

MINUTES
WORCESTER PLANNING BOARD MEETING
NOVEMBER 8, 1989

Attendees:

Frank DeFalco, Chairman
John Reynolds
George Russell
Philip S. Hammond, OPCD
Gerhard Muenchmeyer, DPW
Michael Traynor, Law Department
Francis Donahue, Bureau of Land Use Control

View

Fox Hollow Subdivision
Institutional Zones

Regular Meeting - 25 Meade Street

Chairman Frank DeFalco called the meeting to order at 3:30 P.M.

Approval of Minutes

On a motion by John Reynolds, seconded by George Russell, the Planning Board minutes of September 13, September 27 and October 11, 1989 were approved unanimously.

Worcester Planning Board - City of Worcester Annual Report - FY 1989

The Board authorized Francis Donahue to file the FY 1989 Annual Report for the Board.

Fox Hollow - Subdivision Status

Developer John Minasian of Five Star Construction Co. informed the Board that the project is experiencing financial difficulties and its status is unclear. The situation has reached the point where Five Star will be filing for Chapter 11.

Fox Hollow residents, Raymond Mariano and Lowell Wogan expressed their displeasure and discomfort with site conditions within the subdivision. Corrective action on the streets, sidewalks, street lights and gas lines will need to be pushed to make the subdivision livable.

In support of protecting the residents, the Board voted to pull the project bond and secure the letter of credit. Moreover, to protect the area, Five Star will be asked to respond to the DPW relative to snow plowing so that precautions can be taken.

Catalpa Circle - Status

The Board was briefed on the status of this subdivision by Comfred Savings Bank representatives, Gerry Richer, David Drainor and Arthur Bouley of Bouley Brothers. A completion schedule was discussed. (See attached.)

Biotech Park - Subdivision Discussion

Assistant DPW Commissioner, Gerry Muenchmeyer briefed the Board on preliminary changes to the definitive plan for the Worcester Biomedical Park on Belmont/Plantation Streets. Along with Gerry Downey, Project Consultant from C.E. Maguire, Mr. Muenchmeyer outlined the need to alter the site entrance on Belmont Street beyond Shrewsbury Street, to divert site sewerage to Shrewsbury Street away from Lake Quinsigamond and various elements of the project's landscaping plan.

The necessity of these changes is due to the pending location of BASF Corporation into the park. No action was required by the Board.

Rosewood Subdivision - Communication

The Worcester DPW is in the process of responding. The item was filed.

Highland Hills - Bond Release

On a motion by John Reynolds, seconded by George Russell, the bond was released unanimously.

Longview Heights - Bond Reduction

On motions by George Russell, seconded by John Reynolds, the bond was reduced for Phase I of the project (3-0), but not reduced for Phase II of Longview Heights (3-0).

Plans To Be Ratified

Perkins Street
Gardner Street
Kenyon Avenue
Houghton Street
Cherokee Street

Bailey Street
Saybrook Road
Santoro Road
Chester Street
Trevor Lane

Other Business

Article IV - Parking

A letter from Robert Johnson, Traffic Engineer, on the Worcester Zoning Ordinance was filed.

Wildwood Estates

Upon a motion by George Russell, seconded by John Reynolds, a covenant for Wildwood Estates was approved unanimously.

Rolling Oaks

Upon a motion by John Reynolds, seconded by George Russell, a bond reduction was unanimously approved for the Rolling Oaks Subdivision.

Mr. DeFalco adjourned the meeting at 5:00 P.M.

The next meeting is on December 4, 1989 at 1:00 P.M.

June 17, 1988

DRAFT OF PROPOSED CODE CHANGES FOR PARKING STALL REQUIREMENTS

Prepared by: Richard G. West, President
Wescor Parking Systems Corp.
Worcester, MA

Worcester Report on Zoning, dated July 8, 1987, Appendix B,
Zoning Text, para 4.7.2 Off-Street Parking, sub para .2.3
Dimensions of Parking Space states as follows:

.Conventional Spaces-Each parking space shall be not less than nine (9) feet in width and eighteen (18) feet in length.

.Compact Spaces-On lots requiring more than ten (10) spaces, up to fifty percent (50%) of the required parking spaces may be set aside for compact cars. Each compact space shall be not less than eight (8) feet in width and sixteen (16) feet in length.

.Parking spaces may be smaller than these minimum dimensions where the applicant provides credible technical evidence (such as parking at angles other than 90 degrees) that such spaces meet the objectives of public health, safety and welfare.

I would respectfully suggest that the above, as proposed, is both restrictive in effective land use and burdensome to an applicant who may not have credible technical evidence readily available.

I have drawn the following material from papers and presentations prepared (and furnished to me) by Mr. Robert A. Weant, Vice President for Technical Services, Eno Foundation for Transportation, Westport, Connecticut. Mr. Weant, a civil engineer, is the author of two books dealing with automobile parking. He is also the Editor of the Transportation Quarterly.

Mr. Weant is a participating member of the Institute of Transportation Engineers, the National Parking Association's Parking Consultants Council, and the Transportation Research Board's Committee on Parking and Terminals.

The material herein is drawn from Mr. Weant's writings in a presentation to the Parking Consultants Council, "The Influence of Smaller Cars on Parking Geometry" February 1984; an edited edition with the same title in Transportation Quarterly July 1985; Parking Magazine, "Smaller Cars and Parking Zoning Trends" July-August 1985; and The Parking Professional, "The Small Car Influence" November 1985.

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"Small car spaces are used in conjunction with full-size spaces, and the number that can be used depends on the number or mix of small cars in the local vehicle population..."

"With small car parking, enforcing correct use of the spaces -- by small cars only -- is the major issue."

