

Approved 11/3/15

CITY OF ROCKLAND
PLANNING BOARD
Minutes of Meeting
September 29, 2015

Board Present: Chair E. Laustsen, W. Bodine, A. Knickelbein, and P. vanVuuren

Board Absent: C. Jordan

Staff Present: Code Officer J. Root and Secretary D. Sealey

The Chair called the meeting to order at 5:32 P.M. and reviewed the agenda.

Public Comment: Tina Plumber of 24 James St. said she was concerned about the Five County Credit Union changes because there was a visibility issue when driving out of James St. onto Main St. She wondered if vegetation could be minimized.

Polly Saltonstall, who owns the building adjacent to the proposed Starfire building, asked what was going on with the electric poles CEO Root responded that he had met with Ms. Saltonstall, Eric Allyn, Will Gartley, Terry Pinto, and Public Services today and they had concluded that it had nothing to do with Starfire, since it will have underground electric. Ms. Saltonstall had expressed the desire to remove the pole in question and Mr. Root agreed this might be the time to do that. He said the City would be sure she was kept in the loop.

Communications: CEO Root read aloud an email from Deborah Sealey, who asked that City services not be used to effect removal of any bird carcasses resulting from the proposed reflective glass wall of the proposed Starfire building.

Old Business:

1. Five County Credit Union – 710 Main Street – Site Plan Review Application for Reconfiguration of the Parking Lot and Entrances - Map 13, Block E, Lots 5: Civil engineer Tom Greer represented the applicant, with whom he had been working to upgrade their site. There would be no changes to the building, but they wanted to make the property nicer from a customer point of view and thought they could, at the same time, also make it safer for traffic. Mr. Greer said the current traffic plan on the property caused both lobby and drive-up customers to end up in the same traffic path.

The applicant proposed closing off the Main St. entrance and adding a second entrance from James St., thus providing one entrance for the lobby and one for the drive-up. The parking spaces would be changed from diagonal to perpendicular. The handicap spaces would be moved to the side of the building. Two signs would be added and the fence atop the wall in back would be replaced with a 6'-high white vinyl fence.

All landscaping would be removed and replaced with trees in the front and junipers around the base of the business sign. There would also be beds of day lilies. A sidewalk and concrete paver blocks would be added where the entrance was removed. The current parking pavement would be ripped out and replaced and surrounded with granite curbing. One section of sidewalk, split by the two entrances, would be added along James St.

Mr. Greer said the project had been postponed to the spring.

Chair Laustsen ascertained that the number of parking spaces would remain at 30, including 2 handicap. The two signs would be a "Stop" sign at the exit and a lobby sign closer to Main St. There would also be a "Do Not Enter" sign to maintain 1-way traffic

The Chair opened and closed the Public Hearing at 5:52 P.M. as no one chose to speak.

The PB reviewed the Elements of the plan. The easement shown on the original Site Plan for the property had been abolished as part of that approval. There would be no change to the underground utilities and electric box fixtures would be removed and replaced with LED lights on 20'-high poles. There would be no change to the drainage patterns and Mr. Greer confirmed there were 4 catch basins on the property. The existing business sign would remain on the corner of Main and James Streets.

ACTION: Mr. Bodine made a motion to accept the application as complete.
Carried 4-0-0

Chair Laustsen read aloud the titles in the Standards section of the ordinance. He said traffic would be improved both on- and off-site by the proposed changes. Mr. Laustsen said there would typically be more low bushes in the landscape plan. Mr. Greer responded that the original bushes had become so large they came out onto James St. He said that while junipers would be the main trees, the plan could be revisited. Mr. Laustsen said he was worried about headlights interfering with Main St. traffic.

CEO Root said the distance between curb cuts was specified in this zone as more than 100'. Ordinance Section 19-307.8 (E) stated the PB could allow different spacing to ensure traffic visibility.

ACTION: Ms. Knickelbein made a motion to allow the two curb cuts to be approximately 50' apart.
Carried 4-0-0

ACTION: Ms. vanVuuren made a motion to approve the Standards.
Carried 4-0-0

Chair Laustsen read aloud the proposed 22 Findings of Fact.

ACTION: Mr. Bodine made a motion to approve the Findings.
Carried 4-0-0

The CEO asked Mr. Greer to check with the Public Services Dept. to make sure the sidewalk met their requirements.

