



City of Woonsocket, RI

Planning Board Meeting Minutes

Date/Time: Tuesday, April 5, 2022, | 6 PM

Location: Harris Hall, City Hall, 169 Main Street, Woonsocket, RI 02895

I. Call to Order

Chairman Finlay called the meeting to order at 6:00 p.m.

II. Attendance Review

Members in Attendance:

1. Ken Finlay, Chairman
2. Wendall Gardner, Vice-Chairman
3. Roji Eappen, Secretary

Members Absent:

1. Jon Pratt - Member

Staff in Attendance:

1. Kevin Proft, City Planner/Administrative Officer
2. June Mousseau, Recording Secretary

III. Correction/Approval of Minutes:

Planning Board Meeting – March 8, 2022, Virtual Meeting

Motion to approve the Planning Board minutes of March 8, 2022: Vice Chair Gardner

Second: Secretary Eappen

Discussion: None

Vote:

Chairman Finlay	Yes
Vice-Chairman Gardner	Yes
Secretary Eappen	Yes
Member Pratt	Excused

Motion	Passed	3-0-0
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IV. Resolution appointing June Mousseau as Recording Secretary

Motion to approve resolution appointing Ms. Mousseau Recording Secretary: Vice Chair Gardner

Second: Secretary Eappen

Discussion

Vote:

Chairman Finlay	Yes
Vice-Chairman Gardner	Yes
Secretary Eappen	Yes
Member Pratt	Excused

Motion	Passed	3-0-0
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- V. Solicitation Of Public Input: *The planning Department is working with RIDEM to assess environmental conditions at the Allen Street parking lot at the corner of Bernon Street and Truman Drive. Prior to conducting assessment activities, RIDEM has requested the department provide an opportunity for the public to learn about the project and to provide any relevant information to RIDEM and its environmental consultant. There will be a short explanation of the project followed by an opportunity for public input. There was no vote associated with this agenda item.*

Project manager Rachel Simpson from RIDEM works closely in Woonsocket assessing different Brownfield properties for environmental contamination. The City secured an RIDEM Targeted Brownfields Assessment grant to perform Phase I and Phase II assessments of vacant lots on Allen Street at the corner of Bernon Street and Truman Drive (Lots 14-174, 175, 176, & 177). A Phase I assessment includes a site inspection, records review, and site research. RIDEM stated that they will use ariel photos and maps. Historical resources go back to the late 1800's. There was a pond where Truman Drive was. The pond was filled in. The property was used as an oil filling station for trucks, which could have resulted in petroleum contamination. A Phase II assessment includes Public Notice of investigation activities, quality assurance plan, soil and groundwater sampling and analysis, and remedial plans to address contamination.

Chairman Finlay asked if the site is going to be developed. Mr. Proft stated that the City applied for the grant to reduce uncertainty regarding the site, thereby increasing the chances of redevelopment. The current owner is absentee and the City holds tax liens against the property. After assessment and remediation of any environmental contamination on the site, the City could potentially foreclose on the tax liens and put out an RFP for developers to redevelop the property.

Mr. Proft stated that the nearby bike path's grassy areas are capped. He will share what soil assessment reports that he has. Mr. Proft stated that you can spillways from the mills on Main Street that would have emptied into the pond where Truman Drive was. This pond formerly abutted the property being assessed so could have contaminated it.

Mr. Finlay asked how large the site is. Mr. Proft stated that it is .27 acres over 4 lots and that it is in an MU-2 zone. Mr. Proft also stated that the mills that were already redeveloped along Allen Street are entirely residential.

Mr. Proft stated that the requirements for remediation may change depending on if it is residential or commercial. For example, a solar project may require only a six-inch gravel cap while a residential use would require 1 foot of clean fill with a geotextile layer between the old and new soil. Building foundations and asphalt also serve as caps.

Rachel stated that while a remediated property has deed restrictions, a cap can be disturbed at the time of redevelopment, but it must be done so in a way that conforms to RIDEM requirements. RIDEM must be notified if a cap is being disturbed. Mr. Proft stated that because the lots are in a flood zone, it may make sense to keep the parking lot as a cap and build a structure over the parking area. This would meet the capping requirement and keep the residential or commercial units above the floodplain.

Mr. Finlay asked if there was any public input. No public input was offered.

VI. *Security Guarantee Release* / *Sunset View Estates* / *The attorney representing REPM, Inc. in connection with the Sunset View Estates subdivision has petitioned the Planning Board to release the remainder of the security guarantee associated with the public improvements constructed as part of the project.*

Mr. Finlay stated that the applicant had been excused from attending the Planning Board meeting due to the straightforward nature of the request. Jon Pratt, the City Engineer, provided a memo stating that all improvements associated with the project had been completed and determined to be adequately durable. Mr. Proft stated that the Planning Board is responsible for releasing security guarantees and based on the Engineering Divisions memo recommended the bond be release in its entirety. Mr. Finlay asked if there were any questions from members of the Board. No questions were asked.

Motion to release Sunset View Estates security guarantee: Vice Chair Gardner
Second: Secretary Eappen
Vote:

Chairman Finlay	Yes
Vice-Chairman Gardner	Yes
Secretary Eappen	Yes
Member Pratt	Excused

Motion	Passed	3-0-0
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VII. Discussion Regarding Parking Regulations: *The planning board will review existing parking regulations the Zoning Ordinance and discuss potential amendments to better suit the goals of the city and developers. No vote was associated with this agenda item.*

Mr. Finlay presented a spreadsheet comparing different cities parking requirements to Woonsocket's based on research conducted by Mr. Proft and himself. Mr. Finlay presented his recommendation for what could be presented to the City Council as a potential amendment.

Mr. Proft stated he would get a copy of the ITE Parking Manual to get more context. Mr. Proft stated that in some instances a site-based parking generation study is best. Mr. Finlay stated that the council is not interested in changing size of parking spaces. Three council members said they won't even entertain the idea. The council is in favor of reviewing parking minimums.

Mr. Proft said he would put together a refined recommendation for next month's meeting.

VIII. Administrative Officer's Report:

Mr. Proft stated the department had been working diligently on and EDA grant opportunity. Mr. Proft reported on the first comp plan update public workshop, held on March 24, 2022. He said the City received valuable input from a good cross section of the community that was in attendance. Perhaps 30 people attended. Mr. Finlay, who attended, agreed that it was constructive. He noted that the completion of the bike path is a high priority for the public.

IX. Upcoming Meeting: May 3, 2022.

X. Adjournment

Motion to adjourn the meeting at 7:20PM: Vice-Chairman Gardner

Second: Secretary Eappen

Discussion: None.

Vote:

Chairman Finlay	Yes
Vice-Chairman Gardner	Yes
Secretary Eappen	Yes
Member Pratt	Absent

Motion	Passed	3-0-0
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