Eric Sanderson said that he was a member of Food Coop in the City for seven years and moved to the Bridgeport because he saw the community.

Mr. Fred Steppen came forward and said that he was in favor of the market despite that he is affected by the traffic. He works to educate people on sustainability. This is a worthwhile project.

Ms. Lillie Keller, a Bridgeport resident, came forward and said that she had friends from other towns that are coming to Bridgeport to participate because of the market.

Ms. Torres came forwards and said she was a vendor and was able to start her business because of the Farmer's Market. The market organization is a well-organized machine and the founders are very careful to make sure things are done correctly.

Ms. Danielle Williams, who moved to Bridgeport from Brooklyn, said that she appreciates the farmer's market for the peace it brings. People are moving from Brooklyn and Manhattan to Bridgeport.

Commissioner Riley asked if anyone would like to speak in opposition to the project. Hearing none, Commissioner Riley closed the hearing on 427 Brewster Street.

RECESS

Commissioner Riley declared a recess at 8:14 p.m. Commissioner Riley called the meeting to order at 8:20 p.m.

OTHER BUSINESS

OB-1 DISCUSSION – Petition of the Office of Planning & Economic Development (OPED) – Discuss proposed amendments to the Bylaws of the Planning and Zoning Commission for consideration and adoption and to be voted on at the July 30th hearing.

The Commissioners agreed that they did not have enough information to discuss the proposed amendments at this time.

**** COMMISSIONER PHILLIPS MOVED TO CONTINUE THE ITEM TO MONDAY, JULY 30, 2018.
** COMMISSIONER FILOTEI SECONDED.
** THE MOTION TO CONTINUE AGENDA ITEM OB-1 DISCUSSION – PETITION OF THE OFFICE OF PLANNING & ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT (OPED) – DISCUSS PROPOSED AMENDMENTS TO THE BYLAWS OF THE PLANNING AND ZONING COMMISSION FOR CONSIDERATION AND ADOPTION AND TO BE VOTED ON AT THE JULY 30TH HEARING PASSED UNANIMOUSLY.**

DECISION SESSION

C-1 (17-44) Text Amendment – Petition of the Office of Planning & Economic Development (OPED) – Seeking to establish a comprehensive approach to all establishments serving or selling liquor within the City limits excluding full service restaurants under Sec. 12-10 of the City of Bridgeport Zoning Regulations.

**** COMMISSIONER FILOTEI MOVED TO TABLE AGENDA ITEM C-1 (17-44) TEXT AMENDMENT – PETITION OF THE OFFICE OF PLANNING & ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT (OPED) – SEEKING TO ESTABLISH A COMPREHENSIVE APPROACH TO ALL ESTABLISHMENTS SERVING OR SELLING LIQUOR WITHIN THE CITY LIMITS EXCLUDING FULL SERVICE RESTAURANTS UNDER SEC. 12-10 OF THE CITY OF BRIDGEPORT ZONING REGULATIONS TO MONDAY, JULY 30, 2018.**

**** COMMISSIONER PHILIPS SECONDED.
** THE MOTION PASSED UNANIMOUSLY.**

D-1 (18-26) 167 Steuben St. – Petition of Waltersville Development Group, LLC – Seeking an adaptive reuse and special permit to convert the former school building into a 74-unit apartment building in an R-C zone

Commissioner Phillips said that the project did not have enough parking for 1 to 1 parking. She suggested that they reduce the number of units by 4 and combine some of the studios to two bedrooms, which would compensate for the reduction of units. Then they would have 1 to 1 parking.

Atty. Liskov suggested that the Commission deny the item without prejudice

**** COMMISSIONER FILOTEI MOVED TO DENY WITHOUT PREJUDICE AGENDA ITEM D-1 (18-26) 167 STEUBEN ST. – PETITION OF WALTERSVILLE DEVELOPMENT GROUP, LLC – SEEKING AN ADAPTIVE REUSE AND SPECIAL PERMIT TO CONVERT THE FORMER SCHOOL BUILDING INTO A 74-UNIT APARTMENT BUILDING IN AN R-C ZONE FOR THE FOLLOWING REASONS:**

- 1. THE PROJECT IS IN AN AREA WITH CRITICAL TRAFFIC CONGESTION AND HAVING LESS THAN ONE (1) OFF-STREET PARKING SPACE PER UNIT IS INADEQUATE AND WILL ONLY CONTRIBUTE TO THE CONGESTION.**
- 2. THE ZONING REGULATIONS PROHIBIT ACCESSORY STRUCTURES/USES LOCATED IN THE FRONT YARD OF ANY PROPERTY IN ANY RESIDENTIAL ZONE.**

**** COMMISSIONER PHILIPS SECONDED.
** THE MOTION PASSED UNANIMOUSLY.**

(18-27) 3255 Fairfield Ave. – Petition David Hennessey – Seeking a special permit and site plan review to establish an “escape room” business in the existing commercial building in an OR zone.

**** COMMISSIONER FILOTEI MOVED TO APPROVE AGENDA ITEM (18-27) 3255 FAIRFIELD AVE. – PETITION DAVID HENNESSEY – SEEKING A SPECIAL PERMIT AND SITE PLAN REVIEW TO ESTABLISH AN “ESCAPE ROOM” BUSINESS IN THE EXISTING COMMERCIAL BUILDING IN AN OR ZONE WITH THE FOLLOWING CONDITIONS:**

- 1. THE PETITIONER SHALL FILE PLANS AND APPLICATIONS FOR THE ISSUANCE OF A CERTIFICATE OF ZONING COMPLIANCE FOR A BUILDING PERMIT FOR A TENANT FIT-UP.**

2. THE PROJECT SHALL COMPLY WITH THE BASIC BUILDING CODE OF THE STATE OF CT. FOR THE FOLLOWING REASON:

THE PROJECT AS APPROVED WILL PROVIDE A NEW METHOD OF ENTERTAINMENT WITHIN THE CITY LIMITS.

