

**STAMFORD PLANNING BOARD
APPROVED MINUTES - TUESDAY, MARCH 9, 2021
REGULAR MEETING
VIA THE INTERNET & CONFERENCE CALL
6:30 p.m.**

JOIN ZOOM MEETING
<https://us02web.zoom.us/j/89418759601>

Meeting ID: 894 1875 9601
Passcode: 250800

Web & Phone Meeting Instructions

- *If your computer/smartphone has mic and speaker then:
Type in, paste or click the following link: <https://us02web.zoom.us/j/89418759601>; **OR***
- *If not, then **Call-in** using the **phone number, Meeting ID & password** provided above.*
- *Sign-up for Planning Board meeting updates by emailing lcapp@stamfordct.gov.*

Web Meeting Ground Rules:

- *The meeting shall be recorded and the video shall be posted on the City of Stamford website http://cityofstamford.granicus.com/ViewPublisher.php?view_id=8*
- *The Planning Board shall moderate the audio for attendees.*
- *Attendees shall be on mute and will be unmuted when called to speak by the Planning Board members.*
- *Applicants will have 20 minutes to make their presentation.*
- *Any applicant wishing to submit written testimony can send it prior to the meeting to lcapp@stamfordct.gov or submit through a Chat message to the Planning Board Chair during the meeting.*

Stamford Planning Board Members present were: Voting Members: Theresa Dell, Chair; Jay Tepper, Vice Chair and Jennifer Godzeno, Secretary. Alternates: William Levin and Claire Fishman. Absent: Michael Totilo, Voting Member and Michael Buccino, Voting Member. Present for staff: David W. Woods, PhD, FAICP, Deputy Director of Planning.

Ms. Dell called the meeting to order at 6:30 p.m., introduced the members of the Board and staff present and introduced the first item on the agenda.

PLANNING BOARD MEETING MINUTES:

February 9, 2020 - Regular Meeting: After a brief discussion, Mr. Tepper moved to recommend approval of the Planning Board Regular Meeting Minutes of February 2, 2021; Mr. Levin seconded the motion, and passed unanimously with eligible members present voting, 5-0 (Dell, Fishman, Godzeno, Levin and Tepper).

March 1, 2020 - Special Meeting: As there was not a quorum of the members who participated, this item was **TABLED** until the March 23, 2021 meeting.

REQUEST FOR AUTHORIZATION:

APPROVING ACCEPTANCE OF TITLE TO OLD TOWN HALL PROPERTY AT 175 ATLANTIC STREET: The Board of Representatives of the City of Stamford, Connecticut approved the Ordinance No. 1055 Creating the Old Town Hall Redevelopment Agency in the City of Stamford to redevelop the historic Old Town Hall at 175 Atlantic Street in Stamford. Old Town Hall Redevelopment Agency (OTHRA) was established to implement the redevelopment of the historic, City-owned building through the use of Historic Tax Credits

and New Market Tax Credits, OTHRA was able to reduce public costs and attract private funding to the redevelopment project. OTHRA has recently stabilized the building at functionally full occupancy, generating revenue to nearly cover the building's annual operating expenses. The City is now able to take back public ownership of the building, dissolve OTHRA and remaining tax credit entities, and claim the cash reserves associated with the tax credit transactions. This action requires Planning Board, Board of Finance, and Board of Representatives approval to complete the transfer.

David Kooris, President, DSSD and Thomas Madden, AICP, Director, Economic Development, were available to answer any questions.

After a brief discussion, Mr. Tepper recommended approval of acceptance of Title to the OldTown Hall Property at 175 Atlantic Street and this request has been reviewed pursuant to Connecticut General Statute Section 8-24 and Section C6-30-13 of the City Charter and finds this request to be consistent with CGS Section 8-24, and the City Charter Section C6-30-13, as well as consistent with the adopted 2015 Master Plan; Ms. Godzeno seconded the motion and passed unanimously with eligible members present voting, 5-0 (Dell, Fishman, Godzeno, Levin and Tepper).

ZONING BOARD REFERRALS:

1. **ZB APPLICATION #221-08 - STAMFORD RESEARCH DRIVE, LLC & MAXSON, LLC - 12 RESEARCH DRIVE - Site & Architectural Plans and/or Requested Uses and Special Permit:**

Applicant is proposing to operate a medical marijuana dispensary at 12 Research Drive. Property is located within the M-G zone.

Meaghan Miles, of Carmody Torrance Sandak Hennessey, LLP, made a presentation and answered questions about this project.

Applicants request Special Permit approval to operate a Medical Marijuana Dispensary at 12 Research Drive. The site is located in the Research Drive industrial park at the corner of Research Drive and Larkin Street. It is zoned M-G and in Master Plan Category #13 (Industrial - General). Enhancements and updates are proposed to the building floor plan and parking area, including the addition of landscaping. The application meets the requirements of Section 7-U of the Zoning Regulations and operations will satisfy the requirements of the General Statutes and State Regulations governing the use; in particular, the included security plan details its compliance with the State Regulations concerning site safety. Notably, a Special Permit application was approved for a dispensary at nearby 75 Research Drive but that dispensary was never constructed and the approval has expired.

