

Planning Board Public Hearing Minutes
Special Permit – Parking on an Adjacent Parcel
Greater Holyoke YMCA
 (meeting is being recorded)

On Tuesday, January 12, 2016, the Holyoke Planning Board held a Public Hearing regarding a Special Permit for parking on an adjacent lot, (6.1.7.1) for the property located at 399 Appleton Street, submitted by Greater Holyoke YMCA. The meeting was held in the 4th Floor Conference Room, City Hall Annex, 20 Korean Veterans Plaza, Holyoke, Massachusetts at 5:00 p.m.

Attendance:

Planning Board

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

Planning Staff

Marcos Marrero Director
 Jeffrey Burkott Principal Planner
 Sharon Konstantinidis Head Clerk

Others Present

Chicki (Wendy) Urban ...	186 Pine St.	Karen Betournay	YMCA
Jason Dajani	185 Pine St.	Paul Bessette	YMCA
Stephen Bosco	430 Appleton St.	Daphne Board	191 Pine St.
Carlene Morton	171 Pine St.	Kathy Viens	171 Pine St.
Dan Delany	Fuss & O'Neill	Aimee Bell	Fuss & O'Neill
Jennifer Gilburg	YMCA		

MIMI PANITCH, at 5:20 p.m., called for a motion to open the Public Hearing. A motion was made by JOHN KELLEY and seconded by CHRIS LACHAPELLE. The motion carried 4-0.

MIMI PANITCH explained the Public Hearing process noting that responses to comments and material were received from the Applicant past the Planning Department review deadline and therefore, following a presentation and public comment, the Public Hearing would be continued.

DAN DELANY concurred that the materials were submitted as late as 4:30 p.m. this afternoon evening. He provided a brief overview of the existing site noting that the proposed project was to establish a parking lot adjacent to the YMCA at 399 Appleton Street. The existing primary site contains 107 on-site parking spaces and by the ITE standards for the building size and use, 180 – 250 parking spaces would best serve the YMCA. DAN DELANY stated that the proposed parking lot would serve the needs of the membership during the busier times. During large events, off campus parking would be used. He explained the existing site's vehicular circulation and pedestrian access noting that 5 handicap accessible parking spaces, including 1 van accessible, were proposed near the front door entrance.

DAN DELANY explained that the existing lot would be configured to allow the access and egress to the 21 space proposed parking lot located on Pine Street. The stormwater system was currently under review by the Stormwater Authority. The proposed landscaping had been revised since the original submittal to include the addition of the street trees and flowering trees ledge to provide buffering to the adjacent business. In addition, changes were also made to: reduce the Pine Street driveway apron to 20 feet and bring to City standards; add a pedestrian connection to the Appleton Street sidewalk to enhance pedestrian circulation; additional site lighting in three locations, and additional stripping and signage at the entrance. DAN DELANY stated that signage would direct pedestrians 100 feet to the corner of Pine & Appleton Street crosswalk as a mid-block crosswalk (at the entrance/exit) would be more detrimental to the motorists.

DAN DELANY stated that the increase to the level of traffic was minimal as the parking lot is created to accommodate the existing need not a new facility; a waiver from a Traffic Impact Statement was requested.

JOHN KELLEY asked if additional landscaping (or stripping at the entrance) could be useful to prevent mid-block crossing over Pine Street. DAN DELANY replied that they would inquire with their landscaper; he believed that 80% of the pedestrians would travel to the corner for the crosswalk.

MIMI PANITCH noted that the design of the accessory parking lot directly across Pine Street would aid in the existing on-site traffic flow. She asked if the proposed 21 parking spaces would be enough to alleviate the parking concerns with future expansion plans on the horizon; a Traffic Impact Statement may be a useful tool. DAN DELANY replied that the 20% increase in parking would minimize the parking shortfall. KATHY VIENS responded that it was hard to predict the future plans; the proposed additional parking spaces will help accommodate the 4,300 members the YMCA serves. During snow days, the YMCA loses one-side of parking on the three abutting streets. During large events at the YMCA, parking arrangements were made with the Senior Center and Mater Dolorosa to avoid a negative strain on the residents.

MIMI PANITCH asked for those that wish to speak in favor or against, or to ask questions to come forward.

CHICKY (WENDY) URBAN an abutter, informed Kathy Veins that perhaps the Holyoke Police Department should be made aware that parking is allowed on the parallel parking strip as she has repeatedly received a hard time when she is forced to park there. She added that although off-site parking arrangements are made during swim meets, the sign for the Swim Meet parking is located further up Pine Street. When vehicles turn off Appleton Street, they park right in front of her house not realizing that the designated parking is 3 blocks up the road.

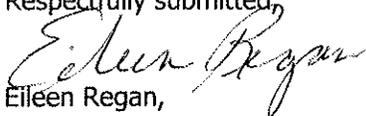
CHICKY URBAN asked if the proposed lot would be accessible to the surrounding residents and why the design of the parking lot would close the Appleton Street entrance. DAN DELANY replied that the site, for overflow customer parking, was designed in an effort to align the two entrances directly across Pine Street; the existing driveway would not line up with the drive aisle. In addition, the Appleton Street entrance would have to be moved the 50 feet from the intersection requirement and still would not line up with the drive aisle.

CHICKY URBAN expressed her concern regarding the narrowing of the Pine Street entrance relative to those entering and exiting. She felt that a crosswalk near the entrance without a flashing light was a huge safety concern. She added that she has witnessed many persons crossing in the middle of Pine Street instead of walking to the existing crosswalk. She asked what the height of the privacy hedges would be along the 4 foot fence of the abutting day care center. DAN DELANY replied the arborvitaes would be approximately 6-9 feet high.

STEVE BOSLOW asked when the Stormwater Authority Hearing was scheduled. MIMI PANITCH replied January 25, 2016.

At 6:06 p.m., there being no further business to come before the Planning Board, a motion was made by JONH KELLEY and seconded by CHRIS LACHAPPELLE to close the Public Hearing. The motion carried 4-0.

Respectfully submitted,


Eileen Regan,
Holyoke Planning Board