



The City of
WORCESTER

Planning Board

**MINUTES OF THE PROCEEDINGS OF THE
PLANNING BOARD OF THE CITY OF WORCESTER**

Wednesday, January 11, 2023

Worcester City Hall – Levi Lincoln Chamber,
with remote participation options available via WebEx online at
<https://cow.webex.com/meet/planningboardwebex> and
call-in number 415-655-0001 (Access Code: 1601714991).

Board Members Present: Albert LaValley, Chair
Edward Moynihan, Vice Chair
Conor McCormack
Adrian Angus
Brandon King (*Participated Remotely*)

Board Members Absent:

Staff Present: Michelle Smith, Division of Planning & Regulatory Services (DPRS)
Pamela Harding, Division of Planning & Regulatory Services (DPRS)
Steve Cary, Division of Planning & Regulatory Services (DPRS)
John Kelly, Inspectional Services (*Participated Remotely*)
Sean Quinlivan, DPW

Call to Order

Board Chair Mr. LaValley called the meeting to order at 5:32 pm.

Leave to Withdrawn without Prejudice

Item 2: 0 Meadow Lane & Pleasant Street (PB-2022-010)

Postponements

Item 1: 1073-1075 Pleasant Street (PB-2022-038)

Request to Postpone the Public Meeting on Parking Plan Approval to February 1, 2023
Extend the Constructive Grant Deadline to February 23, 2023

Item 5: 1L & 1R Honeysuckle Road (PB-2022-064)

Request to Postpone the Public Meeting to February 1, 2023
Extend the Constructive Grant Deadline to February 23, 2023

Item 10: 17 Hermon Street (PB- 2023-001)

Request to Postpone the Public Meeting to February 1, 2023
Extend the Constructive Grant Deadline to February 23, 2023

Item 11: 135 Brooks Street (PB-2023-003)

Request to Postpone the Public Meeting to February 1, 2023
Extend the Constructive Grant Deadline to February 23, 2023

On a motion by Mr. Moynihan, seconded by Mr. McCormack, the Board voted 5-0 to grant the withdrawal and postponements.

Old Business

1. Onandaga Street (ST-2022-010)

a. Public Hearing – Private Street Removal

Mr. Cary provided staff comment, noting that this hearing had been continued from the November 30, 2022 hearing and that the objector to the removal was found to not have standing to object.

Attorney Joe Boynton appeared on behalf of the applicant.

No public comment.

No Board discussion.

On a motion by Mr. Moynihan, seconded by Mr. McCormack, the Board voted 5-0 to grant the street removal.

New Business

3. 1 & 7 Brattle Street (PB-2022-051)

a. Public Meeting – Definitive Site Plan

Attorney Donald O'Neil appeared on behalf of the applicants; described the permitting history and provided an overview of site plan before the Board for approval.

Carl Hultgren, engineer, provided additional details on the site plan.

Mr. Cary provided staff comment and recommended conditions of approval with regard to pedestrian accessibility and lighting; asked the applicant to clarify regarding the site layout and wall drainage; Mr. Hultgren responded.

Mr. LaValley and Mr. Hultgren discussed wheel stops.

No comment from Law or ISD.

Mr. Quinlivan provided DPW comment.

Public Comment

Bill Gemme, abutter to 7 Brattle Street, stated his concerns about the access behind the building.

Mr. Hultgren described the reasoning for the building and drive-aisle layout.

Mr. LaValley asked Mr. Hultgren to describe screening behind the building; Mr. Hultgren described the plantings.

Mike O'Malley, resident of Florida Avenue, stated his support for the project.

Board Discussion

Mr. McCormack asked about existing parking lot in front of existing building; Mr. Hultgren described lease agreement.

Mr. Moynihan and Mr. Hultgren discussed architectural plans, rear and side door access to the building, and parking.

Mr. King and Mr. LaValley had no comment.

Mr. LaValley and Mr. Hultgren discussed a condition of approval; Mr. Cary suggested a condition of approval 1s. relative to wheel stops or bollards in front of parking spaces.

