

PLANNING BOARD, CITY OF GARFIELD
MINUTES OF THE WORK SESSION
Conducted on August 19, 2021

The work session was conducted via Zoom Conference due to COVID-19 and was called to order by Chairwoman Visotcky at 6:35 p.m. who thereupon read the statement required by the Open Public Meeting Act. Secretary called the roll.

WORK SESSION ROLL CALL:

Mayor Richard Rigoglioso
Councilman, Romi Herrera
Chairwoman, Lou Ann Visotcky
Vice Chairman, Michael Wisnovsky
James Clark
Michael Garcia
Jack LoBue
Peter Santacroce, 1st Alternate – joined the meeting at 6:40 p.m.
Costantino Conte, 2nd Alternate

Absent:

Gracie Williams
Dan Golabek

Others present were:

Alyssa A. Cimino, Esq., Attorney/Secretary of the Planning Board
Carl O'Brien – Planning Board Engineer
Beth Calderone, Certified Court Reporter

The Chairwoman asked for a motion to approve the Work Session portion of the minutes from the meeting held on July 22, 2021.

Motion to approve the Work Session portion of Minutes of Meeting on July 22, 2021.

Moved: Michael Garcia
Second: James Clark

Mayor Richard Rigoglioso – Aye
Councilman, Romi Herrera - Abstain
Chairwoman, Lou Ann Visotcky - Aye
Vice Chairman, Michael Wisnovsky - Aye
James Clark – Aye
Michael Garcia – Aye
Jack LoBue - Abstain
Peter Santacroce, 1st Alternate – Abstain
Motion Approved.

The Chairwoman asked for a motion to approve the Regular Session portion of the minutes from the meeting held on July 22, 2021.

Motion to approve Minutes of Regular Meeting on July 22, 2021.

Moved: Vice Chairman, Michael Wisnovsky
Second: Peter Santacroce, 1st Alternate

Mayor Richard Rigoglioso - Aye
Councilman, Romi Herrera - Abstain
Chairwoman, Lou Ann Visotcky - Aye
Vice Chairman, Michael Wisnovsky - Aye
James Clark – Aye
Michael Garcia - Aye
Jack LoBue– Abstain
Peter Santacroce, 1st Alternate – Aye
Motion Approved.

The Chairwoman asked if there were any bills or correspondence.

No bills or correspondence were presented.

Mayor Rigoglioso discussed the possibility of purchasing tablets for Board members to use at the Board meetings to view applications, etc., so that the Board members would not need to print the documents. Mayor Rigoglioso asked Ms. Cimino to provide him with total cost related to delivering the packages to the Board members.

The Chairwoman asked for a motion to close the Work Session.

Motion to close the Work Session.

Moved: Michael Garcia
Second: James Clark

Mayor Richard Rigoglioso – Aye
Councilman, Romi Herrera - Aye
Chairwoman, Lou Ann Visotcky - Aye
Vice Chairman, Michael Wisnovsky - Aye
James Clark – Aye
Michael Garcia – Aye
Jack LoBue - Aye
Peter Santacroce, 1st Alternate – Aye
Motion Approved.

Respectfully submitted,

Alyssa A. Cimino
Planning Board Secretary

Approved at the meeting on September 23, 2021.

ALYSSA A. CIMINO
Planning Board Secretary

PLANNING BOARD, CITY OF GARFIELD
MINUTES OF THE REGULAR MEETING
Conducted on August 19, 2021

The Regular Meeting was called to order by Chairwoman Visotcky at 7:00 p.m. who thereupon read the statement required by the Open Public Meeting Act. Secretary called the roll.

ROLL CALL:

Mayor Richard Rigoglioso
Councilman, Romi Herrera
Chairwoman, Lou Ann Visotcky
Vice Chairman, Michael Wisnovsky
James Clark
Michael Garcia
Peter Santacroce, 1st Alternate
Costantino Conte, 2nd Alternate – rejoined the meeting at 7:15

Absent:

Gracie Williams
Dan Golabek

Others present were:

Alyssa A. Cimino, Esq., Attorney/Secretary of the Planning Board
Carl O'Brien, Planning Board Engineer
David Juzmeski, Planning Board Planner
Beth Calderone, Certified Court Reporter

(Flag Salute)

SUNSHINE LAW: Read by Chairwoman Lou Ann Visotcky
PUBLIC LAW 1975 CHAPTER 231 "OPEN PUBLIC MEETING ACT" PUBLIC
HEARING: November 26, 2020 Council Chambers, City Hall Commencing at 7:00 p.m.

