

Approved As Amended
PLANNING COMMISSION MINUTES
January 6, 2016
7:00 PM
JamestownTown Hall
93 Narragansett Ave.

I. Call to Order and Roll Call

The meeting was called to order and the following members were present:

Duncan Pendlebury – Vice Chair	Rosemary Enright – Secretary
Mick Cochran	Bernie Pfeiffer

Also present:

Lisa Bryer, AICP – Town Planner
Wyatt Brochu – Town Solicitor
Cinthia Reppe – Planning Assistant
Christian Infantalino - Attorney
Douglas DeSimone – Douglas Properties
David Presbrey – Architect
Matt Cotta – American Engineering
Donald Powers – Union Studios, Architect
Eric Busch – Rustpoint Advisory
Brenda Hanna stenographer
Catherine Maxwell
Carolyn Rufo
Bob Trout
Michael Swistak
Michael Smith

II. Approval of Minutes December 2, 2015

A motion was made by Commissioner Cochran and seconded by Commissioner Enright to accept the minutes as written. So unanimously voted.

A motion was made by Commissioner Enright and seconded by Commissioner Cochran for the Planning Commission to sit as the local review board. So unanimously voted.

A motion was made by Commissioner Cochran and seconded by Commissioner Enright to open the Public Hearing. So unanimously voted.

III. Old Business

The Planning Commission Sitting as the Local Review Board pursuant to RIGL 45-53 Low and Moderate Income Housing Act

Master Plan Informational Meeting

1. Jamestown Village Condominiums, Property Owner: Holy Ghost Society, Applicant: Douglas Enterprises, LTD., A.P. 8 Lot 79, 138 Narragansett Avenue, Application for Major Land Development Project , 16 Units (4 income restricted Low-Moderate Income units), 2 buildings, Multi-Family Development Project proposal, Comprehensive Permit per Zoning Article 17, Zoning Variances and Special Use Permit.

Commissioner Pendlebury reviewed what will be done at this public hearing. Town Planner Lisa Bryer stated we have hired 2 consultants Don Powers from Union Studios for architectural review and Eric Busch from Rustpoint Advisory LLC. This has been duly advertised and abutter notification has been met.

Commissioner Pendlebury stated the applicant Douglas Enterprises, LTD's experts will make each a presentation after each expert has presented at that time the local review board will ask questions and the public can then comment, this may take 2 nights.

Attorney Christian Infantolino attorney for the applicant and gave an update of what this application is for the audience. The site proposed is the former PAC site.

Attorney Infantolino listed the variances and special use permits they will be asking for. Mr. Infantolino also named the experts that will be testifying for Douglas Enterprises, LTD.

Joseph D Lombardo, Land Use Planning Consultant
Dan Cotta, American Engineering
George Gifford, The Gifford Design Group, Landscape Architect
Mr. Paul Bannon, RAB Professional Engineers, Inc. P.E. Transportation Planning

A motion was made by Commissioner Enright and seconded by Commissioner Cochran to accept Mr. Lombardo as an expert witness.

Mr. Lombardo introduced himself and gave his professional background information. He was sworn in to testify as an expert.

Mr. Lombardo gave his opinion based on per person capita and impact to the town, he also stated he relies heavily on the census information and town budget data. He figured 1.8 persons per household according to the census information.

The municipal and school budget, and Police, Fire and EMS would be impacted. The cost per student is relatively high but that is because of the relatively low number of people for Jamestown. These are 1 & 2 bedroom units He went over how he arrived at his figures. He is

expecting 31 residents and 1 would be a school age child. There is a strong likelihood that these may be seasonal units. He got projections from DeSimone of what the market rate units would be and the affordable rate which is dictated by the state.

Commissioner Pendlebury asked about the census information and is the 1.8 influenced by owner vs. renters? No it is not. There were no questions from audience.

Paul Bannon Traffic Engineer was sworn in by Brenda Hanna stenographer.

Mr. Bannon president at RAB Engineering gave his background and resume to the Planning Commission.

A motion to accept Mr. Bannon as an expert witness was made by Commissioner Enright and seconded by Commissioner Cochran. So unanimously voted.

Mr. Bannon did a traffic impact study and they reviewed site plans and observed traffic operations. They also did a traffic count in a 24 hour period. This is a predominately residential area. They did the traffic counts in October 2015. School time from 2-3 was the busiest with 204 cars being observed. The future condition with this proposal will generate 7 trips in morning and 9 in the evening. Narragansett Ave will handle this with no problem the traffic will not have a detrimental effect on public health and safety.