On a motion by Mr. Moynihan, seconded by Mr. McCormack, the Board voted 5-0 to approve the Definitive Site Plan subject to staff recommended conditions of approval, adding condition 1s., and DPW comments.

4. 25, 26, 33, 38 & 45 Arctic Street, 1, 14 (a/k/a 8 & 10 Plastics Street) & 23 Hygeia Street, 274, 284 (a/k/a 5 & 7 Arctic Street) & 290 Franklin Street and the Arctic Street & Plastic Street Rights-of-Way (PB-2022-063)

a. Public Meeting – Amendment to Definitive Site Plan

b. Public Meeting – Chapter 12 Section 12 Private Street Improvements

Hal Reader, applicant, provided update on the project.

Chris Anderson, engineer, provided details on the site plan.

Ms. Smith provided staff comments and described recommended conditions of approval, particularly with regard to improvements in and along the ROWs, with regard to lighting, and with regard to the architectural plans.

No comment from Law or ISD.

Mr. Quinlivan provided DPW comment; Mr. Anderson provided a response.

No public comment.

Board Discussion

Mr. Moynihan asked how visible the project would be from I-290; Mr. Anderson responded; Mr. Moynihan stated his support for the project.

Mr. King stated his support and appreciation for street trees.

Mr. LaValley noted that he appreciated the improvements to the architectural plans.

On a motion by Mr. Moynihan, seconded by Mr. McCormack, the Board voted 5-0 to approve the Amendment to Definitive Site Plan and the Ch12Sec 12 application, subject to staff recommended conditions of approval.

6. 50 Oriol Drive (PB-2022-069)

a. Public Meeting – Definitive Site Plan

Attorney Todd Rodman on behalf of Worcester Community Housing Resources provided an overview of the proposed project, to convert an existing Quality Inn motel to 90 units of low-rise multi-family housing for permanent supportive housing with services on-site.

Michael Andrade, engineer, provide detail on proposed improvements to the site.

Ms. Smith provided staff comments, noting the review standards that this project is subject to before the Board; described suggestions for pedestrian connectivity and safety; described other recommended conditions of approval.

No comments from Law, ISD, or DPW.

Public Comment

Bruce Hoffner, Worcester resident, described his concerns about the site with regard to drainage, snow storage, lighting, and the adjacent approved residential building; Mr. LaValley and Mr. Hoffner discussed improvements to the lighting; Mr. Hoffner described his concerns about parking availability and traffic impacts of this and the adjacent project.

Ms. Smith asked the applicant to respond to Mr. Hoffner's concerns; Mr. Andrade discussed drainage on site; described snow storage locations and that it would drain back towards the site, not to the neighboring property; stated that there would be no change to the lighting but that they have been recently replaced by Quality Inn; addressed traffic concerns and that MDM has prepared a memo; quantified parking spaces.

Ms. Smith and Mr. Andrade discussed net parking increase.

Marshall Gaylord, Worcester resident, stated his concern about homeless people in the area and the impact on the surrounding neighborhood; Mr. LaValley reminded the public about the scope about the Board's review.

Mr. LaValley responded to shouting from the audience and reminded the audience about the Board's criteria.

Mr. Gaylord further stated his concern about the impact on the neighborhood.

District 2 Councilor Candy Mero-Carlson stated her displeasure about how the applicants conducted their outreach; noted that the neighborhood's concerns and questions have not been addressed.

Ali Reza-Swali, resident of Worcester, stated his concerns about the suitability of the existing building for this use and his concern about the impact on the surrounding neighborhood.

Bradford Gauthier, Worcester resident, read written comments describing his experience encountering people suffering from addiction in the area and stating his concern about the impact of this project on the children in the neighborhood.

Dominic Brindisi, Worcester resident, stated his concern about the growth of the homeless population in the area and the made suggestions for services that they need.

Gene Morgan, Worcester resident, stated her concern that the site is not appropriate for this use and the other planned projects, citing concerns about traffic and construction impacts.

Unknown Commenter, resident of Seattle Street, stated his concern about the "criminal element" of this project.

Ruben Silva, Worcester resident, stated his concern about the impact of the project relative to the nearby school and children.

