

**MINUTES OF BUSINESS MEETING
HELD BY THE PLANNING AND ZONING COMMISSION
JANUARY 20, 2016**

ROLL CALL:

MEMBERS PRESENT: Eric Prause, Chairman
Andy Kidd, Vice Chairman
Jessica Scorso
Timothy Bergin

Alternate Member Sitting: Teresa Ike

Alternates: Julian Stoppelman
Patrick Kennedy

Absent: Michael Stebe

Also Present: Mark Pellegrini, Director of Planning
Renata Bertotti, Senior Planner
Matthew Bordeaux, Environmental Planner
Karen Logan, Recording Secretary

Time Convened: 7:03 P.M.

NEW BUSINESS:

RAHF SQUIRE PRESERVATION, LLC – For construction of a 6,988 sq. ft. community building, addition of 5 new residential units, and modification of 10 existing units into handicapped accessible units, with associated landscaping, site and parking alterations at 48 Spencer Street (a.k.a. 20-82 Spencer Street). – Erosion and Sedimentation Control Plan (2015-110); Special Exception Modification (2015-111)

Ms. Lisa Feinberg, Attorney with Carmody Law in Stamford, Connecticut, made the presentation on behalf of the applicant. She began by introducing the members of her team and continued by citing the mission of the Jonathan Rose Companies: “to repair the fabric of cities, towns, and villages, while preserving the land around them. Jonathan Rose Companies specializes in creating affordable and sustainable projects and intends to bring that expertise to the Squire Village Apartments project with the use of their Affordable Housing Preservation Fund and Low Income Housing Tax Credits from the State of Connecticut.” The applicant is the contract purchaser of the property and is scheduled to close in February 2016. Immediately following closing, the applicant intends to undertake an \$11.5 million renovation of the property, she said.

She introduced Mr. David McCarthy, associated with Jonathan Rose Companies, who spoke briefly about Jonathan Rose Companies and described their background and experience, specifically in Connecticut. He showed slides of an affordable housing project they completed in

Meriden in 2012. He also described an affordable housing project they have worked on in Stamford.

Ms. Feinberg continued by describing the project for Commission members. The existing site of the Squire Village apartments comprises 30.18 acres. The centerpiece of the project is the construction of a community center, to be located at the southeastern corner of Channing Drive. In making the decision regarding the location of a community center, the applicant looked at the demographics of the residents of Squire Village and found that 44% are children and young adults under the age of 18. The proposed community center building will be situated in a large, open field with an existing play area that is badly in need of improvements. The current play area will be removed and a new play area will be constructed behind the community center, along with a proposed community garden with raised beds. Walkways will be installed to connect the community center with existing sidewalks. New parking spaces will be added along the community center, she said.

The applicant also plans to add five one-bedroom units in existing buildings in areas that are currently used for storage. Ten existing units will be converted into handicapped accessible housing.

At this point, Ms. Feinberg turned the podium over to the project architect. Mr. Jared Crooks, Senior Project Architect with Paul Bailey Architects of New Haven, Connecticut, introduced himself and described some of the details planned for the project. The new community center will be over 6,900 sq. ft., wood framed, and energy efficient, he said. Dense pack cellulose insulation will be used, along with rigid insulation on the outside of the building. In the roof area, spray-in fiberglass insulation will be installed to further ensure energy efficiency. Additionally, the windows will all be triple glazed.

Mr. Crooks said the building is designed with three wings. The main lobby area will be connected to an exercise room on the right, with administrative offices located on the left, and directly through the lobby there will be a large common room for residents to use for events. All three areas are connected to the outside surrounding areas by handicapped access doors.

The exterior of the building will be a colonial yellow and off-white palette. Mr. Crooks showed slides of all four building elevations, noting the roofing material was planned to be asphalt shingles and the siding would be made of fiber cement.

When Mr. Crooks was finished, he introduced Mr. Jim Garry, the Landscape Architect.

Mr. Garry discussed the addition of new sidewalks and noted that the sidewalks would be pushed back to provide a snow shelf for plowing. Some of the trees being used throughout the property include sycamore, birch, beech and hawthorn. Surrounding the patio, the plan calls for paper bark maple and ornamental grasses will be planted next to the foundation of the community center.

The next speaker for the applicant was Mr. Joseph Canas, P.E., Project Manager with Tighe & Bond, of Shelton, Connecticut, who addressed the subject of the erosion and sedimentation

control plan. Due to the anticipated increase in impervious surface, a storm water management plan was developed. The plan calls for a new detention infiltration system which will compensate for the additional impervious surface. The catch basins installed around the community center will have sump pumps lined with silt sacks. Peak flow rates have been reduced for all types of storms, and there is a storm water maintenance plan.

