



City of Woonsocket, RI

Planning Board | Design Review Commission | River Corridor Review Commission Meeting Minutes

Date/Time: Tuesday, October 3, 2023 | 6PM

Location: Harris Hall – 3rd floor City Hall, 169 Main Street, Woonsocket, RI 02895

I. CALL TO ORDER

Chair Finlay called the meeting to order at 6:01PM

II. ATTENDANCE REVIEW

Members Present: Kenneth Finlay, Chair
Wendell Gardner, Vice-Chair
Radames Figueroa, Member
Jonathan Pratt, Member

Members Absent: Barbara Scanlon, Secretary

In Attendance: Joseph M. Rollins, Zoning Official & ADA Compliance Officer, Peter Carnevale, Interim Zoning Official, Michael Debrousse, Planning Director, John Ahumada, Business Growth and Recovery Administrator, Emily Haining-Sheehan, Small Business Outreach Coordinator

III. REVIEW/APPROVAL OF MINUTES

A MOTION by Vice-Chair Gardner, seconded by Member Figueroa to approve the meeting minutes of August 31, 2023.

Roll Call Vote:

Chair Finlay	Yes to APPROVE
Vice-Chair Gardner	Yes to APPROVE
Secretary Scanlon	Absent
Member Figueroa	Yes to APPROVE
Member Pratt	Yes to APPROVE

Motion PASSED on a 4-0 roll call vote.

A MOTION by Vice-Chair Gardner, seconded by Member Figueroa to approve the minutes. MOTION carried.

IV. DIRECTOR OF PLANNING AND DEVELOPMENT

A. INTRODUCTION OF NEW STAFF

Michael Debrousse, the Alternate Administrative Officer and Director of Planning and Development introduced the new staff to the Planning Board. The new Economic

Development Team; John Ahumada, Jennifer Uribe, and Emily Haining-Sheehan, Zoning Department Peter Carnevale and Joseph Rollins.

B. CORRECTION OF RESOLUTION 22-R-03

The ordinance was approved incorrectly as 22-R-03 and has been corrected to 23-R-01. There was no vote.

C. RESOLUTION 23-R-02: APPOINTING JONAS ULRICH BRUGGEMAN AS RIVER CORRIDOR REVIEW OFFICER

A MOTION by Vice-Chair Gardner, seconded by Member Figueroa, to approve resolution 23-R-02. MOTION carried.

Roll Call Vote:

Chair Finlay	Yes to APPROVE
Vice-Chair Gardner	Yes to APPROVE
Secretary Scanlon	Absent
Member Figueroa	Yes to APPROVE
Member Pratt	Yes to APPROVE

MOTION carried on a 4-0 roll call vote.

D. RESOLUTION 23-R-03: APPOINTING JONAS ULRICH BRUGGEMAN ARE DESIGN REVIEW COMMISSION OFFICER

A MOTION by Member Figueroa, seconded by Vice-Chair Gardner, to approve resolution 23-R-03.

Roll Call Vote:

Chair Finlay	Yes to APPROVE
Vice-Chair Gardner	Yes to APPROVE
Secretary Scanlon	Absent
Member Figueroa	Yes to APPROVE
Member Pratt	Yes to APPROVE

MOTION carried on a 4-0 roll call vote.

V. NEW BUSINESS

A. City Council Code of Ordinances

a. 23-O-23: Amendment to Appendix C, entitled "Zoning" regulating self-storage units

The Planning Board was provided opinion from the previous City Planner Kenneth Kirkland and current City Planner Jonas Bruggemann. Both agreed that self-storage facilities are more appropriate in industrial zones, rather than in commercial zones. Staff from the Zoning Board provided maps with the six active and 2 proposed locations of self-storage facilities in the City of Woonsocket. Most are located in I-1 or I-2 zones with only two in commercial zones. Chairman Finlay inquired if there were any applications or new locations proposed. Director Debrousse stated that there are none currently. The Board discussed leaving MU-2 as requiring a special permit.

A MOTION by Vice-Chair Gardner seconded by Member Pratt, to support City Council legislation 23-O-23, as amended to keeping MU-2 as allowed by special permit.

Roll Call Vote:

Chair Finlay	Yes to APPROVE
Vice-Chair Gardner	Yes to APPROVE
Secretary Scanlon	Absent
Member Figueroa	Yes to APPROVE
Member Pratt	Yes to APPROVE

MOTION carried on a 4-0 roll call vote.

- b. 23-O-24: Amendment to Appendix C, entitled “Zoning” regulating office co-ops
Director Michael Debrousse explained an example of co-ops in Woonsocket, 43 Railroad Street, which recently went before the Zoning Board. Mr. Debrousse mentioned that the definition of office co-op is broad and that there is the potential for building code issues. Mr. Rollins mentioned that he spoke with the Building Official and that there could be potential issues when it comes to providing all tenants with CO's and the number of people in the space relative to the overall square footage. Chairman Finlay added that there could be possible unrelated businesses occupying the same space such as a therapist and a metal artist. Director Debrousse suggested tabling the vote until further consultation can be done with other municipalities and within the Zoning and Planning Departments.

A MOTION by Chairman Finlay seconded by Vice-Chair Gardner, to table the vote to support City Council legislation 23-O-24.

Roll Call Vote:

Chair Finlay	Yes to APPROVE
Vice-Chair Gardner	Yes to APPROVE
Secretary Scanlon	Absent
Member Figueroa	Yes to APPROVE
Member Pratt	Yes to APPROVE

MOTION carried on a 4-0 roll call vote.

- c. 22-O-74: Amendment to Appendix C, entitled “Zoning” Section 5 entitled “Parking and Loading Requirements of the Code of Ordinances”
Staff from the Zoning Department provided maps of the municipal parking lots in the downtown area as well as zoning districts. Mr. Rollins stated that the proposed language was broad, Chairman Finlay asked for more clarification. Director Debrousse stated that the proposed amendment should state the zones in section 2 instead of the broad “Downtown Overlay District”. Mr. Bruggemann stated that unclear language could complicate development down the line for business owners and developers.

A MOTION by Vice-Chair Gardner seconded by Member Figueroa, to approve the City Council legislation 23-O-24 with the proposed changes to the language.

Roll Call Vote:

Chair Finlay	Yes to APPROVE
Vice-Chair Gardner	Yes to APPROVE
Secretary Scanlon	Absent
Member Figueroa	Yes to APPROVE
Member Pratt	Yes to APPROVE

MOTION carried on a 4-0 roll call vote.

VI. ADMINISTRATIVE OFFICER'S REPORT

Mr. Debroisse updated the Planning Board due to the new City Planner being new. The second-floor conference room has been converted to office space therefore all future meetings will be held in Harris Hall. The Comprehensive Plan Community Meeting will be held on October 26, the informational flyers will be circulated to the Board. The next meeting will be a workshop held with the Zoning Board to discuss the new changes that will be put into effect January 1, 2024 for zoning and planning in Rhode Island.

VII. UPCOMING MEETING: Tuesday, November 7, 2023 -6PM

VIII. ADJORNMENT

MOTION by Vice-Chair Gardner, seconded by Member Figueroa, to adjourn the meeting.

Roll Call Vote:

Chair Finlay	Yes to APPROVE
Vice-Chair Gardner	Yes to APPROVE
Secretary Scanlon	Absent
Member Figueroa	Yes to APPROVE
Member Pratt	Yes to APPROVE

MOTION carried. Chairman Finlay adjourned the meeting at 7:19 P.M.