After a brief discussion, Ms. Godzeno recommended **approval** of **ZB Application #221-08** and that this request is compatible with the neighborhood and consistent with Master Plan Category #13 (Industrial - General); Mr. Tepper seconded the motion and passed unanimously with eligible members present voting, 5-0 (Dell, Fishman, Godzeno, Levin and Tepper).

Application #221-03 & #221-04 will be heard together but voted on separately

As a reminder to the Planning Board, the applicant presented a Master Plan amendment (#MP-439) on December 15, 2020 requesting a Map Change from Master Plan Category #10 (Shorefront Mixed-Use) to Category #9 (Urban Mixed-Use). The Planning Board adopted this Master Plan change from Category #10 to Category #9 with the specific condition no building to be higher than 12 stories. The applicant's representative, Richard Redniss, of Redniss & Mead, made a presentation on what is being requested for the Text Change. After working with Staff, the applicant has strengthened some of the conditions contained therein. Staff recommends approval of the Text Change amendments to the RH-D (Residential District, High Density) District of the Zoning Regulations as listed above and the Text Change for this parcel is consistent with the amended Master Plan Category #9 (Urban Mixed-Use) and is compatible with the high-density residential development to the south and east of this area. The Map Change is also consistent with Master Plan Category #9 (Urban Mixed-Use).

2. **ZB APPLICATION #221-03 - RICHARD W. REDNISS (22 1st CORP.) representing SPRAGUE OPERATING RESOURCES, LLC - Text Change:** Applicant is requesting to amend Article III, Section 4.B.11. RH-D (Residential District, High Density) of the Zoning Regulations by adding language to *Subsection c. Authorized Uses*; adding a new Subsection (7) to *Subsection d. Building Regulations*; adding language to *Subsection h. Public Amenity Requirement* and adding a new Subsection (4) to *Subsection i. (1) Public Amenity Bonus*.

After a brief discussion, Ms. Fishman recommended **approval** of *ZB Application #221-03* with the condition to change the term “commercial” to “office” and that this request is compatible with the neighborhood and consistent with Master Plan Category #9 (Urban Mixed-Use); Mr. Tepper seconded the motion and passed unanimously with eligible members present voting, 5-0 (Dell, Fishman, Godzeno, Levin and Tepper).

3. **ZB APPLICATION #221-04 - SPRAGUE OPERATING RESOURCES, LLC - Map Change:** Applicant is proposing to rezone 10 Water Street and 2187 Atlantic Street from the current CW-D Zoning District to the RH-D Zoning District.

After a brief discussion, Mr. Tepper recommended **approval** of *ZB Application #221-04* and that this request is compatible with the neighborhood and consistent with Master Plan Category #9 (Urban Mixed-Use); Ms. Godzeno seconded the motion and passed unanimously with eligible members present voting, 5-0 (Dell, Fishman, Godzeno, Levin and Tepper).

ZB Application #221-06 & #221-07 will be heard together but voted on separately

Before Mr. Mazzeo made his presentation, Ms. Dell stated “Requests to Speak” were received from Sue Halpern, Barry Michaelson and Reverend Dr. Dawn Snell on these two applications. Ms. Dell explained she advised everyone there were not going to be any public comments allowed and they would have their opportunity at the Zoning Board Public Hearing. Ms. Dell did state she would make comments on Ms. Halpern’s email after the presentation as it was felt Ms. Halpern’s comments were very informative and should be made part of the Planning Board’s record.

Ms. Dell introduced Mr. Mazzeo.

4. **ZB APPLICATION #221-06 - RAYMOND MAZZEO (22 1st CORP.) - Text Change:** Applicant is proposing the following amendments to the Zoning Regulations: (a) to include Pacific Street (from Dock Street to Ludlow Street) as an “Arterial Street” in the V-C (Village Commercial) Section and; (b) amend Article III, Section 3.B (Defined Terms) by adding “Tax Lot”, “Zoning Lot” and “Zoning Lot Development Agreement.”

Raymond Mazzeo, of Redniss & Mead, made a presentation on both applications. The applicants worked with Land Use Bureau staff to further clarify: (a) arterial streets in the V-C Zoning section of the Zoning Regulations and to amend the arterial designation from 100 ft., which is too narrow, to 125 ft. from the arterial property line; (b) to revise the applicability of the arterial street designation in the V-C Zoning section to better match the new definitions of the depth of arterial lots and; (c) to define Zoning lots allowing existing internal property lines to remain within an approved development.

In other words, this is to clarify what is meant for arterial street and lot line depth in the V-C zone.

After a brief discussion, Mr. Levin recommended **approval** of *ZB Application #221-06* and that this request is compatible with the neighborhood and consistent with Master Plan Category #6 (Commercial - Neighborhood Business); Mr. Tepper seconded the motion and passed unanimously with eligible members present voting, 5-0 (Dell, Fishman, Godzeno, Levin and Tepper).

5. **ZB APPLICATION #221-07 - HOGG HOLDINGS (Contract Purchaser) - 648, 670, 686, 690 & 692 PACIFIC STREET and 171 HENRY STREET - Map Change:** Applicant is proposing to rezone 648, 670, 686, 690 & 692 Pacific Street and 171 Henry Street properties to the V-C (Village Commercial District) Zoning District.

