

STAMFORD PLANNING BOARD
REGULAR MEETING MINUTES #3578
TUESDAY, MARCH 23, 2010
7TH FLOOR LAND USE CONFERENCE AREA
888 WASHINGTON BLVD., STAMFORD, CT

Stamford Planning Board Members present were: Duane Hill, Theresa Dell, Claire Fishman, Rose Marie Grosso and Jay Tepper. Present for staff were Robin Stein and Todd Dumais.

Regular Meeting

The chairman, Mr. Duane Hill, called the meeting to order at 7:30 pm. He explained that the first three applications are for a Text Change, Map Change and General Development Plan were all for Stamford Health System, Inc. involving the Stamford Hospital.

Zoning Board Referrals:

Appl. 209-27 – Text Change, STAMFORD HEALTH SYSTEM, INC., Amend Article II, Definitions by deleting definition 47 'Hospital Complex'; Amend Land Use Schedule Appendix A, Table 1: by deleting permitted use 26 'Hospital Complex (47)'; and Amend Article III Section 9 – “Designed Districts” by reordering existing subsections “L” through “P” as “M” through “O” and by creating a new subsection L “Hospital Complex Design District.”

Appl. 210-05 – Zoning Map Amendment – Stamford Health System, Inc., 30 Shelburne Road, requesting rezoning to HCDD Hospital Complex Design District for property currently zoned R-5, R-6, R-7.5 and RMF, totaling 31 acres.

Appl. 210-06 – General Development Plan (GDP) and Special Exception – Stamford Health Systems, 30 Shelburne Avenue, Expansion of existing hospital campus to 30 acres and reconfiguration and expansion of existing facilities in a multi-phased redevelopment over 10 to 15 years. Existing facilities total approximately 558,000 square feet in fourteen buildings, several of which will be demolished. Principal new building will include a main specialty building of 617,000 sq. ft., a medical office building of 80,000 sq. ft. above a 4-story garage and a separate 4 story garage. Total parking capacity will increase 394 spaces to 1,637 spaces.

Robin Stein introduced the applications. He explained that the Board has seen some of this information before and that the Planning Board is reviewing these applications of referral from the Zoning Board. Mr. Stein then commented that any member of the Public at the meeting wishing to speak would have the opportunity once a public hearing was scheduled with the Zoning Board.

William Hennessey, attorney for the Applicant introduced the applications. He began by stating that Stamford is a world-class City and his client is seeking the approvals to ensure that the health care delivery system and facility is of equal quality for this and future generations. He added that he hopes at the end of the presentation, the Board will embrace and understand the vision of the health system. Mr. Hennessey then introduced members of the Applicant's Tevelopment Team: Charles Katdin (WHR Architects), Richard Redniss, David Sullivan (Malone + MacBroom Traffic Consultants), Landscape Arch-Dirtworks, Paul Nylon Skansi; Hospital Representatiaves Kathleen Silard (EVP + COO), David Smith (Sr. VP of Strategy + Management), Mike Smeriglio,

Ken Monroe, Pam Kaprowski.

Mr. Hennessey stated that this is an 8 year project in the making with its origins in 2002 from an 18-month strategic planning process. He explained that under the vision, the hospital seeks to become the regional center of health care from Bridgeport to New York.

Mr. Hennessey described the Facilities Master Plan assessment revealed significant needs and the fact that current facilities are at the end of their useful life and that a complete hospital facility replacement was required. Mr. Hennessey went on to say that the Stamford Health Systems took a look at where we should be and how large should the facilities be in Stamford and began planning for a replacement of the hospital site working with Charter Oak on land swaps and sales. To help the hospital go forward, they purchased properties immediately surrounding the hospital to acquire a total of 30 acres. He explained that this allows the hospital to operate at current levels of service while undergoing the new construction. The cost is anticipated to be \$575 million, how will they afford it? Mr. Hennessey answered by breaking the working into manageable phases. He added Phase 1 for \$220 million will be accomplished and think they can complete Phase II for another \$100 million. Phase III – the Nursing Tower – does not have a firm date for starting. Mr. Hennessey concluded his introduction by stating that the hospital would like to start construction late fall and that the Stamford Hospital is committed to the West Side and being good neighbors.

