

Planning Board Meeting
(meeting is being recorded)

On Tuesday, September 29, 2015 the Holyoke Planning Board held a Public Meeting in the 4th 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
John Kelley	Secretary Pro Tempore
Eileen Regan	Member

Planning Staff

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

Others Present

Jonathan Goddard	R. Levesque Associates, Inc.
Javier Gonzalez	J. Gonsales Enterprises, LLC

OPEN

At 5:04 p.m., MIMI PANITCH called for a motion to open the Planning Board meeting. A motion was made by CHRIS LACHAPELLE and seconded by JOHN KELLEY. The motion carried 4-0.

ZONE CHANGE / SITE PLAN REVIEW / SUBDIVISION / SPECIAL PERMIT

1. Site Plan Review Amendment - So Summer Street Self Storage (File #89), J. Gonzalez Enterprises, LLC

JOHN GODDARD stated that there were two amendments from the approved Notice of Decision.

- 1) The omission of the vegetative buffer between the building and the fence, and
- 2) The remainder of the City sidewalk.

JOHN GODDARD, relative to the plantings, explained that there was a maintenance concern in providing plantings between the 4-foot space between the building and the fence. Relative to the sidewalk removal of the access for the abutting religious use to the south, the driveway apron was in good condition and used by the abutter for handicap access.

JOHN KELLEY asked if there were alternative options to soften up the look. JOHN GODDARD replied that no plantings were proposed; there would be mulch for weed control.

JEFFREY BURKOTT stated that the original plan showed that the rhododendrons would be replaced with arborvitae. JOHN GODDARD replied that any planting will exceed a 3-foot diameter minimizing the space for access.

MIMI PANITCH stated that as part of the Notice of Decision, the Board would have addressed screening and neighborhood integration. She questioned why the difficulty of providing landscaping was not identified prior to the original approval. JOHN GODDARD replied it was a question of concept verses reality. MIMI PANITCH added that one of the main Findings of the Board was to provide proper screening to the abutters which the original plan provided. There was a harsh discrepancy between the brick and chain link fence, and the unscreened square box structure.

CHRIS LACHAPELLE noted that the project is done without having gone through the process and now the Board is challenged with having to mitigate the outcome. He questioned if anyone had spoken to the abutter.

JAVIER GONZALEZ stated that all of the neighbors were grateful. The trash on site is picked up 3 times a day. The weeds and snow are promptly removed from his property as well as the abutters' property. Any approved landscaping will be destroyed due to frequent trash removal and the trapped trash in bushes looks bad. He noted that the sidewalk withstood the repeated use during construction.

JOHN KELLEY asked if an ornamental tree would soften the look and be easily maintained. JAVIER GONZALEZ replied that the tree would have to be slender.

CHRIS LACHAPELLE asked if plantings could be installed on the abutters' property. JAVIER GONZALEZ replied that he would provide the abutters with a letter to sign asking of their preference; the Board would review the letter to ensure the intent is properly reflected.

Relative to the sidewalk issue, JOHN GODDARD stated that the original intent was to redefine the curb cut, however, the condition of the driveway is in great shape and serves the automatic entry gate well.

MIMI PANITCH stated that a letter was received from the DPW dated 9-25-15 which noted that the Site Plan Review approved the discontinuation of the sidewalk and apron as it was not constructed in conformance with the standards of the DPW.

JAVIER GONZALEZ stated that the use of the apron in front of his gate serves the handicap members of the adjacent church. JEFFREY BURKOTT replied that he was unsure if there were regulation governing if a handicap entrance could be located in front of an abutting building. MIMI PANITCH stated that she would need additional information from the DPW as she did not want to dismiss his opinion.

EILEEN REGAN stated that she visited the site and spoke with the abutting neighbor who felt that bushes would contribute to trash retention and be a place for people to hide. The neighbor across the street concurred with the ineffectiveness of the bushes and noted that the site had sufficient lighting.