ACTION: Ms. Knickelbein made a motion to approve the Site Plan.
Carried 4-0-0

2. Winter Street, LLC – 8 & 12 Winter Street – Site Plan Review for Construction of a 40,000 Sq. Ft. 5-Story Art Management / Gallery Space (“Starfire”) – Tax Map 1, Block D, Lots 9 & 10:

Eric Allyn and Joe Rosillo of A & R Architects and Will Gartley of Gartley & Dorsky Engineering & Surveying represented the applicant. Architect Rosillo said the submittal was complete and met the architectural standards.

Mr. Gartley read aloud the list of items submitted for the application. He said the Site Plan showed the City's latest Winter St. updated design. The south side of the building had the traditional curb, while the north sidewalk had a flush curb. The utility and storm water upgrades were complete. Overhead electrical lines (shown in yellow on the plan) would be removed and underground lines (shown in green) would replace them.

There would be a ROW between the Dowling-Walsh Gallery and the new building, over which CMP would have an easement to a transformer. Drainage would be provided in the ROW by grading and 2 catch basins. There would be 4 parking spaces, including 1 handicap, on the ground floor. The main public entrance would be off the front and sidewalk on Winter St. The walkway would start at 3' wide and

increase to 5' wide due to irregularities of the property. The planters in front of the building had been moved to match the configuration at CMCA across the street.

In response to a question from the Chair, Mr. Allyn said the length of the building would be 105'. Mr. Laustsen asked why the sidewalk was flush and Mr. Gartley responded that it had been designed by Mitchell Glaser to be more pedestrian-friendly and to allow room for vehicles to pull over and pass. Mr. Allyn noted that the planter curbs were raised.

Mr. Allyn said this was a unique contemporary structure, so he wanted to show how it met the Standards item by item. Toward this end, he had provided three booklets: 1) Architectural Standards, 2) Responses to Downtown (DT) & Tillson Avenue Overlay Zone Standards, and 3) Drawings and Renderings.

Referring to and displaying slides from booklets 1 & 2, Mr. Allyn began the Standards review by discussing the street and sidewalk orientation. He said the city sidewalk was 8'6" wide, but the applicant had increased this to 10'1" directly in front of the Starfire building. Mr. Allyn went on to discuss the elements in the order in which they appeared in the ordinance. He mentioned the horizontal expression lines above the 1st floor and double cornices at the 5th floor and roof levels. Designer Allyn projected slides of architectural details, explaining how each met the Standards, as well as displaying similar details on existing buildings in the DT district. Ms. vanVuuren asked that the booklets be updated to say exactly how each standard had been met, including height measurements so that information would be available in the future. In response to a question from Ms. vanVuuren concerning the building height, Mr. Allyn said it was 61' 8" to the main roof and the total height was 75'. He confirmed there was no habitable space between those two heights.

Chair Laustsen asked about the story expression lines and Mr. Allyn responded that they were designated in his drawing by red lines. When discussing vertical elements, Mr. Allyn said Ms. vanVuuren's assertion at the previous meeting that vertical elements might need to go from the bottom to the top of the building was not indicated anywhere in the Standards. He showed examples of other Downtown buildings where the vertical elements did not continue up to include all floors.

Mr. Allyn continued on to an explanation of the relationship of dimensions and the proportional relationships throughout the design. When Mr. Laustsen asked whether reflective glass was used elsewhere in Rockland, Mr. Allyn said it was not; however, he stated that the building used other exterior materials that were suggested in the ordinance. He said there was no indication in the ordinance that new materials could not be used. He read from the 2011 waterfront redevelopment plan that "the city should consider less traditional materials: glass curtain walls and a variety of non-reflective metals are increasingly used in downtown redevelopment."

Mr. Allyn said the glass panels, called a "glass curtain wall", used on Starfire's exterior were present on many urban structures. He provided a sample of the glass for the PB to examine. He said such panels diminished the intensity of the reflected sun by approximately 50%. In regards to "reflectivity of the glass", Mr. Allyn said this was already occurring naturally on Main St. and showed street scenes reflected in local store windows. Chair Laustsen commented that it was not happening in those locations for three complete stories.

