



Department of Development Services  
Planning Division  
Meeting Minutes of the  
Planning & Zoning Commission  
(Approved Minutes)

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REGULAR MEETING OF THE PLANNING & ZONING COMMISSION  
TUESDAY, JULY 28<sup>th</sup>, 2009

**Commissioners Present**

Sandra Bobowski  
Temple Shannon  
John Lupo, Jr.  
David Blatt  
Edwin Vargas, Jr.  
Fran Reale

**Staff Present**

Roger J. O'Brien  
Kim Holden  
Mulu Deres  
Jonathan Mullen  
Jillian Hockenberry

**Commissioners Absent**

David Jorgensen

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Chairperson Bobowski called the meeting to order.

**I. Minutes**

On a motion made by Commissioner Lupo, Jr., and seconded by Commissioner Vargas, Jr., the minutes of May 26, 2009 were approved.

On a motion made by Commissioner Blatt and seconded by Commissioner Vargas, Jr., the minutes of July 14, 2009, were approved.

While waiting for the public hearing to begin, Mr. Roger O'Brien took up some new business with Commissioner Bobowski's approval. He stated that he got a request from the Capitol Region Education Council for a temporary zoning permit to have 300 students from the Greater Hartford Magnet School of Arts and Sciences occupy the Travelers Data Center building come September 1<sup>st</sup>, 2009. However, a school is not permitted in a B-2 zone, and the only way it could be approved in a timely manner would be if the City of Hartford public school system applied for the permit because they are exempt from zoning.

**II. Public Hearing**

- a. **2165-2169 Main Street** – Special Permit for a church with off-site parking. Applicant- Leny Rodriguez. B-3 district.

Chairperson Bobowski called the public hearing to order and read the rules of conduct.

Mr. Roger O'Brien read the public notice.

Principal Planner Mulu Deres presented the application and answered questions.

Commissioner Bobowski showed concern about the handicapped space and how a person would have to cross the driveway to get to the entrance. She and Mr. Deres discussed alternatives.

Mr. Deres introduced the daughter of the applicant, Lenny Velez. She discussed the issues they have dealt with since the property was purchased three years ago.

Commissioner Bobowski reiterated to Ms. Velez her concern about the handicap spot and suggested speaking with the American Legion about leasing another spot to accommodate for the relocation of the handicap spot. Ms. Velez indicated she would relocate the handicap spot.

The public hearing was closed.

**b. 485 Main Street** – Special permit for the conversion of second floor offices into four residential apartments and off-site parking. Applicant- Westside Properties. B-1 district.

Chairperson Bobowski called the public hearing to order and read the rules of conduct.

Mr. Roger O'Brien read the public notice.

Principal Planner Jonathan Mullen made it known that 487-489 Main Street is the entrance to 485 Main Street.

Mr. Mullen presented the application and answered questions.

Mr. Mullen stated that he added a fourth condition saying that the applicant needs to submit a lighting plan.

Commissioner Bobowski asked if the apartments facing the western side would be overlooking the dumpsters and stated that this would not be pleasant for the residents if this were the case.

Architect Herman Cortez from Lifecare Design, Inc. presented the site plan layout of the apartments to assist in answering Commissioner Bobowski's question.

Mr. Tom Nenortas, President of the South Downtown NRZ stated that their strategic plan calls for an increase in residential space and therefore he supports the project fully.

The public hearing was closed.

### **III. Regular Meeting**

#### **A. Consideration of Public Hearing Items**

The Commission considered the following items from the public hearing:

**2165-2169 Main Street - Special Permit for a church with off-site parking. Applicant- Leny Rodriguez. B-3 district.**

On a motion made by Commissioner Vargas, Jr., and seconded by Commissioner Lupo, Jr., the following resolution was approved:

WHEREAS, The Planning and Zoning Commission has reviewed the application for a special permit for parking for the property located at 2165 Main Street; and

WHEREAS, A church is an allowed use in the B-3 district; and

WHEREAS, The applicant has renovated both the exterior and interior of the building to retrofit it for a church use; and

WHEREAS, The applicant has secured an agreement for 13 additional parking spaces at next door 2121 Main Street which accomplishes the required parking; and Now Therefore, Be It Resolved

RESOLVED: That the Planning and Zoning Commission, hereby approves the special permit application for parking for the proposed church at 2165 Main Street, as shown on the plans listed below with the following conditions:

1. A 3 year parking lease be submitted to the Director of Planning and recorded on the land records.
2. The handicap space be relocated.

RESOLVED: This twenty-eighth day of July two thousand nine.

List of plans: Site plan entitled "Renovation of church at 2165-2169 Main Street" (A-1), First level plan and detail (A-2), Elevation detail and lighting plan (A-3), all scaled 1/4"=1'-0" and dated 6/22/07, and Required parking (A-4), scale 1/8"=1'-0", dated 12/5/08.

The following Commissioners voted affirmatively: Bobowski, Shannon, Lupo, Jr., Blatt, Vargas, Jr., and Reale.

