

**STAMFORD PLANNING BOARD**  
**APPROVED MINUTES - TUESDAY, MAY 14, 2024**  
**REGULAR MEETING**  
**VIA THE INTERNET & CONFERENCE CALL**  
**6:30 P.M.**

**ZOOM WEBINAR**

<https://us02web.zoom.us/j/84175927745>

*Webinar ID: 841 7592 7745*

*Passcode: 812655*

---

---

Stamford Planning Board Members present were: Voting Members: Theresa Dell, Chair; Jay Tepper, Vice Chair; Jennifer Godzeno, Secretary. Alternates: William Levin and Stephen Perry. Absent: Michael Totilo, Regular Member. Present for staff: Lindsey Cohen, Associate Planner.

Ms. Dell called the meeting to order at 6:30 p.m.

Ms. Dell introduced the members of the Board and staff present and introduced the first item on the agenda.

**PLANNING BOARD MEETING MINUTES:**

**April 30, 2024:** After a brief discussion Mr. Levin moved to recommend *approval* of the Planning Board Regular Meeting Minutes of April 30, 2024; Mr. Perry seconded the motion, and passed unanimously with eligible members present voting, 5-0 (Dell, Godzeno, Levin, Perry and Tepper)

**ZONING BOARD REFERRALS:**

- ZB APPLICATION #224-11 - RICHARD REDNISS, 22 1ST CORP. - Text Change:** River Bend Center, LLC is seeking to amend the City of Stamford Zoning Regulations to revise portions of the HT-D Regulation and create an opportunity to infill new residential development where it helps sustain the maintenance and viability of existing industrial/flex type uses in new or existing buildings.

The River Bend Center property is located in the Springdale neighborhood of Stamford and is fully within the HT-D Zoning District and Master Plan Category #13 (Industrial - General). This Text Change would have limited applicability because this is the only area in Stamford that is zoned HT-D. The Text Change is significant because it adds residential as a Special Permit use in this district and could result in the development of almost 200,000 sq. ft. of non-residential floor area and ~470,000 sq. ft. of residential floor area (or 376-470 units depending on provision of BMR units) if approved by the Zoning Board by way of Special Permit(s). Please see the Application materials for market-related considerations that led to this Application and the potential for impact to Stamford's tax base. The property is currently developed with office buildings and associated parking. The offices are tenanted with businesses that need the larger office footprint, but they are not businesses that have noxious odors, fumes, or noises. The final sentence in the description of this category reads: "Infilling new residential development may be allowed by Special Permit by the Zoning Board where it serves to promote the maintenance and viability of existing industrial/flex type uses."

A portion of the Text Change requires within a Zoning Lot that at least 30% of the total floor area in the HT-D District be used for non-residential uses. This requirement is critical to the Application's alignment with the Master Plan Category that, while supporting residential in an industrial area, still is intended to preserve and enhance industrially zoned property. Part of the argument in favor of this Application is that allowing residential will assist in maintaining the existing non-residential uses, which is aligned with this Master Plan Category.

Any residential projects in this District are required to have a General Development Plan and may be subject to Large Scale Development Plan Review, which will be referred to the Planning Board. With the addition of residential uses to this category comes a concern regarding traffic. While the offices are mostly vacant now, leading to less vehicular movements in and out of the site, at one point the offices were fully occupied and had a greater traffic count than would result from residential use. Residential projects would be required to have a Transportation Demand Management Plan which will be important to address public concerns regarding vehicular traffic. The site is well-suited for residential development due to its proximity to the Springdale train station, local commercial amenities like Rico's and CVS. The proposed Text Change is aligned with the following Master Plan policies and strategies:

- Strategy 3B.4: Encourage the reconfiguration of existing office and retail space to accommodate market trends and potential new users.
- Strategy 6A.1: Balance new development with preservation of existing residential communities.
- Strategy 7G.3: Where feasible, in multifamily zones, locate and/or design development such that 50 percent of the residential units are within a quarter-mile radius of walkable, diverse uses supportive of the compact and complete community.
- Strategy BGS1.1: Encourage higher-density, mixed-use and pedestrian-friendly development around the Glenbrook and Springdale train stations, along the Hope Street commercial corridor and Glenbrook Road and in the Belltown neighborhood business district.

Ms. Dell introduced the agenda item and noted that numerous public comments in favor and opposed were received and will be made part of the public record.

Ms. Cohen made introductory comments and introduced Mr. Redniss.

Richard Redniss, Redniss & Mead, made a presentation and answered questions from the Board.

After considerable discussion regarding the future development of housing on the site and the potential to impact traffic on Hope Street, the Board decided to **TABLE** this item to one of the June meetings. The Board had expressed concerns regarding the maximum number of units permitted and that Hope Street could not handle the additional vehicular trips resulting from that amount of housing.

Mr. Levin noted the need for comprehensive improvements to Hope Street with the addition of new housing around the train stations.

Ms. Godzeno requested consideration of a Transportation Demand Management Plan requirement for developments in this District in the future.