A subsequent Notice of change of the Regular Meeting date from August 26, 2021 to August 19, 2021 and venue change from Council Chambers, Second Floor, City Hall to a Zoom Conference Meeting has been provided at least 48 hours in advance by publication in The Bergen Record and The Herald News on August 12, 2021.

Resolutions

- a) Resolution memorializing approval of the study conducted by DMR Architects which determined that the property known as Block 119.03, Lot 36 as shown on the Official Tax Map of the City of Garfield, more commonly known as 28 Walnut Street, is an area in need of redevelopment, specifically a Non-Condensation Redevelopment Area pursuant to the Local Redevelopment and Housing Law N.J.S.A. 40A:12A-1 et seq.

Motion to memorialize Resolution PB-06-2021 approving the Study Conducted by DMR Architects (28 Walnut Street).

Moved: Michael Garcia
Second: Vice Chairman, Michael Wisnovsky

Mayor Richard Rigoglioso - Aye
Councilman, Romi Herrera – Abstain
Chairwoman, Lou Ann Visotcky - Aye
Vice Chairman, Michael Wisnovsky - Aye
James Clark – Aye
Michael Garcia – Aye
Jack LoBue - Abstain
Peter Santacroce, 1st Alternate – Aye
Costantino Conte, 2nd Alternate – Aye
Motion Approved.

- b) Resolution memorializing approval of the study conducted by DMR Architects which determined that the property known as Block 147.02, Lots 1, 5 & 7 as shown on the Official Tax Map of the City of Garfield, more commonly known as 30-38 Plauderville Avenue, is an area of redevelopment, specifically a Non-Condensation Redevelopment Area pursuant to the Local Redevelopment and Housing Law N.J.S.A. 40A:12A-1, et seq.

Motion to memorialize Resolution PB-07-2021 approving the Study Conducted by DMR Architects (30-38 Plauderville Avenue).

Moved: Vice Chairman, Michael Wisnovsky
Second: James Clark

Mayor Richard Rigoglioso - Aye
Councilman, Romi Herrera – Abstain
Chairwoman, Lou Ann Visotcky - Aye
Vice Chairman, Michael Wisnovsky - Aye
James Clark – Aye
Michael Garcia – Aye
Jack LoBue - Abstain
Peter Santacroce, 1st Alternate – Aye
Costantino Conte, 2nd Alternate – Aye
Motion Approved.

- c) Resolution memorializing approval of Application for Preliminary Site Plan Approval and Final Site Plan Approval at property known as Block 50.01, Lot 1, as shown on the Official Tax Map of the City of Garfield, more commonly known as 290 River Drive (Kalama Site).

Motion to memorialize Resolution PB-08-2021 approving Preliminary and Final Site Plan (290 River Drive – Kalama Site).

Moved: Mayor Richard Rigoglioso
Second: Chairwoman, Lou Ann Visotcky

Mayor Richard Rigoglioso - Aye
Councilman, Romi Herrera – Abstain
Chairwoman, Lou Ann Visotcky - Aye
Vice Chairman, Michael Wisnovsky - Aye
James Clark – Aye
Michael Garcia – Aye
Jack LoBue - Abstain
Peter Santacroce, 1st Alternate – Aye
Motion Approved.

Old Business

1. Hearing on Application for Preliminary Site Plan Approval and Final Site Plan Approval regarding Block 200, Lots 16, 18 & 21, as shown on the Official Tax Map of the City of Garfield, more commonly known as 844-858 River Drive.

Michael Herbert, Esq. appeared on behalf of the applicant and owner, Meridia Garfield 848, LLC.

Yogesh Mistry, Architect - sworn. Mr. Mistry testified that the Plan proposes to demolish all structures on the site which consists of an auto dealership and an auto repair shop. The Plan proposes construction of a 5-story building. The first 2 levels will be a parking garage. The 3 stories above the garage will be apartments consisting of a total of 79 units. There will be 63 1-bedroom units and 16 studio units. Each floor is approximately 21,000-25,000 sq. ft. Mr. Mistry testified that there are a total of 87 parking spaces in the parking garage. The corner of the property (first floor) will contain the main office, elevator lobby, stairway and mail room. There are access points into the garage from Division Ave., Banta Ave., and River Dr. Parking spaces will be assigned to the tenants. Mr. Mistry testified there would be a trash room, containing a trash shoot, on each floor of apartments that residents can access. Trash would collect in a trash room on the first level.