Commissioner Enright asked in terms of using the October figures the traffic in that area is busier in the summer months. They figured 25% more in the summer. Just to clarify for everyone these are trips per hour stated Commissioner Pendlebury and also based on the type of land use which is condominium.

Commissioner Cochran asked when you calculate the averages for Narragansett Ave. and that particular part with the four corners he did calculate those numbers based on that.

Catherine Maxwell – 170 Narragansett Ave. Jamestown - She thinks the total number of cars seems correct and a point of clarification to the scope of the analysis it does not look at pedestrian or bicycle traffic. Bicycle traffic in that area is quite heavy because of school children. The public safety official has asked for a Pemberton Ave. exit too. And the applicant is agreeable to this. This issue came up at a TRC meeting and it was brought up by police and fire and they would like a second access of exit only onto Pemberton Ave. Enright in terms of pedestrian access one of our consultants has asked about it and the site engineer can talk about this. Their concerns first then ours.

Dan Cotta American Engineering was sworn in by Brenda Hanna, stenographer.

Dan Cotta has previously been approved by this board.

Mr. Cotta explained the site from an engineering standpoint as he has done previously. A discussion ensued about storm drains and where they are located in the street.

Carolyn Rufo- 148 Narragansett Ave.- she lives on the corner of Lawn and Narragansett. There is a river down Narragansett Ave and Lawn Ave. when it rains. Are you saying less water will come off the site and where will it impact, DOT is constantly there to get the sand out of the drains, Cotta said we cannot fix the problem on Narragansett Ave. but it will be less.

Is the town aware of this? Maybe a complaint brought to someone else she thinks it is all coming to Narragansett Ave and she hopes its less.

Commissioner Pendlebury said is the river in front of this site and it comes down to the corner of Lawn Ave. If Mr. Gray is aware of it that is a good thing.

Bob Trout - 14 Lawn Ave.- Lawn Ave is like the Mississippi at times and it has not changed in 25 years, he drives by Narragansett Ave and it is minimal compared to Lawn Ave he thinks it will be a help with the project.

Mike Swistak - 143 Narragansett – In earlier sessions there was talk of cisterns to capture the runoff? No they will not be requiring them.

Flood Zone A does it encroach the front of the property? Do you have to build above? So the edge of the zone will be where the building footprint is? Naturally it has to be above will it be a little taller then what is shown on the plans. The flood plane is about 1 foot deep. You have to take in consideration where the edge of the zone is. These elevations may need to be raised then Mr. Swistak said.

Commissioner Pendlebury asked what would be the grade of the floodwater?Mike Smith said it is 16 feet above MLW He explained the flood zones. What is the first floor grade?

Swistak asked will the elevation certificate be available and a requirement? It should be noted and this is part of a building permit.

George H. Gifford - Gifford Design Group was sworn in by Brenda Hanna

He has previously been accepted as an expert witness.

The engineer did a good job at explaining the current impervious site and he shows on his plan the additional greenspace that will be added. In late October Mr. DeSimone had a meeting with the neighbors who have asked about incorporating some sort of vegetative barrier along the west property line. They have agreed to that and in addition he put some street trees along Pemberton Ave. A minor challenge he said because there was not enough room to put street trees, the existing sidewalk that would be place there once all the pavement was removed it would have to be on private property. A curved sidewalk is proposed. One of the comments at the public meeting addressed the idea of creating a gathering space a sitting area, one abutter said it might be too successful and too much gathering will go on there. Center of the parking lot is good location for a shade tree. The privet hedge is not owned by this property. Norway maple he wants to keep but it is unfortunately in a state of disrepair. It will be removed from the east property line and it will be replaced by an evergreen hedge. The European Beech they will try to preserve.

Ms. Bryer said we received correspondence from abutter requesting 3 trees and a fence.

Mr. Gifford addressed the evergreen hedge he refers to it as a green wall they are more effective for creating a screen then a fence (softer texture) He prefers to let the evergreens along the property line additionally this spot along western property line does not provide much lateral space if wetry to tuck 3 large shade trees along building he would be concerned about the growth affecting the building and additional shade to the evergreens that would cause them to thin out.