Kathleen Silard, EVP Stamford Hospital, explained that to understand the facility's needs, you need to know how the hospital evolved into a Plaintree Hospital. She discussed the programmatic needs of services: the Emergency Room has the most need and is undersized for current demand and that it was built for 25,000 visits but they see 46,000/year. They are thankful to have the Tully Center which handles 18,000/year. She explained that the new Emergency Room will have a separate cardiac area, a separate level II trauma center, a dedicated pediatric emergency department area and a dedicated area for behavioral health. Phase I will bring the most important needs for the community. Mrs. Silard went on to say that the Operating Suite handles about 12,000 visitors a year and they currently have 9 operating rooms which are too small to meet current needs. They are 470 sf compared to 600-650 sf which is the new standard. The new facility will have 12 operating rooms. The Heart-Vascular Institute will be the only such hospital in the area to be able to provide these types of services. The new Intensive Care Unit needs to expand the number of beds based on needs of the patients. The Inpatient Tower will be a 5-story tower with private rooms and private baths which is the standard of today. Mrs. Silard stated that they will not increase the total number of current beds but need a different configuration of them and that the Plaintree program is committed to Patient Center Care and the key is cultural transformation. She added that architecturally and from an engineering standpoint they are designing for patient care. They've shifted to meet the needs of the whole patient – mind, body and spirit. The new design will be environmentally conscious, cogenerational, rainwater collection system, LEED certified at least to Silver level and a sustainable landscaping plan. Mrs. Silard concluded by stating that this community deserves a new hospital.

Mr. Hill asked the Board members if there were any questions.

Mr. Tepper asked about no new beds and if the new health legislation change this? Ms. Silard said she didn't think so. They've looked at their existing and future community needs and believe they will have enough and are flexible for future needs.

Mrs. Fishman noted that parking hadn't been mentioned. Mrs. Silard stated they'd done an entire assessment of parking. Mrs. Fishman asked if staff housing would be destroyed? Mrs. Silard said they are looking at a relocation plan and said this is a priority for them. They are performing a needs assessment.

Mr. Tepper asked what the impact would be to Norwalk and Greenwich Hospitals? Mrs. Silard said they were separate corporations with no anticipated impact.

Mr. Hill asked how many Plaintree facilities were in Connecticut? Mrs. Silard said 2 in Connecticut and 50 – 60 nation-wide. He then asked about the costs. Mrs. Silard said it did not elevate the cost of the facility based on the Plaintree model. Mr. Hill again noted that this meeting was not a public hearing and that the Board could not accommodate questions from the audience.

Next, Mr. Hennessey discussed the Text Amendment and how we got to have a new hospital from a land use planning viewpoint. He said that hospitals in Stamford are regulated by a paragraph definition authorized by way of Special Exception which is an imperfect tool. This Text Amendment is different and he discussed with Land Use Bureau staff how to address this. They realized they needed a new way to think about doing this and looked at how other cities in Connecticut regulate hospitals and looked at what Stamford most successful floating zones are: SRD, TCDD, DW-D. They combined these tools and took standards from Greenwich and Hartford. Mr. Hennessey walked the Board members through the outline view of the text amendment (distributed to Board members).

The Board asked questions about the helicopter landing facility use and Mr. Hennessey answered.

Mr. Tepper asked if signage would remain the same or be different? Mr. Hennessey said probably remain the same but currently trying to figure this out, pointing out that right now there is no standard.

Mr. Tepper asked about section 3-D, land ownership and if it was intended to provide for separate ownership for the medical office building? Attorney Hennessey said yes.

Mr. Hill said in reviewing the procedures, ambiguity is significant/non-significant and they might want to clear and tighten this language up. Mr. Hennessey said they tried to come up with some items to be conducted administratively and explained that the purpose was to fix a problem in the zoning regulations. Mr. Hill said he applauds applicant and the staff for the approach taken on the text.

Mr. Hennessey next stated that if the text is approved, it will have to be landed on a zoning map. Mr. Hennessey discussed how the hospital acquired new land, road discontinuances and CDC land swaps and discussed the new HCDD zone area. He explained the Board has already heard about Phase I, II and III of the project. Mr. Hennessey showed a site plan with landscape details and explained the virtues of the plan.

Mr. Robin Stein said there is a need for staff housing which was identified by the Cecil Group study.