Mr. Mistry testified that the façade of the first & second floor of the building create a horizontal band. The upper floors contain a mix of stucco and brick with precast limestone tile on the curved portion. The variance being requested pertains to signage height. The City Ordinance allows for 6 ft. signs. The plan proposes 2 blade signs on the corner of the building that are 12 ft. high. Mr. Mistry testified that the height of the building is 64 ft. which is less than what is allowed. The redevelopment plan allows a building height of 70 ft.

The Chairwoman asked if these units were for sale or are they rentals.

Mr. Mistry testified that they are rentals.

Mr. Garcia stated that the Fire Dept. always has issues with arial access to multi-story buildings regarding equipment being obstructed by the power lines from the street.

Mr. Herbert responded that his client would be willing to work with the Fire Dept. on that issue.

The Chairwoman asked if the building would block the sun from the neighbors' properties.

Mr. Mistry testified that the building would create a shadow on the neighbors' properties in the afternoon.

Mr. Santacroce asked if the apartments would have balconies.

Mr. Mistry testified that there would not be balconies.

Mr. Garcia asked how these apartments would impact the public school system.

Mr. Herbert stated that due to the size of the units, they would not generate a flow of children into the school system.

Mr. Garcia asked if the generator supplies only the elevators or all the units.

Mr. Mistry testified that the generator only supplies emergency lights in the hallways and stairwells and the elevators.

Mr. Juzmeski asked if they would consider putting the power lines underground.

Mr. Herbert responded that the applicant would consult with PSE&G and be guided by what they recommend.

Joseph Sparone, Engineer – sworn. The site is approximately 0.78 acres, 35,070 sq. ft. which complies with the minimum lot area requirement of the redevelopment plan.

Mr. Herbert asked Mr. Sparone about any underground storage tanks at the site.

Mr. Sparone testified that if there are underground tanks they will be dealt with in accordance with DEP and local criteria.

Mr. Herbert asked about the possibility of underground power lines.

Mr. Sparone testified that currently the Plan is to maintain the overhead lines. There will be discussions with PSE&G regarding the option of putting the lines underground. All of the new utilities to the building will be underground.

Mr. Sparone testified that the site is near mass transit, including the NJ Transit Rail Line Plauderville station. There are 79 units and 87 parking spaces are proposed. Access to the site will be provided via one right turn ingress/right turn egress driveway along Division Ave. and one right turn ingress/right turn egress along Banta Ave. The existing access points along River Dr. will be eliminated. The parking aisles will be 22 ft. wide and will allow for two-way circulation. Parking spaces will be 8½ ft. x 18 ft. which complies with the redevelopment plan. Mr. Sparone testified that minimum project size of 65,000 sq. ft. required, 115,369 sq. ft. is proposed. The site complies with the minimum lot area of 25,000 sq. ft. In addition, there is a 5 ft. setback provided along the rear of the building to the adjacent residential dwellings. Minimum dwelling unit size required is 500 sq. ft. for studio units and 512 sq. ft. is proposed. For the 1-bedroom units the requirement is 600 sq. ft. and 601 sq. ft. is proposed. Mr. Sparone testified that all signage complies with the redevelopment plan with the exception of the Meridia Banner signs that are 12 ft. high, where a height of 6 ft. is allowed. The lighting proposed for the outside of the building is the standard city streetscape lighting fixtures which complies with the redevelopment plan. The Board professionals had some comments regarding the lighting, tree spacing, and providing City trash receptacles, and we will comply with the recommendations.

Mr. Sparone testified that the amended State stormwater requirements do not apply, since the site is less than 1 acre. Even though the amended requirements do not apply, the impervious coverage will be reduced which leads to a reduction in stormwater runoff rates. Another added value is that the runoff will be what is considered 'clean runoff'.

Mr. Garcia asked how will they handle tenants that have 2 cars, since street parking is already a problem in the area.

Mr. Sparone testified that are some extra spaces. The 1-bedroom and studio units are catering toward the single tenants that would have one car per unit.

Mayor Rigoglioso asked if security cameras would be provided around the building.

Mr. Sparone testified that there would be cameras within the building. Generally, there are also cameras in the parking decks and building entrances.

Mr. O'Brien asked if the applicant would comply with the recommendations made in his review letter dated 8/6/2021.

Mr. Herbert stated that the applicant would comply the recommendations.

Mr. O'Brien asked about the pick-up of trash and recycling.

Mr. Sparone testified that trash pick-up will be provided by a private hauler on specific days. The schedule has not yet been determined. The truck will be picking up the trash from the trash room which faces Banta Ave.