JAVIER GONZALEZ stated that a security system had been installed and the automatic gate system will not operate "after hours".

JEFFREY BURKOTT stated that on the approved plan it showed bollards between every unit to protect the exterior of the building between the units. JAVIER GONZALEZ responded that the bollards were eliminated because it affected the turning radius of vehicles; extra side panels were ordered if they become damaged.

JEFFREY BURKOTT asked if vehicles would be stored in the units. JAVIER GONZALEZ responded yes. JEFFREY BURKOTT noted that during Site Plan Review he stated that he would not be storing cars in the units. JAVIER GONZALEZ responded that MA regulation allows for storage of vehicles but not hazardous waste; a contract would be signed that explains that servicing cars was illegal. The minutes of 2013 were read in which he stated that no cars would be stored.

JEFFREY BURKOTT asked if the approved bituminous curbing proposed to be installed along the rear from the point of connecting each of the units was to help contain the storm water on-site. JOHN GODDARD replied that no curbing was to be installed at this time but he would get clarification from his engineer.

JEFFREY BURKOTT stated that the barbs on the fencing were approved to end at the lateral bar when in fact they were installed over the bar. The Building Commissioner views what was installed as barbed wire which the City does not allow. JOHN GODDARD replied that he would research what options were available to remedy the situation.

Due to outstanding information, discussions would resume on October 13, 2015 at 5:30 p.m.

PLANNING BOARD BUSINESS

A) Discussion of Planning Board Regulations & Procedures

The Board discussed setting submittal deadlines. JOHN KELLEY noted that at the last Public Hearing, the Board Members were less than professional and showed a low level of respect for each other as well as staff. The Board has always been accommodating, but it was time to set expectations up front relative to applicant deadlines and adhere to them (see Planning Board Rules and Regulations VII (7)).

CHRIS LACHAPELLE asked what the consequence of submitting after the deadline. MIMI PANITCH stated that materials submitted after the deadline will result in a continuance of the Hearing instead of closing and allow staff time for a thorough review of materials.

The Board agreed that the guidelines already exist and should be provided to the applicants upon submittal; the Board needs to reinforce the guidelines.

B) Election of Officers (Article IV)

A motion was made by JOHN KELLEY and seconded by CHRIS LACHAPELLE to reelect MIMI PANITCH as Chairperson. The motion carried 4-0.

A motion was made by JOHN KELLEY and seconded by MIMI PANITCH to reelect CHRIS LACHAPELLE as Vice-Chairperson. The motion carried 4-0.

A motion was made by JOHN KELLEY and seconded by CHRIS LACHAPELLE to reelect EILEEN REGAN as Secretary. The motion carried 4-0.

C) Project Updates/Old Business/New Business

Gary Rome – Gary Rome and Gayle Keith have walked the site to determine which trees may be worth saving.

Lynch Project – Continues to do their due diligence.

Claire Ricker replacement – The Mayor understands the importance of a replacement for the Senior Planner position.

D) Meeting Schedule (tentative):

October 13, 2015 – Planning at 5:00; P.H. Amend SC Zone & Create Shopping Center Zoning for Large Scale District (Eileen would not be present)

October 27, 2015 – ZC Telecommunication, ZC 161 Lower Westfield Road,

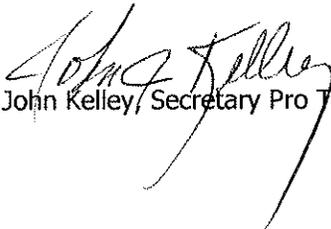
November 10, 2015 –

November 24, 2015 –

Adjournment

There being no further business to come before the Planning Board, MIMI PANITCH, at 6:15 p.m., called for a motion to close the Planning Board meeting. A motion was made by JOHN KELLEY and seconded by EILEEN REGAN. The motion carried 4-0.

Respectfully submitted,


John Kelley, Secretary Pro Tempore