



City of Woonsocket, RI

Planning Board Meeting Minutes

Date/Time: Tuesday, September 13, 2022 | 6PM

Location: 2nd floor Conference Room – City Hall, 169 Main Street, Woonsocket, RI 02895

I. CALL TO ORDER

Chair Finlay called the meeting to order at 6:00PM.

Motion to open the Planning Board Meeting at 6:00PM: Chair Finlay

Second: Member Pratt

Discussion: None

Vote:

Chair Finlay:	Yes
Vice-Chair Gardner:	Yes
Secretary Scanlon:	Yes
Member Pratt:	Yes

MOTION	PASSED	4-0-0
---------------	---------------	--------------

II. ATTENDANCE REVIEW

Members in Attendance:

1. Kenneth Finlay, Chair
2. Wendall Gardner, Vice-Chair
3. Barbara Scanlon, Secretary
4. Jonathan Pratt, Member

Staff in Attendance:

1. Kenneth Kirkland, City Planner / Administrative Officer
2. Veronicka Vega, Recording Secretary

III. REVIEW/ APPROVAL OF MINUTES

Motion to approve the Planning Board Minutes of August 2, 2022: Vice-Chair Gardner

Second: Secretary Scanlon

Discussion: None

Vote:

Chair Finlay:	Yes
Vice-Chair Gardner:	Yes
Secretary Scanlon:	Yes
Member Pratt:	Yes

MOTION	PASSED	4-0-0
---------------	---------------	--------------

IV. MEETING BUSINESS

A. Subdivisions & Land Development Projects

1. 60 Mendon Road: Former Ballou Home for the Aged | Map A6, Lot 46-2 | Zone: R-2
Public Hearing – Major Land Development Project: Combined Master & Preliminary Plan Stages of Review

Chair Finlay read the Notice of Public Hearing.

Motion to open the Public Hearing: Vice-Chair Gardner

Second: Secretary Scanlon

Discussion: None

Vote:

Chair Finlay: Yes

Vice-Chair Gardner: Yes

Secretary Scanlon: Yes

Member Pratt: Yes

MOTION

PASSED

4-0-0

Attorney Amy Goins, Esq. of Ursillo, Teitz, and Ritch, Ltd., for Applicant/Owner ESJ Investments, Inc. presented the redevelopment plans of the former Ballou Home for the Aged into a 21-unit condominium complex. In essence, the exterior would remain unchanged, with only minor parking reconfiguration, (formal line restriping) to accommodate the proposed residential units. The existing garage would remain and would be included for the two-bedroom units. Existing water and sewer utilities adequately serve the site. The building interior would be substantially reconfigured for the residential units, (eleven 2-bedroom units, and ten 1-bedroom units) with individual amenities within each unit. Proposed common areas include a community room, study, home business space, a gym, a library, and individual storage space.

The existing landscapes, (green and hardscape installations) were discussed, and it was stated that other than regular maintenance, it would remain, as it is mature, well-established, buffers the neighbors, and adds senses of character and ownership for the residents. Attorney Goins introduced design professionals Joseph Casali, P.E., and John O’Hearne, AIA for any specific questions.

There was a brief discussion regarding emergency access, ingress, and egress; Representative Goins deferred to Architect O’Hearne and Engineer Casali, who stated that the basement doors and windows were adequate as per the required Codes, to which Chair Finlay concurred from his prior professional knowledge of the site.

There was a long discussion regarding age restrictions; Representative Goins stated it was the intent of the Applicant/Owner to restrict the Proposal to 55+ in an effort to address housing shortages for seniors and older residents in the City; there was consideration to increase the minimum age to 65+ to incorporate a more-impacted subset of the senior population. Representative Goins stated there was no concern with that, so long as if it were imposed as a condition, to be written flexibly in the event federal housing laws prevented such a condition, to which the Board agreed. Once asked, City Planner Kirkland couldn’t state for a fact such a condition would be untenable, though it is a common housing-related project condition and could investigate it further, but concurred with Representative Goins that flexibility is best-suited for this Proposal.

City Planner Kirkland presented the Staff Report dated August 23, 2022, revised September 9, 2022, which concurred with the testimony presented. City Planner Kirkland noted that as the Proposal seeks a variance (use) from the Zoning Board of Review, an advisory recommendation from the Planning Board is required under State law. Staff Report Section VI details the required Findings of Fact, and Section VII details Staff’s commentary on the Planning Board’s advisory recommendation.

City Planner Kirkland noted that the Proposal was overall consistent with the Comprehensive Plan, with the Current Zoning and Future Land Use Maps illustrating the only inconsistencies, (both show the property as zoned R-2, where multi-family is prohibited), of which the granting of a use variance would address. Representative Goins introduced Mr. Kevin Flynn, Planning Consultant, to discuss the Proposal’s consistency with the Comprehensive Plan. Mr. Flynn presented his planning credentials and stated that the Staff Report was essentially in-line with his own analysis, and stated that the Proposal was the highest-and-best-use for the site.