Craig Ryno, V.P. Real Estate, Capodaglia Properties – sworn. Mr. Ryno testified that the garage is gated and the tenants are given an electronic access card, which hangs from the rear-view mirror in their car, and opens the gate automatically. The gate closes automatically after the car passes through. There will be motion sensor lights throughout the garage. The tenants access the building and their apartment using their cell phones (a program for their cell phones is provided). Security cameras are throughout the building, the garage and outside. Tenants will also receive an app. for their cell phones that can access the security cameras.

Mr. Garcia asked what is being offered regarding visitor parking.

Mr. Ryno testified that he would let the Traffic expert address visitor parking.

Mr. Garcia asked what the cost of renting the apartments will be.

Mr. Ryno testified that the cost is approximately \$1,600 to \$2,200.

The Board asked if the security cameras were connected to the Police Dept.

Mr. Ryno testified that they are not connected to the Police Dept. A security company monitors the security cameras.

Craig Peregory, Traffic Engineer – sworn. Mr. Peregory testified that manual turning movement counts were conducted on February 2, 2021 from 7:00 a.m. to 9:00 a.m. and from 4:30 p.m. to 6:30 p.m. at the intersection of River Dr. with Division Ave. and on June 30, 2021 at the intersection of River Dr. and Banta Ave. The analysis concluded that there would be no

significant change in the traffic as a result of this development. Access to the site will be provided via 1 right turn ingress/right turn egress along Division Ave. and 1 right turn ingress/right turn egress along Banta Ave. This is an improvement over the existing access and eliminates access points along River Dr. The proposed plan provides good traffic circulation throughout the site and provides adequate parking.

The Chairwoman asked if it was possible to get a traffic light at the Banta Ave./River Rd. intersection.

Mr. Peregory testified that the level of traffic volume is below 100 cars per hour. The lowest threshold to even consider a traffic light is 200 cars per hour.

Mr. Clark asked if their analysis considered that school was not in-person, since it was during COVID when the study was conducted.

Mr. Peregory testified that they also used pre-COVID DOT traffic counts.

Mr. Garcia voiced concern about the wait time to be able to get onto River Dr. from Banta Ave. with the additional 79 cars exiting this site.

Mr. Pergory testified that is one of the reasons he suggested that the driveway on Division Ave. be used as a two-way driveway. Therefore, some of the cars exiting the site will alleviate some traffic onto Banta Ave.

Mr. Garcia asked where visitors would be parking.

Mr. Peregory testified that there are some extra parking spaces available on-site or visitors would likely choose street parking.

Steven Martini, Professional Planner – sworn. Mr. Martini testified that the Plan proposes a 5-story multi-family dwelling containing 79 units. The building consists of 16 studio apartments and 63 1-bedroom apartments. The applicant is seeking one variance for exceeding the maximum height of the exterior sign. There are other similar multi-family apartments within close proximity to this proposed project site. The Catherine Arms Apartments are located across Division Ave., which has 34 units in a U-shaped building with parking in front. From a planning perspective, the project being considered by the Board is a very fitting project that's an appropriate redevelopment for the City especially in this area. This project will contribute to the rejuvenation of the River Dr. corridor, as well as patronage to local businesses along the corridor and throughout the City.

Mr. Garcia asked if he is aware that the Catherine Arms Apartment is currently causing the biggest problem for street parking on Division Ave. Since no on-site visitor parking is available, visitors are taking the street parking spaces.

Mr. Herbert stated that the situation at the Catherine Arms Apartment is not related to what is being proposed on this project.

The Chairwoman then asked for a motion to open the meeting to the public.

Motion to open the meeting to the public.

Moved: Councilman Romi Herrera

Second: Jack LoBue

Mayor Richard Rigoglioso - Aye
Councilman, Romi Herrera
Chairwoman, Lou Ann Visotcky – Aye
Vice Chairman, Michael Wisnovsky - Aye
James Clark – Aye
Michael Garcia - Aye
Jack LoBue – Aye
Peter Santacrocce, 1st Alternate – Aye
Costantino Conte, 2nd Alternate - Aye
Motion Approved.

The Chairwoman asked if anyone from the public wanted to come forward.

Joseph Paz from the public is the owner of the Catherine Arms Apartments. Mr. Paz asked what is the City Ordinance for the required number of parking spaces. He stated that he understood the City Ordinance to be 142 parking spaces.

Mr. Peregory testified that Redevelopment Zone requirements for parking spaces is 79 and 87 spaces are being proposed.

Mr. Paz asked if someone else wanted to build 5 blocks away, what would the parking requirement be.

Mr. Herbert stated that there are different requirements for different parts of the City.