Mr. Allyn said the recently approved CMCA building and the 250 Main St. hotel also had glass curtain walls. Mr. Laustsen said no one had told the PB that those buildings incorporated glass curtain walls and Mr. Root pointed out that those examples used transparent glass. Ms. vanVuuren said the glass curtain wall on the CMCA building was only one story and was only at the ground level. She said the zoning was all about a balance between the modern and the historic and the Starfire plan proposed a very different proportional relationship. Ms. vanVuuren said Mr. Allyn had not addressed the minimal Architectural Design Standards in the Performance Standards.

Going back a few slides, Mr. Allyn said he was incorporating some very distinct elements that were pre-existing on Main St. and related back to the examples he had displayed. He said incorporating direct influences from Main St. perhaps made the Starfire building more of a balance than CMCA, which was almost wholly contemporary. He declared that his design displayed balance and incorporated the historic

and the more modern, which the ordinance suggested was completely acceptable. Chair Laustsen said that CMCA had, in his opinion, met the ordinance 100%.

Continuing on to vertical elements, Mr. Allyn said the ordinance stated that buildings of more than 75' fronting on a public street shall incorporate vertical elements in their façade to simulate smaller scale development. Ms. vanVuuren said the ordinance continued on to say the intention was to make the building feel like a smaller development. Mr. Allyn said Starfire's façade was broken into three different sections and explained what they were. Ms. vanVuuren said Mr. Allyn was talking about the street level, whereas she interpreted the zoning as talking about the whole façade. In the buildings referenced by the ordinance, pre-1941 between Park and Lindsey Streets, the stories were delineated and there was not one solid element, no matter what material was used. There should not be a wall more than 10' long, which was where windows came in, she said. Ms. vanVuuren did not feel that one narrow strip of windows met the ordinance requirements.

Mr. Allyn continued his explanation of how the vertical elements separated into smaller scale development. The façade was one wall and the ordinance said there must be windows within 10' of each other as measured in length across the building; however, Mr. Allyn said, those windows did not have to be within 10' on the height of the building. Mr. Allyn quoted the ordinance as saying buildings "must contain transparent windows on each floor" and said Starfire's design met that exactly. Mr. Laustsen read from the ordinance that buildings "may not have blank walls of more than 10' ". In response, Mr. Allyn showed the long blank wall of the CMCA building. Ms. vanVuuren said she would like an interpretation of this from the City Attorney because she felt the designer had gone further than the ordinance.

Mr. Allyn said lighting on the building would be at the entrances only. The mechanicals were on the roof, completely buffered from the edges of the building. When Chair Laustsen asked if there would be sound insulation for the HVAC, CEO Root said he would obtain noise information.

The east side of the building would have aluminum siding with a muted grey enameled finish. The 5th floor would have cedar wood plank siding with a rain screen behind it, as would the back of the building. Mr. Allyn gave a brief description of the transparent glass wall on the south side and its effect on the inside of the building.

CEO Root asked about loading and unloading. He was told that box trucks and vans would come up the ROW and back into the building to a receiving area, which was double-secured. From there, unloaded cargo could go via freight elevator to the higher stories for work or storage. There would be no semis or tractor trailers making deliveries, though large items could be delivered through the gallery from the street.

Mr. Allyn said windows going around the building corner facing Main St. would help draw people from Main St. down Winter St. He described the mirrored building surface as a tool to make the building less imposing and help it blend into its surroundings.

The PB reviewed the Elements of the Site Plan. The proposed ROW easement for CMP would be for purposes of access to a transformer. The strip of land between Starfire and Aurora was a ROW, also. The Chair asked that the CMP easement be shown on the plan. He also asked for renderings of the three sides of the building not facing onto Winter St., the CMP easement, and the buffer between the residential and commercial lots. In addition, Mr. Laustsen wanted fact sheets on the glass wall material and to see multi-story photos of the glass walls.

ACTION: Mr. Bodine made a motion to accept the application as complete.
Carried 3-0-0

A Public Hearing was scheduled for October 20.

Other Business:

The Planning Board thanked Asst. Code Officer David Kalloch, upon his retirement, for all of his hard work serving both the City and the Planning Board over the past decades.

Adjournment:

ACTION: Ms. vanVuuren made a motion to adjourn the meeting at 8:30 P.M.
Carried 3-0-0

Respectfully submitted,

Deborah Sealey