The applicant worked with Staff and this is consistent with Master Plan Category #6 (Commercial - Neighborhood Business) and the proposed zone change will encompass the entire east side of the block fronting Pacific Street; Henry Street to the north to Ludlow Street to the south. However, there is an existing two-family home adjacent to the parcel that will remain in the RM-F Zoning District (NOT V-C) will serve as a “buffer” to the other RM-F properties adjacent to the east.

After a brief discussion, Mr. Levin recommended **approval** of **ZB Application #221-07** and that this request is compatible with the neighborhood and consistent with Master Plan Category #6 (Commercial - Neighborhood Business); Ms. Godzeno seconded the motion and passed unanimously with eligible members present voting, 5-0 (Dell, Fishman, Godzeno, Levin and Tepper).

Ms. Dell addressed the citizens who wanted to make comments. Ms. Dell stated that Rev. Dr. Dawn Snell asked to speak as there were concerns about the development as the church property is located at 175 Henry Street. Ms. Dell also stated Barry Michaelson asked to speak but he did not send any written comments. Ms. Dell mentioned the email and photographs of some of the historic buildings in the area submitted by Ms. Halpern explaining she has concerns with the historic features in this section of the City and that these buildings may be taken down. Ms. Dell stated she would forward these emails to Mr. Mazzeo so he could reach out directly and discuss the concerns about these two applications.

Dr. Woods requested to allow Mr. Michaelson to speak under New Business to address the South End Historic Preservation Study application and to allow the Planning Board to ask questions.

Ms. Dell agreed and asked Mr. Michaelson to remain on the meeting.

6. **ZB APPLICATION #220-51 - DOMINICK ROSA, JR. - 351 HOPE STREET - Map Change:** Applicant is requesting to amend the City of Stamford’s Zoning Map pertaining to 351 Hope Street only. Applicant is requesting that 351 Hope Street to be changed from the R-6 Zoning District to the C-N Zoning District.

The applicant owns an existing nonconforming use (automobile repair shop) on the northeast corner of Hope Street and Church Street. The applicant proposes to convert the automobile repair portion to a small convenience store and storage as well as operate the gas service station. By changing the zoning from a legal nonconforming zone (R-6 - One & Two Family District) to a conforming commercial zone (C-N - Neighborhood Business District), will make this consistent with zoning for commercial use.

After a brief discussion, Ms. Fishman recommended **approval** of **ZB Application #220-51** and that this request is compatible with the neighborhood and consistent with Master Plan Category #6 (Commercial - Neighborhood Business); Ms. Godzeno seconded the motion and passed unanimously with eligible members present voting, 5-0 (Dell, Fishman, Godzeno, Levin and Tepper).

OLD BUSINESS:

Ms. Dell stated she received the Capital Budget the Mayor sent to the Board of Finance. The Mayor did keep in most of the recommendations made by the Planning Board. The Planning Board budget was \$44,309,705.00 and the Mayor’s budget was \$53,064,705.00. The changes put in by the Mayor was additional state grant money, a private contribution from Stamford Aboretum for \$85,000.00 and the Capital Non-recurring came in at \$4,829,000.00 where it was \$200,000.00 when the Planning Board saw it. The Mayor also put in the additional \$620,000.00 for the Strawberry Hill Avenue Widening Project and \$1,900,000.00 for Government Center renovations. Originally was that was \$200,000.00 but was determined additional work was needed and the amount was increased. The renovations at the Yerwood Center were reduced by \$200,000.00. The Mayor also added \$6M to Street Patch and Resurfacing for a total of \$10M. Lastly, Fire Apparatus was increased to \$1.2M as the Mayor felt they needed additional funds.

Ms. Dell stated that most of the changes occurred with State Grants and Capital Non-recurring and the outside agencies received funds and were not taken out of the budget.

NEW BUSINESS:

Next regularly scheduled Planning Board meetings are:

- March 23, 2021 - Regular Meeting
- April 6, 2021 - Regular Meeting

Ms. Dell requested Mr. Michaelson to speak on affordable housing and the Historic Preservation Study but Mr. Michaelson had left the meeting. Ms. Dell stated she would invite Mr. Michaelson to the March 23, 2021.

Dr. Woods was able to speak to the Historic Preservation Study and stated it is an application to the state where the State Historic Preservation Office (SHPO) would conduct the study. After the study is completed, it will come to the Planning Board for final approval and then move on to other Boards to setup a referendum to create a historic district in the south end where each landowner inside the district would also have to approve.

Dr. Woods reminded the Board of the meeting schedule change moving the meeting scheduled for April 13, 2021 to April 6, 2021 as some members had conflicts with the April 15, 2021 income tax deadline.

Ms. Dell announced Ms. Godzeno and Mr. Buccino have both been reappointed for 3-year terms with the Planning Board and offered her congratulations.

There being no further business to come before the Board, Ms. Dell adjourned the meeting at 7:53 p.m.

Respectfully Submitted

March 12, 2021

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