Michelle Scivone, daughter of neighborhood resident, stated that the neighborhood is already overwhelmed and that the shelter should find another location; requested a continuance to research the possible impacts of the project and offered to help find another location for the project; asked about staffing of the project; asked the Board to visit the site.

Mr. Hoffner made further comments about traffic safety concerns and criminality in the area; stated that the applicant had not adequately answered the neighborhood's concerns; stated concern about the balconies and safety.

Mr. Reza-Swali reiterated his concern that the building is not appropriate for the use and his concern about all the development planned for the neighborhood.

Leonard Tebow, Knight Street, stated his concern about the social problems present in the area.

Joe Carshia, neighborhood resident, stated that the city was not implementing this project in a responsible way; noted that the community's concerns are based on lived experience; noted that Oriol Drive improved once a similar use was shut down; Mr. Carshia and the Board discussed where the nearest similar development was located; stated his request for a continuance to address the neighborhood's concerns; stated concerns about the site and its size in the context of the neighborhood.

Board Discussion

Mr. Moynihan asked staff to clarify on conditions of approval being struck; Ms. Smith clarified.

Mr. Moynihan reminded the public that this is a by-right use; discussed three studies with regard to supportive housing outcomes; stated his support for the project on the basis on American ideals.

Mr. McCormack reminded the public that the scope of review is very narrow; concurred with the colleagues that this was an effective approach to homelessness and that the use is beyond their review and encouraged the applicant to continue dialogue with the community.

Mr. Angus encouraged applicant to continue meetings with the community; reminded public about the Board's purview and that a denial would open the City up to a lawsuit.

Mr. King stated that the plan complies with the site plan review standards; stated that it was a misconception to correlate criminality with homelessness; stated that housing first is an effective model.

Mr. LaValley stated his support for the site plan and the housing first approach.

On a motion by Mr. Moynihan, seconded by Mr. McCormack, the Board voted 5-0 to approve the Definitive Site Plan and subject to staff recommended conditions of approval, striking conditions 1b, 1e, and 1f, and with waiver granted.

Ms. Smith reminded the public about the citywide long-range planning process that they can participate in.

7. 17 Perkins Street (PB-2022-071)

a. Public Meeting – Definitive Site Plan

Carl Hultgren, engineer, described the proposed site plan for a two-family dwelling on slopes greater than 15%.

Mr. Cary provided staff comment; described improvement to the site plan that the applicant has made after discussion with staff.

No comments from Law, ISD, or DPW.

Public Comment

Paula Egenlauf, daughter of abutting landowner, expressed concern that the project did not have the adequate frontage required and that the survey was incorrect; Mr. LaValley stated that Board and City presume that the survey that the applicant provided is correct and that Ms. Egenlauf has time to provide an independent survey disputing the survey of record; Ms. Egenlauf stated that the site has been listed on Zillow already.

Robert Divasian, husband to Ms. Egenlauf, asked the Board what their recourse would be if they find that the survey was faulty; Mr. LaValley advised that they consult an attorney.

Mr. Hultgren noted that B&R Survey surveyed the land.

Board Discussion

Mr. Moynihan noted that this was beyond the survey issue this was otherwise a straightforward site plan.

Mr. McCormack noted that they rely on the stamp on the plan and that he had no issues.

No comment from Mr. King, Mr. Angus, or Mr. LaValley.

On a motion by Mr. Moynihan, seconded by Mr. McCormack, the Board voted 5-0 to approve the Definitive Site Plan subject to staff recommended conditions of approval.

8. 45-47 Westminster Street (PB-2022-072)

a. Public Meeting – Definitive Site Plan

Carl Hultgren, engineer, provided an overview of the project and described the site plan.

Mr. Cary provided staff comments.

Mr. Hultgren responded to staff comment.

No comments from Law.

No comments from Inspectional Services.

No comments from DPW.

No public comment.

Board Discussion

No discussion.

On a motion by Mr. Moynihan, seconded by Mr. McCormack, the Board voted 5-0 to approve the Definitive Site Plan subject to staff recommended conditions of approval.

9. 3 Oriol Drive & Benson Ave (PB-2022-074)

a. Public Meeting – Definitive Site Plan

Attorney Todd Rodman introduced the project team, gave an overview of the site and described the proposed development.

