

Joint Public Hearing Minutes
City Council Ordinance Committee / Planning Board
Zone Change –Parking as a Principal Use by Special Permit in the Downtown Zones
(meeting is being recorded)

On Tuesday, May 12, 2015, the Holyoke Planning Board continued the Joint Public Hearing (April 14, 2015) with the Ordinance Committee of the City Council regarding parking as a principal use in the downtown. The meeting was held in the City Council Chambers, 536 Dwight Street, Holyoke, Massachusetts at 6:30 p.m.

Attendance:

Planning Board

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

Planning Department

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

Ordinance Committee

Rebecca Lisi	At Large Councilor
Gordon Alexander.....	Ward 7 Councilor
Linda Vacon.....	Ward 5 Councilor
David Bartley	At Large Councilor
Jennifer Chateaufneuf	At Large Councilor

City Council

Joseph McGiverin.....	At Large Councilor
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Others Present

Kara Cunha.....	2 nd Assistant City Solicitor
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MIMI PANITCH, at 6:30 p.m., called for a motion to open the Public Hearing for the above mentioned Zone Change Amendment. A motion was made by MARK JOY and seconded by EILEEN REGAN. The motion carried 5-0.

MARCOS MARRERO stated that since the April 14, 2015 Public Hearing, the working sub-group has not been able to meet to discuss the details and intent of the proposed changes therefore, there is no new information to present.

REBECCA LISI asked if the report by the Pioneer Valley Planning Commission would be discussed. MARCOS MARRERO responded that the report contained useful findings that the sub-group would extrapolate and draft the Special Permit criteria and best practices for the City Council. Since scheduling was an issue with City Councilors, it was the intent of the Planning Board to draft the language to present to the Ordinance Committee for review to expedite the process.

COUNCILOR VACON was in support of any method that would produce a document for discussion.

COUNCILOR BARTLEY concurred and stated that expecting the Planning Board members to participate in a sub-group outside of normal business was above and beyond their volunteer position. He supported the Planning Board discussing the details at their regularly scheduled Hearing in order to present a document to the Ordinance Committee.

MIMI PANITCH stated that once a draft document was created it would be reviewed by the Law Department prior to the Ordinance Committee.

JOHN KELLEY stated that the process was most efficient when a draft is created by the Professional Staff based on comments heard from the Councilors and presented to the Ordinance Committee.

EILEEN REGAN asked if a sub-group was necessary. JEFFREY BURKOTT responded that in this instance, a sub-group would be useful to help determine the intent of the sponsoring Councilor and direction for the Special Permit. The Planning Board would review the document prior to submittal to the Ordinance Committee for review or acceptance.

MIMI PANITCH stated that by having a draft document to present during the Joint Public Hearing, it was less of a burden to the public as there was currently no document to comment on.

COUNCILOR MCGIVERIN stated that this appeared to be a commonsense approach to get to a resolution. He noted that the Order has been active for 9 months and requested that it become a priority. He asked for clarification relative to the procedure as two government bodies have begun the process. KARA CUNHA stated that a quorum of the individual Board members could not meet.

The Boards discussed future meetings relative to remaining in compliance with the Open Meeting Law. It was determined that the Boards could hold Public Hearings separately and reconvene together. A working group could meet to discuss the technical details to later present to the Boards and accept public comments.

COUNCILOR VACON read the intent of the Order per the Ordinance Committee minutes. She stated that a draft document had been presented on April 14, 2015 and asked what the concerns were regarding the language as it appeared to be straight forward. MARCOS MARRERO responded that they wanted to attach Site Plan Review with expanded criteria, and was seeking input from a sub-group to evaluate the criteria and determine the specifics.

COUNCILOR REGAN stated that the Planning Board has greater access to the Professional Staff and individually have the expertise necessary to be on the Board. It appears that there is a lack of confidence in the Planning Board and recently the micromanaging of many issues. The Ordinance Committee has been taking over the responsibility of the Planning Board. There is a procedure in place to have all the questions addressed without requiring Planning Staff attend Ordinance Committee meetings to create a document.

MIMI PANITCH at 7:31 p.m. called for motion to continue their Public Hearing until May 26, 2015 at 6:00 p.m. A motion was made by MARK JOY and seconded by EILEEN REGAN. The motion carried 5-0. (The Ordinance Committee continued their Public Hearing until June 9, 2015 at 6:30 p.m.)

Respectfully submitted,



Mark Joy, Secretary
Holyoke Planning Board