

Planning Board Meeting
(meeting is being recorded)

On Thursday, November 13, 2014 the Holyoke Planning Board held a Public Meeting in the 4th Floor Conference Room, City Hall Annex, Holyoke City Hall, Holyoke, MA 01040 at 6:00 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

Others Present

Karen Betournay 749 Hampden Street
 Kathy Veins YMCA, Executive Director
 Daphne Board 162 Suffolk Street

OPEN

MIMI PANITCH called for a motion to open the Planning Board meeting at 6:01 p.m. A motion was made by MARK JOY and seconded by JOHN KELLEY. The motion carried 5-0.

ZONE CHANGE/ SITE PLAN REVIEW/ SUBDIVISION /SPECIAL PERMIT

1. Zone Change – Greater Holyoke YMCA, 399 Appleton Street, DR to BC,

MINI PANITCH stated for those present that the discussion was a meeting and there was no opportunity for public comment.

The Board compared the Downtown Residential (DR) and Downtown Business (BC) Use Chart.

MIMI PANITCH stated that in keeping the zoning regulations in mind, the zone change petition is based on the needs of one applicant and their contribution to Holyoke. This application is clearly a case of a spot zone as there is no other BC zone in the area. There is a redevelopment plan in place that has been adopted for a different land use then the one proposed. She sympathized with the lack of parking for the YMCA. She noted that it sends a bad message to ask resident to participate in land use surveys and public hearings, for the City to overlook what has been adopted because we like the applicant.

EILEEN REGAN stated that she tends to act with her heart and realizes that she should not. The YMCA was presented with other parking options.

JOHN KELLEY stated that he has given a lot of thought to the question of spot zoning and land use and noted that you have to look beyond that sometimes. The YMCA has tremendously contributed to the success of that area and he weighs heavily what they do for the community.

MIMI PANITCH stated that when the zone is changed and the YMCA does not follow through with the plans, or changes them, the zone will continue to affect the abutting zones.

CHRIS LACHAPELLE stated that the Board was in a tough spot and it was not easy to not consider what the YMCA has done for the community. The additional 21 spaces would be vital to a very overcrowded site; the site has been well designed and landscaped. He added that he also is respectful of the adjacent residents that were not in favor of the zone change.

EILEEN REGAN stated that the YMCA has been respected and is important to the community. It should be afforded some trust to follow through with their proposed plan. She recognized that the request was a spot zone.

MIMI PANITCH responded that the zone change was for the property and their contribution to the community cannot be taken into consideration. Approving this zone change will put the Board and the City in the position to grant other applicants the same consideration of a spot zone and having to forgo the use of the regulations.

JOHN KELLEY stated that the applicants expected to come forward for a zone change are for profit businesses and this applicant is a non-profit. Ultimately, the final decision lies with the City Council regardless of our recommendation. MIMI PANITCH responded that in two separate occasions the City Council has rejected a City-wide revitalization plan to create additional downtown parking.

MIMI PANITCH called for a motion.

JOHN KELLEY made a motion to recommend in favor of the zone change from DR to BC for the Greater Holyoke YMCA. The motion was seconded by MARK JOY.

In favor: John Kelley, Mark Joy. Against: Eileen Regan, Chris LaChapelle, and Mimi Panitch.
Mark Joy stated 2-3 opposed.

EILEEN REGAN called for those in favor. John Kelley asked those in favor to raise their hands.

In favor: John Kelley, Mark Joy, Eileen Regan and Chris LaChapelle. Against: Mimi Panitch.
John Kelley stated 4-1 in favor.

EILEEN REGAN stated that she did not know where that vote came from. DAPHNE BOARD noted that the vote did not appear the same both times. EILEEN REGAN stated that the vote was the same for her both times. MIMI PANITCH stated that the vote was an unjustified decision and will submit a formal decision to the City Council.

PLANNING BOARD BUSINESS

A) Project Updates/Old Business/New Business

JEFFREY BURKOTT stated that materials relative to the Marcotte Ford and the Holyoke Hotel Site Plan Reviews were included in their packet for review prior to November 25, 2014.

B) Meeting Schedule

The next Planning Board meeting scheduled was as follows:

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

December 9, 2014: Zoning Ordinance Amendment continuation regarding Special Permits, Lyman Terrace Site Plan Review continuation. JOHN KELLEY would not be available.

December 23, 2014: Possible continuations of Public Hearings and the Pride Site Plan Review.

MIMI PANITCH stated that a meeting was held with the Ordinance Committee Chairman to discuss a joint Public Hearing schedule and format going forward. The first Tuesday of the month would be designated for joint Public Hearings; no changes as discussed have been implemented at this time as meetings were currently scheduled.

The timing of City Council notification of Joint Public Hearings and submittal dates were discussed. The Board agreed that during the Joint Public Hearings that they have often felt rushed to review materials to render a timely decision.

JOHN KELLEY and EILEEN REGAN both noted that the Planning Board has been very accommodating and "business friendly" which appears one sided. The Board requested that the City Council Ordinance Committee Chairperson be informed of the Planning Boards time frame and that staff adhere to the deadlines.

JEFFREY BURKOTT discussed amending the submittal deadline for applicants in the interest of a thorough review by the various departments and the Board. The Planning Board agreed that extending the submittal schedule and adhering to the deadlines was not unreasonable.

C) Minutes

A motion was made by JOHN KELLEY and seconded by CHRIS LACHAPELLE to approve the meeting minutes of September 23, 2013, September 30, 2014, and October 14, 2014. The motion carried 5-0.

D) Other Business

There was no other business to come before the Board.

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 6:43 p.m., called for a motion to close the Planning Board Meeting. A motion was made by JOHN KELLEY and seconded by MARK JOY. The motion carried 5-0.

Respectfully submitted,


Mark Joy, Secretary