Carlton Quinn, engineer, presented the site plans to the Board.

Mr. Cary provided staff comment and discussed recommended conditions of approval.

Mr. Quinn and staff discussed front yard setbacks.

Mr. LaValley asked to clarify on endorsement of ANR.

Ms. Smith provided additional comments relative to traffic management; suggested added condition #17 on a transportation demand management plan.

Mr. Quinn requested a modification to condition #5; Ms. Smith said staff was amendable.

No comments from Law.

No comments from Inspectional Services.

Mr. Quinlivan provided DPW comment.

No public comment.

Board Discussion

No discussion.

On a motion by Mr. Moynihan, seconded by Mr. McCormack, the Board voted 5-0 to approve the Definitive Site Plan subject to staff recommended conditions of approval, modifying conditions 1m and #5, and adding conditions 1s and #17, and to endorse the ANR plan (agenda item 14e).

12. 2 Grove Street (PB-2023-004)

a. Public Meeting – Definitive Site Plan Extension of Time

John Spillane, attorney, on behalf of the project, described the ongoing project and the reason for the extension of time request.

Ms. Harding noted that approval with Historical Commission will need to be extended.

No comments from Law, ISD, or DPW.

Mr. Quinlivan asked the applicant what is to happen with the tunnel; Mr. Spillane and Mr. LaValley explained.

Board Discussion

No comments.

On a motion by Mr. Moynihan, seconded by Mr. McCormack, the Board voted 5-0 to approve the Extension of Time request, extending the approval for a period of two years.

Other Business

13. Street Petitions

a. Hockanum Way (Convert to Public) (ST-2023-001)

Mr. Quinlivan stated that DPW is assigning Priority #2 to this petition.

On a motion by Mr. Moynihan, seconded by Mr. McCormack, the Board voted 5-0 to favorably recommend a Priority #2 designation and refer back to City Council.

14. Approval Not Required (ANR) Plans(s)
 - a. 137-143 Blithewood Avenue (Public & Private) (AN-2022-058)
 - b. 11 Prudence Street (Public) (AN-2022-059)
 - c. 49 & 69 Upland Street - (AN-2023-002)
 - d. 0 Granite Street (Public) (AN-2023-003)
 - e. ~~3 Oriol Avenue (Public) (AN-2023-004)~~
 - f. 22 Elm Street (Public) (aka 10 Chestnut Street) (AN-2023-005)
 - g. 55 Elm Street (Public) (AN-2023-006)

Ms. Harding and Mr. Cary described the ANRs before the Board for endorsement.

On a motion by Mr. Moynihan, seconded by Mr. McCormack, the Board voted 5-0 to endorse items 14a, 14b, 14c, 14d, 14f, and 14g.

15. Communications
 - a. Massachusetts Historical Commission – Main Street & Murray Avenue Historic District Acceptance to National Register of Historic Places
 - b. GEI Consultant Inc – AUL Notice – 1023 & 1025-1039 Southbridge Street

Board and staff discussed the communications.

16. Board Policy and Procedures
 - a. Review & Approval of 2024 Meeting Dates and Filing Deadlines
 - b. Appointment of Central Massachusetts Regional Planning Commission Delegate

Ms. Smith discussed the reason for approving dates a year in advance.

Ms. Harding clarified as to CMRPC delegate and asked the Board to approve herself as a delegate.

On a motion by Mr. Moynihan, seconded by Mr. McCormack, the Board voted 5-0 to approve Ms. Harding as a delegate.

Ms. Smith clarified that Mr. McCormack would be the other delegate.

18. Approval of Minutes - 9/21/2022; 9/28/2022 (Special); 11/02/2022; 11/09/2022 (Special); ~~11/30/2022;~~
~~12/21/2022~~

On a motion by Mr. Moynihan, seconded by Mr. McCormack, the Board voted unanimously to approve minutes from 09/21/22, 09/28/22, 11/02/22, and 11/09/22.

On a motion by Mr. Moynihan, seconded by Mr. McCormack, the Board voted unanimously to adjourn at 8:39pm.