The proposed community center will connect to an existing sanitary sewer and water main, as well as irrigation service, fire service and domestic water service. Also, gas, telephone and electric will connect from Channing Drive, Mr. Canas said.

Mr. Prause asked if the electrical service would be buried and Mr. Canas replied that the electrical service is overhead. Mr. Prause commented that if the community center is being planned to be a resiliency center during a power outage, if the electrical service is overhead, the community center itself would be more susceptible to a power outage than if the lines were buried. Mr. Pelkey of Jonathan Rose Companies noted that this was the reason for the addition of a backup generator.

Mr. Canas went on to discuss the erosion and sedimentation control plan, which calls for an anti-tracking pad to be installed at the entrance to the community center building construction area, which will be enclosed in a fence and protected from erosion by a silt fence which will be installed around the perimeter of the construction site. All drainage structures will be periodically inspected by the construction contractor and cleaned to prevent silt buildup.

Mr. Crooks discussed the changes planned for the rest of the site, including new roofs with insulation, new trim and new gutters. Fifteen of the units will undergo interior rehab – five storage units will be converted to loft units, five one-bedroom units will be converted to one-bedroom handicapped accessible units, and five two-bedroom units will be converted to two-bedroom handicapped accessible units. Fifteen of the 31 units will have solar panels.

Ms. Feinberg noted that half of the population living at Squire Village is under 18, so the play area and all of the outdoor space is important to the project. She finished by asking for any questions or comments.

Mr. Prause stated that he felt this was a worthwhile project and that it was well planned. He appreciated the effort that had gone into the application. He went on to ask what the existing community center would be used for once the new community center is constructed. Ms. Feinberg indicated that the current community center is the location of the Manchester police substation, but their space is very cramped. She believed that the police substation would remain in the existing community center and that they would have more space once the new one opened. Mr. Pelkey noted that the police would be able expand programming and have meeting rooms available.

Mr. Prause asked if the existing playscape would be available to the resident children during the construction of the Community Center. Mr. McCarthy of Jonathan Rose Companies noted that during the 8-month construction phase, there will be nothing available to the children. Mr. Prause suggested that it would be nice if there were something available to the children for play.

Ms. Scorso asked what operating hours would be planned for the community center. Typically, the community center would be open during working hours, such as 8 a.m. to 6 p.m., Mr. McCarthy said.

Ms. Scorso also asked what the turnaround time would be for maintenance requests at the community center. Mr. McCarthy indicated that it depended on the type of repair needed. For something smaller, it would only be a day or two, but larger issues might take longer.

Mr. Bergin asked the proposed square footage of the storage units being converted into livable space. Mr. McCarthy responded that the one-bedroom units would be approximately 700 square feet.

Mr. Prause asked for comments from staff. Ms. Bertotti indicated that the comments from staff were fairly minor and technical and could be made a condition of approval if the Commission chose to move forward.

Mr. Prause went on to ask Ms. Feinberg to discuss how the applicant's project addresses each of the special exception criteria. Ms. Feinberg responded that as far as suitable location, the development is already in existence and the applicant plans to add amenity space and upgrade units. This is an investment in affordable housing. Regarding suitable structures for use, she said the upgrades will impact residents positively. Regarding neighborhood compatibility, she said the improvements will serve to enhance the residents' experience. Regarding adequate parking and access, she said the applicant plans to add more parking spaces than are required. Regarding adequate streets, she said the streets will not be changed at all; sidewalks will be added. Regarding adequate emergency access, she said the access hasn't changed at all. Regarding adequate public utilities, she said the applicant's engineers are working with Town engineering staff to address any concerns. Regarding environmental protection and conservation, she said the plan calls for adding landscaping throughout the site, as well as necessary erosion and sedimentation control measures during construction. Regarding consistency with purposes, she said the proposed use will not have a detrimental effect. This proposal will enhance and upgrade the site and the experience of the residents.

Mr. Bergin asked if all the units will be affordable housing and Ms. Feinberg answered that this was correct.

Erosion and Sedimentation Control Plan (2015-110)

MOTION: Mr. Bergin moved to approve the erosion and sedimentation control plan at 48 Spencer Street with the modifications as specified in staff memoranda from:

1. Derrick Gregor, Assistant Town Engineer, dated January 7, 2016 to Renata Bertotti.

Ms. Ike seconded the motion and all members voted in favor.

