

**MINUTES OF PUBLIC HEARING  
HELD BY THE PLANNING AND ZONING COMMISSION  
MARCH 19, 2012**

**ROLL CALL:**

Members Present: Joseph Diminico, Chairman  
Andy Kidd, Secretary  
Eric Prause  
Horace Brown

Alternates: Anthony Petrone  
John Chaput (sitting)

Absent: Kevin Dougan, Vice Chairman  
Susan Shanbaum

Also Present: Mark Pellegrini, Director of Planning  
Renata Bertotti, Senior Planner  
Ginger MacHattie, Recording Secretary

The Chairman opened the Public Hearing at 7:10 p.m. The Secretary read the legal notice for the application when the call was made.

TOWN OF MANCHESTER PLANNING AND ZONING COMMISSION – Broad Street redevelopment area – revisions to the zoning regulations to add Article II Section 26 – Form-Based Zone – Zoning Regulation Amendment (2012-003) (*continued*)

Mr. Pellegrini reminded Commission members that there were a number of technical and clerical corrections that needed to be made in addition to the changes that were discussed at the last meeting. Commission members were provided a revised document with additions underlined in red and deletions struck out in red. A lengthy discussion was held at the last meeting regarding whether requirements for affordable housing should be included in the Form-Based Zoning Regulations.

Ms. Bertotti reviewed the edits for Commission members.

Chairman Diminico asked if any member of the public wished to comment either in favor of or in opposition to the amendments.

Mr. Pellegrini received an e-mail from Ms. Barbara Weinberg, a member of the Redevelopment Agency (Agency) and local realtor. She said she did not think it is necessary to tie the hands of future developers and did not want to see an affordable housing requirement.

Mr. Gary Sweet, 75 Forest Street, agreed with Ms. Weinberg's comments and shared her concerns. He said the Redevelopment Agency is going on a fishing trip to try to get Broad Street developed and he did not want to see a potential developer's hands tied. The Dye House has affordable housing due to the financing mechanism. Mr. Sweet spoke with a developer who said the majority of the projects he is involved in have affordable housing included. The Agency would like to see a diversity of housing but he feared requiring a percentage would limit the pool of potential developers. He urged Commission members to let the market determine the percentage of affordable housing.

Ms. Marlene Walsh, 112 Pitkin Street, Housing Advocate and Redevelopment Agency member, expressed concern that a 20% requirement will cause unintended consequences. She did not want to see a high threshold set that in effect limits the results in the Broad Street area. She said as financing and the project come together, it is likely that any type of federal funding will be tied to some measure of affordability. She wants the project to be successful and the developer to have latitude.

Mr. Phil MacVane, 425 Hackmatack Street, agreed with the previous speakers. He was not opposed to affordable housing but he was opposed to restrictions placed on developers. He did not want to limit the creativity of those in business and would like to be able to assist the Town's growth.

Mr. Bob Schneider, 59 Scarborough Road, complimented the Planning and Zoning Commission and Town staff. He said they have been doing a lot of hard work throughout this process. He underlined what other Agency members have said. He said he sees the redevelopment area as a piece of private real estate of which the Town is the caretaker. It is important to let the market reign and let it come to its own conclusions with time and the right developer, he said. The more latitude a developer has will result in making the project more fruitful for the Town of Manchester. He said this is a good document and a good plan. Mr. Schneider did not think the Town should require any impediments.

In response to a question from Mr. Diminico, Mr. Pellegrini read the following excerpts from page two of the Broad Street Redevelopment Plan Executive Summary: "A strong residential component that includes a range of rental and/or owner-occupied housing in a variety of types and at various prices is critical for the redevelopment plan. While the market once supported an almost purely retail center on Broad Street, market shifts require a new approach. Discussions with market experts indicate a saturated local retail market.", and "The plan calls for an exclusively residential, high-density land use at the center of the vacant Parkade site. The residential area would include two to six story structures of multifamily apartments, townhouses, or condominiums. Other residential uses would be on the upper floors of mixed-use buildings, generally from Bigelow Brook to the northern end of the study area."

Mr. Pellegrini read the following from the section titled "The Benefits of Mixed-Use Development" on page fourteen of the Broad Street Redevelopment Plan: "Increased Housing Options: A mix of residential types and uses adds to the overall vibrancy of the final development. A diversity of housing types at various price points allows people and families of

various ages and means to live in one neighborhood. The resulting mix of residents helps create the activity and vibrancy the Agency desires to create.”

Mr. Pellegrini thought those would be the most direct references to the issue of what types of housing is being called for. The potential financing resources include federal or state grants or loans, which may have their own requirements in terms of income, amenities, and design.

Mr. Sweet explained that Mr. Gary Anderson, Senior Planner, brought a spreadsheet to one of the Agency’s meetings that indicated a family of four, making 80% of the mean income level is a family with an income of \$68,000. This means there is potential that people working for the Town of Manchester would qualify for affordable housing. The idea is to encourage developers.

Ms. Bertotti said the Connecticut Regional Council of Governments (CRCOG) has indicated there are no apparent conflicts with regional plans or neighboring towns and the plan is consistent with several of the regional plan’s land use and zoning policy recommendations.