***THIS SPECIAL PERMIT APPROVAL, AS REQUIRED UNDER SEC. 14-4-5 OF THE ZONING REGULATIONS OF THE CITY OF BRIDGEPORT, CT SHALL EXPIRE JULY 2, 2019.**

**** COMMISSIONER FEDELE SECONDED.
** THE MOTION PASSED UNANIMOUSLY.**

(18-28) 225-245 Boston Ave. – Petition of Domus Realty Group, LLC – Seeking a zone change for a 1.45 acre lot, as surveyed and described on the land records of the City of Bridgeport, that is partially located in an Residence-B (R-B) zone and partially located in an Residence-C (R-C) zone with an existing commercial building and business to now all be located and changed to the Office Retail-General (OR-G) zone.

**** COMMISSIONER PHILLIPS MOVED TO APPROVE AGENDA ITEM (18-28) 225-245 BOSTON AVE. – PETITION OF DOMUS REALTY GROUP, LLC – SEEKING A ZONE CHANGE FOR A 1.45 ACRE LOT, AS SURVEYED AND DESCRIBED ON THE LAND RECORDS OF THE CITY OF BRIDGEPORT, THAT IS PARTIALLY LOCATED IN AN RESIDENCE-B (R-B) ZONE AND PARTIALLY LOCATED IN AN RESIDENCE-C (R-C) ZONE WITH AN EXISTING COMMERCIAL BUILDING AND BUSINESS TO NOW ALL BE LOCATED AND CHANGED TO THE OFFICE RETAIL-GENERAL (OR-G) ZONE WITH THE EFFECTIVE DATE OF JULY 2, 2018 FOR THE FOLLOWING REASONS:**

- 1. THE CHANGE FROM R-B TO OR-G IS CONSISTENT WITH THE ABUTTING SHOPPING CENTER PROPERTY.**
- 2. THE EXISTING RETAIL SERVICE BUSINESS WILL NOW BE COMPLIANT WITH THE ZONING REGULATIONS OF THE CITY OF BRIDGEPORT, AS WELL AS THE MASTER PLAN OF CONSERVATION AND DEVELOPMENT.**

**** COMMISSIONER FEDELE SECONDED.
** THE MOTION PASSED UNANIMOUSLY.**

(18-29) 427 Brewster St. – Petition of Saint Ann Church Corporation (Black Rock Farmer’s Market) – Seeking a special permit and a site plan review to legalize a seasonal farmer’s market use on a house of worship property in an R-B zone.

**** COMMISSIONER FILOTEI MOVED TO APPROVE AGENDA ITEM (18-29) 427 BREWSTER ST. – PETITION OF SAINT ANN CHURCH CORPORATION (BLACK ROCK FARMER’S MARKET) – SEEKING A SPECIAL PERMIT AND A SITE PLAN REVIEW TO LEGALIZE A SEASONAL FARMER’S MARKET USE ON A HOUSE OF WORSHIP PROPERTY IN AN R-B ZONE WITH THE FOLLOWING CONDITIONS:**

- 1. THE YEARLY HOURS OF OPERATION SHALL BE 9 A.M. TO 1 P.M. ON SATURDAYS FROM MAY 30TH TO OCTOBER 30TH.**
- 2. A “SPECIAL EVENT” FORM SHALL BE SUBMITTED TO THE ZONING DEPARTMENT PRIOR TO THE START OF THE FARMERS’ MARKET SEASON.**
- 3. LIVE ENTERTAINMENT SHALL BE ACOUSTIC AND SHALL NOT EXCEED MORE THAN 3 MUSICIANS.**

FOR THE FOLLOWING REASON:

- 1. THE FARMER’S MARKET WAS ORIGINALLY INTENDED FOR PARISHIONERS AND NEIGHBORS, BUT HAS NOW GROWN INTO AN ARTISAN FOOD MARKET, ATTRACTING CUSTOMERS FROM SURROUNDING COMMUNITIES.**

***THIS SPECIAL PERMIT APPROVAL, AS REQUIRED UNDER SEC. 14-4-5 OF THE ZONING REGULATIONS OF THE CITY OF BRIDGEPORT, CT SHALL EXPIRE JULY 2, 2019.**

**** COMMISSIONER WALKER SECONDED.
** THE MOTION PASSED UNANIMOUSLY.**

**OTHER MATTERS THAT MAY PROPERLY COME BEFORE
THE COMMISSION**

There were no additional matters to consider at this time.

APPROVAL OF MINUTES

Minutes of May 29, 2018 – Present: Acting Chair, Melville Riley. Commissioners: Robert Morton, Carlos Moreno, Robert Filotei, Cesar Cordero, Barbara Freddino, and Thomas Fedele; Staff: Dennis Buckley, Zoning Official.

There were not enough Commissioners present to approve the minutes at this time.

ADJOURNMENT

**** COMMISSIONER FEDELE MOVED TO ADJOURN.
** COMMISSIONER PHILLIPS SECONDED.
** THE MOTION PASSED UNANIMOUSLY.**

The meeting adjourned at 8:37 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

S. L. Soltes
Telesco Secretarial Services