Special Exception Modification (2015-111)

MOTION: Ms. Ike moved to approve the special exception modification for construction of a 6,988 sq. ft. community building, addition of 5 new residential units, and modification of 10 existing units into handicapped accessible units, with

associated landscaping, site, and parking alterations at 48 Spencer Street, with the modifications as specified in staff memoranda from:

1. Bernard Kalansuriya, Design Engineer, dated January 6, 2016;
2. James Davis, Zoning Enforcement Officer, dated January 6, 2016;
3. Jim Mayer, Traffic Engineer, dated January 7, 2016; and from
4. Derrick Gregor, Assistant Town Engineer, dated January 7, 2016 to Renata Bertotti.

Ms. Scorso seconded the motion and all members voted in favor.

The reason for the approval is the proposal meets the special exception criteria of Article IV Section 20 in the zoning regulations

RICHARD NUGENT & STEPHANIE WINSLOW – Change property grading to increase usable outdoor living space at 4 Trevor Court. – Inland Wetlands Permit – Determination of Significant Impact (2015-117); Inland Wetlands Permit (2015-117)

Ms. Stephanie Winslow, Manchester resident, presented the applicants' request to add fill at 4 Trevor Court. She noted that the backyard at this address was extremely small and on a steep slope away from the home. The applicants want to add 120 cubic yards of fill to provide a more level and usable yard. The goal is to maintain a level grade at elevation 404' to match the walkout basement. There will be no tree removal.

The proposed fill area is limited by the existing conservation easement shown on the plans which prohibits encroachment of this kind. The proposal includes provisions for the management of sedimentation during construction. Maintenance of the sedimentation barrier will be required until the fill area is stabilized with grass. The applicant proposes to use the existing driveway for construction vehicle access.

Mr. Richard Nugent said the plan was to provide a silt barrier to avoid encroachment in the conservation area, along with modified riprap. When the fill process was complete, the entire area would be seeded with grass, he said.

Mr. Prause asked how far the level area would extend from the house. Mr. Nugent replied that the plan called for a level yard to the tree line, which is about four feet. Mr. Prause continued by asking whether the neighbor's yard would be at a different elevation and Ms. Winslow replied that the neighbor's yard had already been filled and would be even with their yard once the project was complete.

Mr. Prause asked Mr. Bordeaux whether he had any information to add. Mr. Bordeaux indicated that he had been working with the applicants for some time. He noted that there are conservation markers that would need to be staked prior to any work. There would be no need for an anti-tracking pad because the applicants will be using the driveway for access.

Mr. Prause asked if the conservation easement markers were stakes and Mr. Bordeaux replied that they could either be stakes or on trees. Mr. Prause asked if the use of the conservation easement markers was a condition of approval and both Mr. Bordeaux and Ms. Bertotti stated

that the installation of the markers was part the applicants' proposal and therefore, binding.

Mr. Kidd noted that this proposal seemed to be a reasonable request. He went on to ask Mr. Bordeaux to discuss the issues related to determination of significance. Mr. Bordeaux responded that the negative short-term construction impacts related to the import of sediment were addressed in the proposal by stabilizing and managing the process. This proposal should not alter drainage patterns, there is very minimal clearing required, and there will not be any significant impact on the character or the natural state of the wetlands.

Inland Wetlands Permit – Determination of Significant Impact (2015-117)

MOTION: Ms. Scorso moved to find the proposed activity at the above referenced location as shown on the Inland Wetlands Permit application 2015-117 will not have a significant impact on the wetlands and therefore will not require a public hearing. Ms. Ike seconded the motion and all members voted in favor.

Inland Wetlands Permit (2015-117)

MOTION: Mr. Bergin moved to approve the inland wetlands permit with the modifications as specified in staff memoranda from:

1. James Davis, Zoning Enforcement Officer, dated January 15, 2016; and from
2. Derrick Gregor, Assistant Town Engineer, dated January 14, 2016 to Renata Bertotti.

Ms. Scorso seconded the motion and all members voted in favor.

The reason for the approval is the proposed activity does not disturb the natural or indigenous character of the land by significant impact or major effect.

The approval is valid for 5 years. The work in the regulated area must be completed within one year of commencement.

ADMINISTRATIVE REPORTS

Ms. Bertotti asked the Commission members whether they would be willing to hold a workshop on mixed-use areas and corridors following the next meeting, scheduled for February 1st. The second item for discussion at the workshop would be to consider changes to the zoning regulations for the Cheney Mansions.

Ms. Bertotti went on to note that the sign regulations adopted by the Commission would become effective during the next week. She distributed an additional email from Ms. Fish, who addressed the Commission during the Public Hearing.

RECEIPT OF NEW APPLICATIONS

There were no new applications before the Commission.

The Chairman closed the business meeting at 8:35 p.m.

I certify these minutes were adopted on the following date:

February 17, 2016 _____
Date

Eric Prause, Chairman

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