Mr. Prause said it has been a long road to get to this point and applauds the Agency members for all of their hard work. The Plan calls for an aspiration to add mixed residential types and housing at different price points. He wondered if this is reflective of the original goals and the charter that was given to the Agency.

Mr. Pellegrini said the original charge to the Agency from the Board of Directors was very broad. It was to develop a redevelopment plan for the Broad Street area. It was through the research and analysis of the Agency that the plan calls for the type of housing it does, he said.

Mr. Brown, referring to the chart on pages 24 and 25, recalled a discussion held at the last meeting regarding places of worship. He thought that it was the consensus that having places of worship in a commercial zone would break the commercial frontage in that zone, yet the regulations only allow places of worship in the commercial zone. He is not sure that is the way that discussion went.

Ms. Bertotti said she reviewed the meeting and it was unclear to her how this was intended to be handled. At some point, the Commission was clear that it did not want places of worship in the frontage zone of the commercial subdistrict and they are not permitted in the frontage zone. However, it was unclear whether this should be left in the commercial district at all, she said.

Mr. Diminico said places of worship are presently allowed by special exception in a residential and industrial area.

Ms. Bertotti added that places of worship are permitted in commercial areas by special exception. They are not permitted in Central Business District or PRD zones.

Mr. Diminico remembered that places of worship are not allowed in the Central Business District because the Town is trying to promote businesses on Main Street instead of places of worship. He wondered if that same thought process would hold for this project as well.

Mr. Brown said he did not have strong feelings either way, but it seemed unclear to him. He knows that specific efforts have been made to reduce the number of special exceptions needed, but this may be a case in which a special exception is needed.

Mr. Diminico suggested that the Commission be consistent and require a special exception for all places of worship.

Ms. Bertotti verified that places of worship will change from permitted to special exception in the commercial subdistrict and they will not be allowed in the frontage zone or the residential area. The Commission members agreed.

Mr. Brown noted, on page 25, under the residential frontage zone, retail stores up to 5,000 square feet, arts and crafts, convenience stores, personal services establishments, restaurants, cafes, taverns, grills, alcohol and liquor sales, general food service stores, and refreshment stands are all allowed in the frontage zone. He understands that the Commission is trying to avoid the use of special exceptions in the Form-Based regulations but he has concerns about all of these uses in the frontage zone of the residential area.

Mr. Pellegrini explained the frontage zone is 40' from the public street in the residential district and 40' from Green Manor Boulevard and Park Road; those are the only places that the businesses Mr. Brown mentioned would be allowed in the residential area. The internal blocks would be exclusively residential. The intent is to provide the opportunity for flexibility on the ground floor.

Mr. Chaput, referring to page 31, noted that the paragraph on maximum building height was removed and suggested leaving a reference to the table. Mr. Pellegrini said he would.

Mr. Brown expressed some concern about the item regarding trees on page 44. It states that public frontages should include shade canopies which mature at three stories high but remains predominately clear of building frontages. He said there is not a great deal of width between the street and the building and he was not sure that the entire frontage of the building will remain clear, which will hinder the visibility of the businesses and their signs. He said this is a problem on Main Street. People are unable to see the signs because of the trees.

Mr. Pellegrini explained that the intent is not to limit trees to three stories, but that trees may be at least three stories. The idea is to create shade canopies along the street. He did not think it is reasonable to expect the bottom of the canopy to be 35' high. He recommended keeping the wording the way it is. If one refers back to street frontage types, it becomes clear we are trying to get a tree line street canopy.

Mr. Brown suggested adding the word generally before three stories and Commission members agreed to that wording.

The public hearing on this application was closed.

TOWN OF MANCHESTER PLANNING AND ZONING COMMISSION – revisions to the zoning regulations to add Article I Section 4.05.07; Application Requirements: Supplemental Requirements – Detailed Plans for form-based zone, and a minor administrative text amendment at Article I Section 4.01. – Zoning Regulation Amendment (2012-008)

Ms. Bertotti explained the proposal for this text amendment is directly related to Form-Based Zoning and has to do with the application requirements. This spells out what the applicant is to do when filing a special exception application. Each site that is less than 50,000 square feet can be approved by Town staff. The applicant will have to meet all of the requirements of the Form-Based Zoning Regulations. If a development is larger than 50,000 square feet, the applicant will need to file a site plan application. For each site plan application, an application to the Planning and Zoning Commission will be required, including a detailed plan as described in Article I Section 4.04 of the existing zoning regulations. In addition, supplemental requirements are being proposed specific to the Form-Based Zone.

Chairman Diminico asked if any member of the public wished to comment on this application and no member of the public came forward at this time.

In response to a question from Mr. Prause, Ms. Bertotti said traffic impact reports are not required with site plan reviews. A PRD is a zone change and therefore would require a traffic impact report. Floor plans are not part of the proposed building layouts.

Ms. Bertotti reported that CRCOG did not find any conflicts with regional planning or neighboring towns.

The Chairman closed the Public Hearing portion of the meeting at 8:22 p.m.

**NOTICE: A DIGITAL RECORDING OF THIS PUBLIC HEARING CAN BE HEARD IN THE PLANNING DEPARTMENT.**