### **ZONING BOARD OF APPEALS REFERRALS:**

1. **ZBA APPLICATION #018-24 - AMOL DIXIT - 163 SOUTHFIELD AVENUE - Variance of Section 4 and Section 12:** Applicant owns a single-family dwelling with a deck and is proposing a Change of Use of the existing single-family dwelling to a two-family dwelling. Applicant is requesting the following:

#### Section 4.B.3.d(1) - Building Regulations

- The minimum lot area of a two-family dwelling to be 4,625 sq. ft. in lieu of the 6,000 sq. ft. required.

#### Section 12.C.1-Table 12.5 - Parking in Yard Space

- The minimum distance of surface Parking Areas and Loading Space from any interior Lot Line to be 3.7 ft. in lieu of the 5 ft. required.

The property is located in Master Plan Category #3 (Residential - Low Density Multifamily) in the Waterside neighborhood. Adjacent Master Plan Categories are MP Category #3 and MP Category #10 (Shorefront Mixed-Use) which includes TGM Anchor Point apartments directly across the street. Surrounding land uses are residential and range from single-family, two-family, and large- and small-scale multifamily buildings. With respect to the lot area variance, MP Category #3 intends to allow for amenities of multifamily living in a single-family neighborhood. There would be no changes to the exterior of the home and it would still look like a single-

family dwelling. In addition, a two-family home is a way to increase density without the intensity of a multifamily building. With respect to the parking area variance, the parking will be to the rear of the home and would not have a significant impact on the outward appearance. The requests are in general harmony with the existing land uses and the Master Plan Category. In addition, such a proposal is aligned with Policy 6C implementation Strategy 6C.2 to promote the development of a variety of housing types.

Ms. Cohen made comments providing further details on the proposed variances.

After a brief discussion, Mr. Tepper recommended **approval** of **ZBA Application #018-24** and that this request is in general harmony with Master Plan Category #3 (Residential - Low Density Multifamily); Mr. Levin seconded the motion and passed unanimously with eligible members present voting, 5-0 (Dell, Godzeno, Levin, Perry and Tepper).

2. **ZBA APPLICATION #019-24 - STEPHANIE MARK representing JAMES & NELLY SLOCUM - 2324 WASHINGTON BOULEVARD - Variance of Table II, Appendix B:** Applicant owns a two-family dwelling and is proposing to construct an addition over the existing footprint except for a 59 sq. ft. connector over an existing alcove inset from Washington Boulevard. Applicant is requesting the following:

- a. Coverage of 49.64% in lieu of the 25% allowed in the RM-1 Zone.
- b. Front yard setback from Washington Boulevard of 11.2 ft. in lieu of the 25 ft. required for the second story addition.
- c. Street center setback from Washington Boulevard of 41 ft. in lieu of the 50 ft. required for the second story addition.
- d. Side yard setback of 7.5 ft. in lieu of the 10 ft. required for the western side yard for the second story addition.
- e. Side yard setback of 4.5 ft. in lieu of the 5 ft. required for the western side yard for the platform/step on the existing deck per Section 3-Permitted Obstructions.

The property is located in Master Plan Category #3 (Residential - Low Density Multifamily). The variance requests are supported by two factors: the property area was reduced to widen Washington Boulevard in the 1970s and it is a corner lot with two front yard requirements. The homeowners at the time of the Washington Boulevard roadway widening were compensated for the taking. Both factors impacted the property in 2003 when the Applicant was approved for 14 variances similar to those being requested today with respect to setbacks and lot coverage. At its meeting on May 12, 2003, the Planning Board voted unanimously to recommend denial of the application on the grounds that the proposal was too intense for the subject property and out of concern for space available for parking. The ZBA Approved the variances requested in 2003. At its meeting on October 10, 2023, the Planning Board voted unanimously to recommend denial of another nine variances (ZBA #034-23) on the grounds that the proposal is too intense, and the home is already comparatively bulky compared to neighboring buildings. The ZBA denied the variances requested in 2023. Presently, variance requests labeled a, b, c and d were all part of the most recently denied variance request (ZBA #034-23). Variance request labeled e is a modification. There were four other variance requests from ZBA #034-23 that are not included in this application.

Even given these changes, the existing home appears large and bulky in relation to the lot it is located on in comparison to other homes around it on West Forest Lawn Avenue and Washington Boulevard. This makes sense considering the lot has almost twice the allowable building coverage. By adding a second story onto a one-story portion of the home and by installing further encroachments into the front yard, building bulk would only grow.

Staff recommends denial of the application. This Master Plan Category #3 “is intended to allow for the amenities of multifamily living in a single-family neighborhood setting... and the least intensive multifamily development.” The bulk that would result from this proposal does not align with the intent of this Master Plan Category because it would result in a more intensive development than what was envisioned.

Ms. Cohen made comments providing further details on the proposed variances and introduced Ms. Mark.

Stephanie Mark and John Leydon, Esq., representing the applicant, made a presentation and answered questions from the Board.

After considerable discussion, Mr. Tepper recommended **approval** of **ZBA Application #019-24** and that this request is in general harmony with Master Plan Category #3 (Residential - Low Density Multifamily); Ms. Godzeno seconded the motion and passed with eligible members present voting, 4-0-1 (Dell, Godzeno, Perry and Tepper - In Favor / Levin - Abstain).