Mr. Hill asked the Applicant to describe the Special Exception. Mr. Hennessey explained that it relates to GDP, Article 19 sets standards and we think we meet all of the standards for SE approval. We are improving the edges, bettering traffic and protecting

surrounding areas from negative impacts. This meets the spirit and intent of the 2002 Master Plan and distributed a sheet outlining the project's of conformance.

Mrs. Dell asked where the main entrance of the new hospital will be? Attorney Hennessey said on Finney Lane. Traffic Consultant, David Sullivan from Milone & MacBroom described a conservative estimate would be an increase of 30% in traffic and they plan to redistribute 45% of traffic from West Broad to Stillwater with the same level of service essentially good.

Mr. Stein said they anticipate different traffic peak hours.

Mr. Tepper moved to recommend approval of application **209-27**. Mrs. Fishman seconded the motion and it passed unanimously with the members present voting, 5-0 (Hill, Dell, Fishman, Grosso and Tepper).

Mrs. Dell moved to recommend approval of application **210-05**. Mrs. Grosso seconded the motion and it passed unanimously with the members present voting, 5-0 (Hill, Dell, Fishman, Grosso and Tepper).

Mrs. Fishman moved to recommend approval of application **210-06**. Mr. Tepper seconded the motion and it passed unanimously with the members present voting, 5-0 (Hill, Dell, Fishman, Grosso and Tepper).

Zoning Board of Appeals Referrals:

ZBA 023-10 – Jean-Claude Merz, requesting a Variance of Table III, Appendix B, sideyard setbacks and a variance of Section 10 Expansion of a Non-Conforming Use to construct a 2-story garage and storage building located at 331 Greenwich Avenue in the R-MF zoning district.

Mr. Dumais briefly described the application. After a short discussion, Mrs. Dell moved to recommend denial of application 023-10. Mrs. Fishman seconded the motion and it carried unanimously with the members present voting, 5-0 (Hill, Dell, Fishman, Grosso and Tepper).

ZBA 024-10 – Temple Beth El, Special Exception to permit a Child Day Care Center in an existing synagogue located at 350 Roxbury Road in the RA-1 zoning district.

Mr. Dumais briefly described the application. Mr. Tepper moved to recommend approval of application 024-10. Mrs. Grosso seconded the motion and it passed unanimously with the members present voting, 5-0 (Hill, Dell, Fishman, Grosso and Tepper).

ZBA 025-10 – 372 Wilton Associates, Special Exception per Section 11-C.1, to convert an existing auto-service station into a convenience store located at 899 High Ridge Road in the C-N zoning district.

Mr. Dumais briefly described the application. After a short discussion, Mrs. Dell moved to recommend approval of application 025-10. Mrs. Grosso seconded the motion and it carried unanimously with the members present voting, 5-0 (Hill, Dell, Fishman, Grosso and Tepper).

ZBA 026-10 – Hilton, LLC, Special Exception to permit an automatic car wash located at 229-235-249 Greenwich Avenue in the M-G zoning district.

Mrs. Dell moved to recommend denial of application 026-10. Mrs. Grosso seconded the motion and it carried unanimously with the members present voting, 5-0 (Hill, Dell, Fishman, Grosso and Tepper).

Planning Board Meeting Minutes for Approval:

January 12, 2010 Mrs. Dell moved approval of the meeting minutes with the recommended corrections. Mrs. Grosso seconded the motion and it passed unanimously with the members present voting, 5-0. (Hill, Dell, Fishman, Grosso and Tepper)

January 19, 2010 Mrs. Dell moved approval of the meeting minutes. Mrs. Grosso seconded the motion and it passed unanimously with the members eligible to vote, 3-0. (Hill, Dell, and Grosso)

March 9, 2010 Mr. Tepper moved approval of the meeting minutes. Mrs. Fishman seconded the motion and it passed unanimously with the members eligible to vote, 4-0. (Hill, Dell, Fishman and Tepper)

Old Business:

None

New Business:

None

There being no further business to discuss, Mr. Hill adjourned the meeting at 9:45 pm.

Respectfully Submitted,

Duane Hill, Chairman
Stamford Planning Board

Note: These proceedings were recorded on tape and are available for review in the Land Use Bureau located on the 7th floor of Government Center, 888 Washington Boulevard, during regular business hours.