

**Planning Board Meeting**  
(meeting is being recorded)

On Tuesday, October 14, 2014 the Holyoke Planning Board held a Public Meeting in the 4<sup>th</sup> Floor Conference Room, City Hall Annex, Holyoke City Hall, Holyoke, MA 01040 at 5:00 p.m.

Attendance:

**Planning Board**

Mimi Panitch .....	Chairman
Christian LaChapelle.....	Vice-Chairman
Mark Joy.....	Secretary
Eileen Regan .....	Member
John Kelley.....	Member

**Planning Staff**

Marcos Marrero.....	Director
Jeffrey Burkott .....	Principal Planner
Claire Ricker .....	Senior Planner
Sharon Konstantinidis.....	Head Clerk

**Others Present**

Hazel Hopkins .....	Hazel Wood Hopkins, Sign Consultant
Edward Owen .....	120 Front Street
Doug Loughy .....	24 Whitney Avenue

**OPEN**

MIMI PANITCH called for a motion to open the Planning Board meeting at 6:10 p.m. A motion was made by JOHN KELLEY and seconded by EILEEN REGAN. The motion carried 5-0.

**ZONE CHANGE/ SITE PLAN REVIEW/ SUBDIVISION/SPECIAL PERMIT**

**1. Special Permit - Section 6.4.6.4 Increase in size sign, H&R Block – 198-210 High Street**

MIMI PANITCH called for a motion to approve a Special Permit for a sign exceeding 40 square feet in a Downtown Business (BC) Zone, submitted by National Sign Corporation on behalf of H&R Block for the property located at 198-210 High Street. A motion was made by JOHN KELLEY and seconded by EILEEN REGAN. The motion carried 5-0.

**2. Zone Change –Whiting Farms Road 18-acre Parcel Continued, BG to IP,**

JEFFREY BURKOTT stated that statutorily, the Board had 21 days to render a decision.

JOHN KELLEY read the top four preferences from the results of the paper survey and the on-line survey. He reminded the Board that the decision to be made was whether or not the zone change should be granted and not for a specific use. He stated that:

- 1) the Holyoke Gas & Electric letter dated 1-10-14 clearly outlined the property owners’ opposition to the zone change and he noted it would set a bad precedent to allow a change against the wishes of the property owner;
- 2) There were many Public Hearings held, input was received from the residents and City Council and Planning & Economic Development Department and staff which resulted in the survey. The final responses to the survey contradict their Zone Change Petition request to IP; and
- 3) There is willingness by the property owner to consider alternate zones provided that the zone would allow the highest and best use for the property.

MR. KELLEY stated that he was not in favor of approving the zone change from BG to IP.

MARK JOY stated that he agreed with Mr. Kelley as to what the residents indicated that the uses they would like to see there was not allowed in the IP zoning.

EILEEN REGAN agreed and added that the wishes of the property owner weighed heavily on the decision. This was not one of those times where government needed to override the wishes of the property owner.

CHRIS LACHAPELLE stated that, in looking forward, it did not appear necessary to pursue a zone change when there was a qualified potential buyer, who would potentially be seeking another zone change as well. He was not in favor of the zone change.

MIMI PANITCH wanted to clarify that M.G.L. does allow the process of someone other than the property owner to come forward as a legal mechanism for a zone change; the process would require 12 votes of the City Council. She added that historically, the property was zoned IP when Holyoke Gas & Electric acquired the property. It is evident by the survey that neither zone would do what the abutters nor the City would prefer. It was difficult to support a zone change for a zone that was not preferred.

JOHN KELLEY stated that if the zone were to be changed via the abutters (although it was a recognized method), there was the potential that the property owner would seek legal action resulting in monetary damages. He added that it was sending the wrong message to Developers.

MIMI PANITCH called for a motion to recommend to the Ordinance Committee the denial of the zone change petition. A motion was made by MARK JOY to deny the zone change request from BG to IP based on the survey results which are not in line with the proposed zone change. The motion was seconded by CHRISTIAN LACHAPELLE. The motion carried 5-0.