Mr. Paz asked how many parking spaces are on the first garage level.

Mr. Mistry testified that there are 40 spaces on the ground floor.

Mr. Paz asked what the size is of each space.

Mr. Mistry testified that the size is 8½ x 18.

Mr. Paz asked how many parking spaces are on the second garage level.

Mr. Mistry testified that there are 47 spaces on the second level.

Mr. Paz asked what the size is of these spaces.

Mr. Mistry testified that some of the spaces are 8½ x 18 and there are some compact spaces.

Mr. Paz asked what the requirements are for on-street parking, because there is a shortage of on-street parking already.

Mr. Herbert stated that it is not part of this project.

Mr. Paz asked how many handicap spaces are required and are they shown on the plans.

Mr. Herbert stated that they will be adding the handicap spaces to the plans.

Jackie Paz from the public expressed her objection to the project due to the shortage of on-street parking in this area. Ms. Paz is very concerned that this project will make the problem worse, because one parking space per unit is not realistic.

Mr. Paz asked what is the setback on Division Ave. from the first house next to this project.

Mr. Sparone testified that 5 ft. is required and 5 ft. is provided.

Mr. Paz asked is it the same setback on Banta Ave.

Mr. Sparone testified that it is the same as Division Ave.

Mr. Paz asked how many air conditioning units would be on Division Ave. and on Banta Ave. facing the houses. He is concerned about the noise.

Mr. Mistry testified that there are 3 units facing Division Ave. and 6 units facing Banta Ave.

Frances Maceyak from the public expressed concern about the on-street parking problem. Ms. Maceyak is also very concerned that the 5-story building will block the sun from her property and that her privacy is being invaded because the tenants can look down into her yard.

Marcin Paluch from the public stated that his property is the first house on Banta Ave. next to the proposed building. Mr. Paluch asked if there will be a fence or retaining wall put up once the existing buildings are demolished.

Mr. Herbert stated that when the existing buildings are demolished the applicant will make sure that there are no adverse effects to his property.

Mr. Paluch is concerned about safety once the demolition and construction begins. He is also concerned about potential damage to his property during construction.

Mr. Herbert responded that the applicant is concerned about neighbors' safety. There will be a temporary construction fence put up when building begins. If there is any damage to Mr. Paluch's property, the developer is required to repair it.

Mr. Paz is concerned about the height of the building.

The Chairwoman asked if anyone else from the public wanted to come forward.

The Chairwoman stated that no one else from the public came forward.

The Chairwoman asked for a motion to close the public session.

Motion to close the Public Session.

Moved: James Clark

Second: Michael Garcia

Mayor Richard Rigoglioso - Aye

Councilman, Romi Herrera
Chairwoman, Lou Ann Visotcky – Aye
Vice Chairman, Michael Wisnovsky - Aye
James Clark – Aye
Michael Garcia - Aye
Jack LoBue – Aye
Peter Santacroce, 1st Alternate – Aye
Costantino Conte, 2nd Alternate - Aye
Motion Approved.

The Chairwoman asked for a motion for Preliminary Site Plan Approval and Final Site Plan Approval.

Motion to approve application for Preliminary Site Plan Approval and Final Site Plan Approval (844-858 River Drive).

Moved: Mayor Richard Rigoglioso
Second: James Clark

Mayor Richard Rigoglioso – Aye
Councilman, Romi Herrera - Aye
Chairwoman, Lou Ann Visotcky – Aye
Vice Chairman, Michael Wisnovsky - Aye
James Clark – Aye
Michael Garcia - Aye
Jack LoBue – Aye
Peter Santacroce, 1st Alternate – Aye
Costantino Conte, 2nd Alternate - Aye
Motion Approved.

Approval is granted with the condition of conformance to the requirements of the Board Engineer, Planner, and the Garfield Fire Dept.

The Chairwoman asked for a motion to close the meeting.

Motion to close meeting.

Moved: James Clark
Second: Councilman, Romi Herrera

Mayor Richard Rigoglioso - Aye
Councilman, Romi Herrera - Aye
Chairwoman, Lou Ann Visotcky – Aye
Vice Chairman, Michael Wisnovsky – Aye
James Clark – Aye
Michael Garcia - Aye
Jack LoBue – Aye
Peter Santacroce, 1st Alternate – Aye
Costantino Conte, 2nd Alternate - Aye
Motion Approved.

Respectfully submitted,

Alyssa A. Cimino
Planning Board Secretary

Approved at the meeting on September 23, 2021.

ALYSSA A. CIMINO
Planning Board Secretary