"In December, 1982, the American Planning Association (APA) surveyed approximately 900 local governments that administer parking regulations throughout the US and Canada. APA received 557 responses (nearly 62 percent) and these responses indicated a clear trend toward local zoning for downsized and small car parking stalls."

"There are strong regional differences in zoning policies for small car parking. The differences reflect the patterns of small car ownership and use throughout the US and Canada. Interestingly, cities having major universities are more likely to have zoning that allows for small car parking."

"Downsizing Full-Size Parking Stall Dimensions. Most local zoning codes or bylaws typically require full-size parking stalls to be a minimum of 9 feet wide and of a prescribed length, usually ranging from 18 to 20 feet. There is, however, a trend toward an overall downsizing of the dimensional requirements for full-size parking spaces. This downsizing refers to changes that apply to all parking stalls, or to a 'class' of parking based on how the parking spaces are to be used -- low-turnover or high-turnover. Increasingly, with employee or long-term, low-turnover parking, local zoning authorities will allow a downsized stall width to a minimum of 8.5 feet most typically."

"Nearly a third of the 102 US cities providing detailed returns to the APA survey, permit full-size stall widths to be less than 9 feet; however.....many of these cities limit use of the downsized spaces to conditions that will exhibit low-turnover parking."

"The most widely used combination of small car stall width and length for the surveyed cities is 7.5 feet by 15 feet."

I respectfully suggest that the above is sufficient to generate a brief discussion of parking stall sizes as they might be included in the proposed Worcester code. I would also include my own observations from over 25 years experience in the parking industry.

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While the third paragraph of the proposed code (above) beginning "Parking spaces may be smaller than these minimum dimensions..." provides a convenient "catch all" to the first two proposed paragraphs, I suggest it places an undue burden on the applicant who, as previously stated, may not have credible technical evidence readily available.

The proposed code for conventional spaces would require stalls to be not less than 9' x 18', subject to the catch-all. Downsizing as previously discussed, recognizes different needs for low versus high turnover parking areas. Certainly high turnover, such as serving a retail area, needs stalls 9' x 18'. Certainly low turnover, such as serving employee or tenant areas, can do very well with 8.5' x 18' stalls.

It also works quite well in some situations to subdivide a parking area into both high and low turnover stalls so long as appropriate signage, or other controls, are in place.

I would suggest that the determination of low or high turnover requirements be left to the City License Board which would review a proposed parking plan based on turnover needs rather than dimensional requirements. This would remove the "credible technical evidence" issue which some applicants for a license might find difficult.

Therefore, I suggest that the PROPOSED CONVENTIONAL SPACES wording be replaced with the following:

.Conventional Spaces-Each high turnover parking space shall be not less than nine (9) feet in width and eighteen (18) feet in length, and each low turnover parking space shall be not less than eight and one-half (8.5) feet in width and eighteen (18) feet in length.

Remembering from above that the number of small car spaces used in any parking area depends on the mix of small cars to the total vehicle population, I would suggest that the 50% restriction be eliminated. What would work well adjacent to one of Worcester colleges would not necessarily work well in downtown Worcester. Instead of a flat restriction city-wide, I suggest the License Board make the determination of the ratio of small cars to the total parking area.

It was stated previously that the issue with small car parking is the enforcing of the correct use of the spaces. Also stated above is that the most common small car dimensions are 7.5 feet by 15 feet.

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I can attest from experience that the best way to self-police proper small car space use is by dimension. Design the small car stalls and aisles such that standard size vehicles "just will not fit".

I recently reviewed architectural plans for a proposed parking garage in the Boston area. The garage will serve a combination commercial/residential development. To satisfy the local code for total number of parking stalls required, the architect planned for a large number of compacts. (It was an out of balance ratio as well.) The plans called for a 24' aisle, with standard stalls on one side 9'x18', and compact on the other 7.5'x18'. Certainly the plan invites abuse.

Short of stationing a parking attendant at the site to enforce proper use, there is no way to keep a small car from using a standard space because "it will fit". But with proper design for the small stall, the small car area can be made reasonably sacred because the standard car "won't fit". Obviously, the larger the small car space is made, the more vulnerable to abuse it becomes.

I have found very workable a small car space that is 7.5'x15', placed a ninety degrees to an 18' aisle. And my standard size station wagon will not fit in there.

Therefore, I suggest that the proposed COMPACT SPACES paragraph be subdivided as follows:

- a) .Compact Spaces-The License Board shall determine, on a case by case basis, the allowable ratio of small cars to the total proposed parking area.
- b) . Compact Spaces-Each compact space shall be not less than seven and one-half (7.5) feet in width and fifteen (15) feet in length.

I also suggest that the proposed third paragraph of the new code be amended as follows:

.Parking spaces may not be smaller than these minimum dimensions unless the applicant provides credible technical evidence that such spaces meet the objectives of public health, safety and welfare.

I note that in the proposed new code, no provision is made to regulate the size of handicapped spaces. Twelve (12) foot wide stalls have been the norm for years, and in recent years new regulations were adopted on the State level which reduced the

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individual stall width when HP spaces were designed adjacent to one another.

Therefore, I suggest the addition of the following paragraph:

.Handicapped Space-Where a handicapped space is designed to stand alone, it shall be not less than twelve (12) feet in width and eighteen (18) feet in length.

.Handicapped Spaces-Where two (2) or more handicapped spaces are designed adjacent to each other, then each space shall be not less than eight (8) feet in width and eighteen (18) feet in length, provided however that a crosshatched area not less than four (4) feet in width and eighteen (18) feet in length shall be created between the spaces.

I urge your consideration of the above as the City of Worcester considers adoption of a new Code, and trust you will find my suggestions helpful.