## **PLANNING BOARD BUSINESS**

### **A) Project Updates/Old Business/New Business**

*Rail Platform Update* - MARCOS MARRERO stated that all the businesses have relocated and the site has been secured. The bid for the demolition has been received and work is expected to begin soon. The bid for the platform construction came in larger than the available funding (even with the gap funding from MA DOT) and alternatives and cutting line items are being discussed. Going out to bid again would delay breaking ground before the fall. The environmental portion of the project revealed underground storage tanks which will have to be removed; Brownfield money can be accessed for the removal prior to soil testing. There is a potential for a Site Plan Review amendment as funding may alter the design.

*Marcotte Ford* - JEFFREY BURKOTT stated that Marcotte Ford (Main Street) would be coming forward around December for a Site Plan Review for a super duty truck center.

*Pride* - JEFFREY BURKOTT stated that a Pride Gas Station would be demolishing the Citco gas station on Dwight Street (adjacent to Oliver Auto body) and rebuilding a 3,200 s/f Pride Convenience Store with a drive-thru. Significant site changes will trigger Site Plan Review; the drive thru would require a Special Permit from the City Council.

*Hampden & Pleasant* - MARCOS MARRERO stated that HEDIC had signed a purchase and sale agreement with Quabbin, LLC to sell them the property located at Hampden and Pleasant for the purpose of building a gas station/convenience store. The proposal would require a zone change for the use. This project was not anticipated to come before the Planning Board until February 2015.

*Automania* - CLAIRE RICKER stated that a Request For Qualifications was out for a site professional to perform a document review and create a clean up plan. Additional money may be pursued, other than from the EPA, for clean up. Letters of support, quotes, and qualifications are anticipated to be obtained by December.

### **B) Meeting Schedule**

The next Planning Board meeting scheduled was as follows:

October 28, 2014: Planning/Lyman Terrace SPR continuation/YMCA Zone Change

November 11, 2014: No meeting due to Veterans Day

November 25, 2014: Zoning Ordinance Amendment – Ordinance Special Permits, Auto Related, and possibly a Site Plan Review for Marcotte Ford.

December 9, 2014: Zoning Ordinance Amendment continuation - Special Permits

The Board discussed the upcoming scheduling constraints and joint public hearing issues. MARK JOY suggested that the Board consider suspending holding joint public hearings with the Ordinance Committee until an agreement can be reached relative to scheduling and meeting format. MIMI PANITCH agreed.

JOHN KELLEY agreed and suggested having the two Chairpersons meet to discuss the issues and come up with a solution.

The Board concurred. MARCOS MARRERO stated that he would make the arrangements.

**C) Minutes**

A motion was made by EILEEN REGAN and seconded by CHRIS LACHAPELLE to approve the Public Hearing minutes of April 16, 2013: J.G.L. Truck Sales, South Summer Street; and September 23, 2014 Lyman Terrace Revitalization. The motion carried 5-0.

**D) Other Business**

PVPC meeting – MIMI PANITCH stated that at the Annual Meeting she learned that there was a group of professionals willing to go to the various towns, free of charge, to educate businesses/offices on the various document saving methods in the event of a disaster. JOHN KELLEY stated that perhaps the Library would be interested in learning about these methods.

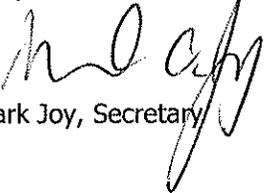
**E) Correspondence**

There was no correspondence to come before the Board.

***Adjournment***

There being no further business to come before the Planning Board, MIMI PANITCH, at 7:20 p.m., called for a motion to close the Planning Board Meeting. A motion was made by JOHN KELLEY and seconded by CHRIS LACHAPELLE. The motion carried 5-0.

Respectfully submitted,



Mark Joy, Secretary