Chair Finlay proposed adding two (2) additional conditions:

1. The Residences at Mendon shall be age-restricted to 55 and older, with an initial restriction preference of 65 and older, so long as such 65 and older restriction is not inconsistent with or contrary to any federal or state law; and,
2. Final Plan approval shall be conducted administratively.

Chair Finlay opened the floor and asked if any members of the public wished to speak regarding the Application, none presented.

Motion to close the Public Hearing: Vice-Chair Gardner

Second: Secretary Scanlon

Discussion: None

Vote:

Chair Finlay: Yes

Vice-Chair Gardner: Yes

Secretary Scanlon: Yes

Member Pratt: Yes

MOTION PASSED 4-0-0

Motion to grant combined Master & Preliminary Plan approval subject to the conditions outlined in the Staff Report dated August 23, 2022, revised September 9, 2022, as amended with two (2) additional conditions proposed by Chair Finlay: Member Pratt

Second: Vice-Chair Gardner

Discussion: None

Vote:

Chair Finlay: Yes

Vice-Chair Gardner: Yes

Secretary Scanlon: Yes

Member Pratt: Yes

MOTION PASSED 4-0-0

2. 195 Congress Street | Map D6, Lot 41-153 | Zone: R-3

Public Informational – Minor Subdivision: Preliminary Plan Stage of Review

Steven Carr, Owner, BC Partners, LLC discussed the Proposal to subdivide the existing lot at 195 Congress Street into three (3) new lots. All proposed lots have adequate frontage, area, and width; proposed Lot 4 is technically a corner lot on the unimproved paper segment of Vineyard Street and shows the proper building envelope for a corner lot as required. The area is served by public roadways, and municipal water and sewer utilities.

City Planner Kirkland presented the Staff Report dated August 24, 2022, revised September 9, 2022, concurring with the Owner's presentation. It was noted that the existing lot is oversized for the neighborhood and is 4.5 times larger than the minimum lot size under the Ordinance; the Proposal represents a subdivision that would create smaller, more comparable lots for the construction of smaller, more economic homes for working-class middle-income residents. City Planner Kirkland noted that the Plan underwent municipal review, and no issues were raised regarding the proposed Lots, although the Zoning Official noted the existing house to remain at 195 Congress has a pre-existing, non-conforming side and rear setbacks.

There was a brief discussion regarding wetlands, which are known to exist in the area. City Planner Kirkland stated that wetland delineation and submission of an application to RIDEM is part of the Preliminary Plan process, and a RIDEM determination and permit would be part of the Final Plan submission, review, and approval process by the Administrative Officer.

Chair Finlay proposed adding one (1) additional condition:

1. Hours of work shall be limited from 7AM-5PM Monday through Saturday.

Motion to grant Preliminary Plan approval subject to the conditions outlined in the Staff Report dated August 24, 2022, revised September 9, 2022, as amended with one (1) additional condition proposed by Chair Finlay: Member Vice-Chair Gardner

Second: Secretary Scanlon

Discussion: None

Vote:

Chair Finlay:	Yes
Vice-Chair Gardner:	Yes
Secretary Scanlon:	Yes
Member Pratt:	Yes

MOTION	PASSED	4-0-0
---------------	---------------	--------------

B. Resignation of Recording Secretary Mousseau & Appointment of New Recording Secretary

Chair Finlay read Planning Board Resolution 22-R-04 into the record, accepting the resignation of Recording Secretary Mousseau and appointing Veronicka Vega as the new Recording Secretary.

Motion to appoint Veronicka Vega as Planning Board Recording Secretary: Member Pratt

Second: Secretary Scanlon

Discussion: None

Vote:

Chair Finlay:	Yes
Vice-Chair Gardner:	Yes
Member Pratt:	Yes
Member Scanlon:	Yes

MOTION	PASSED	4-0-0
---------------	---------------	--------------

V. OLD/ONGOING BUSINESS

A. Discussion Regarding Parking Regulations

Tabled.

B. Board Vacancy

City Planner Kirkland stated that the Mayor is looking to fill the vacancy.

VI. ADMINISTRATIVE OFFICER'S REPORT

A. Approved and/or Recorded Projects

1. 2000 Diamond Hill Rd., (Diamond Hill Plaza - McDonald's) - Major Subdivision
Combined Master & Preliminary Plan Approval: August 2, 2022
Recorded: Book 2757 Page 325

B. Comprehensive Plan Update

1. Survey Analysis & Plan Outline
The Consultant has received 250 survey responses from the community and will be drafting the Survey Analysis and the Plan Outline for the City to review. Materials will be provided online as soon as available.

VII. NEXT MEETING: Tuesday, October 4, 2022 @6PM.

VIII. ADJOURNMENT

Motion to adjourn the meeting at 7:34PM: Vice- Chair Gardner

Second: Secretary Scanlon

Discussion: None
Vote:

Chair Finlay:	Yes
Vice-Chair Gardner:	Yes
Member Pratt:	Yes
Member Scanlon:	Yes

MOTION	PASSED	4-0-0
---------------	---------------	--------------

Respectfully Submitted,

Veronica Vega
Recording Secretary