3. **ZBA APPLICATION #020-24 - ROBERT L. GROCE & MAYRA M. RIOS - 226 FIFTH STREET - Variance of Table II, Appendix B:** Applicant owns a two-story single-family dwelling with a garage and is proposing to construct a first-floor addition containing a mud room, laundry room, pantry and half bath and a second-floor addition containing a bedroom with bathroom and a family room with bathroom over the garage. Applicant is requesting: **[a]** a side yard setback of 3.2 ft. in lieu of the 10 ft. required; and **[b]** a side yard setback for both sides of 19.6 ft. in lieu of the 20 ft. required.

The property is located in Master Plan Category #2 (Residential - Low Density Single-Family). The lot is undersized for the Zoning District in which it is located, which is a hardship. Additionally, the home is a pre-existing non-compliant building. The home is currently 3.2 ft. setback from the side yard and the proposal is a second-story addition that would align with the exterior of the home. The addition would be behind the existing second story of the home, not completely visible from the street. It is concerning that there would be significantly more length of two-story building within the side yard, approximately 48 ft. and 3.2 ft. from the side setback. The added bulk may seem imposing on the four neighboring lots to the east with their back yards abutting this side lot line. In addition, the second story addition will be visible from Strawberry Hill Avenue, further increasing perceived bulk in the area. For a low-density single-family area, this imposing building may not be in harmony with the intentions of the Master Plan, however the Planning Board does typically refer favorably to additions that meet an existing non-compliance.

Ms. Cohen made comments providing further details on the proposed variances and answered questions from the Board.

After a brief discussion, Mr. Levin recommended **approval** of **ZBA Application #020-24** and that this request is in general harmony with Master Plan Category #2 (Residential - Low Density Single-Family); Ms. Godzeno seconded the motion and passed unanimously with eligible members present voting, 5-0 (Dell, Godzeno, Levin, Perry and Tepper).

4. **ZBA APPLICATION #021-24 - JOHN SCAVELLI representing GREGORY LIVESAY - 16 GLENDALE CIRCLE - Variance of Table II, Appendix B:** Applicant owns a single-family dwelling with a driveway, walkway, patio and deck and is proposing to construct an 86 sq. ft. second floor addition. Applicant is requesting: **[a]** a rear yard setback of 27.7 ft. in lieu of the 30 ft. required; and **[b]** a rear yard setback for the rear deck of 21.4 ft. in lieu of the 24 ft. required.

The property is located in Master Plan Category #2 (Residential - Low Density Single-Family). The existing home has a legal non-compliant rear yard setback of 27.7 ft. The proposed first floor addition meets the edge of the existing home and does not encroach any further than existing. The proposed addition would not be visible from the street.

After a brief discussion, Mr. Perry recommended **approval** of **ZBA Application #021-24** and that this request is in general harmony with Master Plan Category #2 (Residential - Low Density Single-Family); Ms. Godzeno seconded the motion and passed unanimously with eligible members present voting, 5-0 (Dell, Godzeno, Levin, Perry and Tepper).

5. **ZBA APPLICATION #022-24 - DANIEL J. MORRIS - 442 PEPPER RIDGE ROAD - Variance of Table II, Appendix B:** Applicant owns a single-family dwelling with an attached garage and is proposing to demolish the existing garage and construct a new two-car garage with living space above. Applicant is requesting: **[a]** a front street line setback of 24 ft. in lieu of the 40 ft. required; and **[b]** a front street center setback of 48.9 ft. in lieu of the 65 ft. required.

The property is located in Master Plan Category #2 (Residential - Low Density Single-Family). The property is a corner lot that must meet two front yard setbacks. The existing home is non-compliant with respect to the front yard setback along Robinson Drive (35.2 ft. where 40 ft. is required). The proposal would increase the building's non-compliance along Robinson Drive by having a setback of 24 ft. where 40 ft. is required.

The Applicant has expressed that there are no other ways to have a two-car garage without encroaching.

Ms. Cohen made comments providing further details on the proposed variances and answered questions from the Board.

After a brief discussion, Mr. Perry recommended **approval** of **ZBA Application #022-24** and that this request is in general harmony with Master Plan Category #2 (Residential - Low Density Single-Family); Mr. Tepper seconded the motion and passed with eligible members present voting, 4-0-1 (Dell, Levin, Perry and Tepper - In Favor / Godzeno - Abstain).

Next regularly scheduled Planning Board meetings are:

- May 21, 2024 (Regular Meeting & Public Hearing)
- June 11, 2024 (Regular Meeting)
- June 25, 2024 (Regular Meeting)
- Summer Hiatus - No Meetings in July

There being no further business to come before the Board, Ms. Dell adjourned the meeting at 8:31 p.m.

Respectfully Submitted  
May 16, 2024

Jennifer Godzeno, Secretary  
Stamford Planning Board

**NOTE:** These proceedings were recorded on video and are available for review on the Planning Board website at [http://cityofstamford.granicus.com/ViewPublisher.php?view\\_id=20](http://cityofstamford.granicus.com/ViewPublisher.php?view_id=20)