**485 Main Street - Special permit for the conversion of second floor offices into four residential apartments and off-site parking. Applicant- Westside Properties. B-1 district.**

On a motion made by Commissioner Lupo, Jr., and seconded by Commissioner Blatt, the following resolution was approved:

WHEREAS, The Planning and Zoning Commission has reviewed the application for the conversion of retail/office space on the second floor and at the rear of 487 Main Street to four apartments; and

WHEREAS, The project is an appropriate adaptive reuse of an existing downtown building; and

WHEREAS, The applicant has secured a lease agreement with the operator of the parking lot across Elm Street for 8 parking spots; and

WHEREAS, The off-site parking spots are within 500 feet of the Main Street entrance to the building; and

WHEREAS, The proposed plan will improve the exterior of the building by removing the sign and boxing the sheet metal duct work; and

WHEREAS, The project will help bring “feet on the street” to the Downtown Neighborhood; Now Therefore Be It

RESOLVED: The City of Hartford Planning and Zoning Commission hereby approves the conversion of office space on the second floor and the rear portion of the building located at 487 Main Street as shown on the plan entitled “487 Main Street and 18 Elm Street Alterations” prepared by Lifecare Design, Inc, 1429 Park Street, Suite 201, Hartford, CT 06106, dated March 15, 2009, scale 1 inch equals 20 feet, with the following conditions:

1. The painted sign on the north side of the building is removed.
2. The exterior duct work on the north side of the building is enclosed in an appropriate manner with a material that blends with the building and is compliant with the City design standards.
3. An acceptable 3 year lease agreement must be submitted to the Director of Planning for review and filed on the land records.
4. The applicant submits a lighting plan that shows adequate lighting for the building and the off-site parking lot.

RESOLVED: This twenty-eighth day of July two thousand nine.

The following Commissioners voted affirmatively: Bobowski, Shannon, Lupo, Jr., Blatt, Vargas, Jr., and Reale.

#### B. Site Plan Review

#### **444-520 Albany Avenue - Amendment of a special permit site plan for the reconfiguration of a parking lot, and a change of the fencing, lighting and landscaping at an off-site parking lot. Applicant - YMCA of Greater Hartford, B-4 district.**

Principal Planner Jonathan Mullen presented the site plan and its four amended components that the staff recommends for approval. These include the reorganization of the parking layout, the modification of the entrance off of Garden Street, the relocation of the dumpsters, and the replacement of the southwestern entrance gate with 4 more parking spaces. Finally, the fifth component includes the restoration of landscaping on Bedford Street, the restoration of the brick pillars, the restoration of the pedestrian crosswalk across Bedford Street, the approved site lighting plan around the perimeter of the parking lot. The changes making up component five were items that were originally approved and staff feels it is necessary that they remain the same.

Mr. Mullen stated that members from JCJ Architecture and YMCA were there as representatives and available for questions.

Ms. Barbara Joslin from JCJ Architecture stated her concern with restoring the landscaping on Bedford Street would cause a loss in parking spaces. She also discussed the difficulty they have had working with DPW regarding the landscaping and curb cuts.

Mr. Jim Fuda from the BSC Group discussed his opposition to component number five as well and stated some possible changes that could be made to better accommodate the parking situation.

Mr. Roger O'Brien stated his concern about last minute changes because the Commission is trying to approve a plan for a September opening.

Jim Scherer from the YMCA showed his agreement that whatever could be done to maximize number of parking spaces would be very beneficial. Also, he showed concern about the cost of the brick pillars and overall cost of the project. He stated that the brick pillars alone would cost \$75,000 when the cost of the building is 13 million dollars. He stated that he thinks the brick pillars should be substituted with another building material in order to save costs.

Commissioner Bobowski suggested the second row of trees in the island be eliminated and the outermost rows are pushed inward as a possible solution, and the members from JCJ agreed that that would be a fair compromise.

Mr. Roger O'Brien stated that the 6 foot fence should be built regardless of the code because it is part of the approved site plan.

On a motion made by Commissioner Vargas, Jr., and seconded by Commissioner Lupo, Jr., the following resolution was approved:

WHEREAS, The Planning and Zoning Commission has reviewed the amendments to the Special Permit for new construction of a community center and a child daycare center with a portion of the required parking located off site; and

WHEREAS, The reorganization of the parking lot is generally consistent with the original approval; and

WHEREAS, Several key design and safety elements including lighting, pedestrian crosswalks, and landscaping are proposed to be eliminated; Now  
Therefore Be It

RESOLVED: The City Of Hartford Planning and Zoning Commission hereby approves the general reorganization of the parking lot located at 520 Albany Avenue as shown in the plans entitled "YMCA Family Neighborhood Center North End CHS Parking Lot Special Permit Amendments 520 Albany Avenue, Hartford, CT" prepared by BSC Group 180 Glastonbury Boulevard, Suite 103, Glastonbury, CT 06333, dated June 23, 2009, and revised July 21, 2009, with the following exceptions:

The following elements are to be restored to the plan:

- a. All approved landscaping on the YMCA parking lot with the removal of four trees on the island located on the Bedford Street side
- b. The approved brick pillars at the main entrance on Garden Street
- c. The approved raised concrete pedestrian crosswalk across Bedford Street that connects the parking lot with the YMCA building

RESOLVED: This twenty-eighth day of July, two thousand nine.

The following Commissioners voted affirmatively: Bobowski, Shannon, Lupo, Jr., Blatt, Vargas, Jr., and Reale.

#### **IV. New/Old Business**

The earlier discussion regarding the Travelers Data Center as a temporary place for 300 students from the Greater Hartford Magnet School was brought up again. Mr. Roger O'Brien stated that he would feel the most comfortable issuing a temporary six month permit if this was possible based on the regulations.

**V. Adjournment**

Meeting adjourned.

Respectfully submitted,

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Roger J. O'Brien, Secretary