Commissioner Pendlebury asked "What are you proposing for the evergreens?" They are proposing Arborvitae's which are dense to the base and we don't want it to take up lateral and not encroach it would be an arborvitae the giant is much more tolerant and the deer do not like them as much. Upright Ewe but they grow slowly compared to the arborvitae.

Commissioner Cochran asked about the number of big trees along the driveway they may have to go to something else in a shaded area. He wants to get past the concept stage. Is the client going to maintain both sides of the plants? He cannot go onto private property, Mr. DeSimone said. Commissioner Enright asked if they have a maximum height? 6 or 7 feet is what the height is. It is not appropriate to place them close together. Initially there will be clear spots in the gaps.

Katherine Maxwell – she is concerned about a screen of the view of the parking on the Narragansett Ave entrance the one aspect lacking is the Narragansett Ave entrance the visual impact will be of parked cars. She thinks additional landscaping on Narragansett Ave. It looks like it is there.

Don Powers, Architect, Union Studios was sworn in.
Commissioner Enright made a motion seconded by Commissioner Cochran to accept Mr. Powers as an expert witness. So unanimously voted.

Donald Powers - 71 Grinnell St. - he was asked to provide peer review comments. Mr. Powers is also a resident of Jamestown. His firm prepared the design guidelines that Jamestown Planning Department uses and it is traditional patterns most lots here have hedges fences for lot lines. He showed in his drawing a boundary with green and taking that across the Narragansett Ave. side. That would screen the parking. They recommended that building A continue the sidewalk to Pemberton Ave. They also propose a genuine pedestrian entry onto Pemberton Ave. It is reasonable that this will be people walking too. This is an element from an urban design point of view additional egress onto Pemberton but it disperses the car traffic and finally a matter of aesthetics they take a conservative approach he does not care for the serpentine sidewalk. In general they agree with how the buildings are oriented no large parking fields it is appropriately faced to the streets. Later on there will be comments about the architecture itself.

David Presbrey with David Presbrey Architects was sworn in.
He introduced himself to the Planning Commission with his background. A motion to accept Mr. Presbrey as an expert witness was made by Commissioner Cochran and seconded by Commissioner Enright. So unanimously voted.

The initial application the building has been shrunk from the original proposal but not since the application that was presented on Nov 16th. A discussion ensued regarding how many affordable units there will be in each building and what the make-up of the buildings will be. There are 3 affordable units in building B and 1 in building A. The design of the roof line was discussed after a question from Commissioner Cochran. This was one of Union Studios comments. At the TRC we discussed the possibility of 2 twos and 2 ones. Doug DeSimone said he likes his buildings entry ways but if the Planning Commission finds that they want another 2 bedroom unit it can be done. The planning Commission and Mr. Presbrey discussed the floor plans.

Commissioner Pendlebury said the mix of bedrooms for the affordable rate matches the marketable rate he says and he would like to see more 2 bedrooms. Ms. Bryer said she wants to read into the record that The project was reviewed by the AHC and they made two motions one of them making more 2 bedrooms.

Catherine Maxwell – She thinks this is a very attractive building. She is a planner and also a neighbor. She reviewed the Comp Plan and the Affordable Housing plan we need to provide 150 more affordable houses. She thinks this site is great for affordable housing and also said she thinks more 2 bedrooms are much better for Jamestown than the 1 bedrooms this site is within minutes of both schools, library, playground, shopping and the beach. Do not strictly reduce the opportunities for families. This offers an opportunity for affordable units. Commissioner Pendlebury asked Don Powers to go over his review of the buildings.

Before he makes specifics he said his general opinion is it is an appropriate style and completely consistent of the other buildings and styles in Jamestown. He only has a few suggestions for tweaks. Consider a technique that creates more of a consistent portion by adding panels to the windows so they look more consistent. Central gable is undersized and the peak should be added in the front of back building. Eave details should be aligned. Minor comments to building B.

Commissioner Pendlebury said at one time we talked about a porch on the building that is close to Narragansett Ave. and trying a balcony and then tying a porch into it. Minor comments about alignment that sometimes when they are computer generated drawings the windows don't line up. Mr. Powers thinks that the buildings themselves are a great design. His comments on the site plan to mirror this building on the bay on Pemberton, it is a minor issue and a matter of mirroring the building he personally would do it. Mr. Presbrey agreed but the parking could be an issue.

Commissioner Pendlebury asked if your comments are implemented would it bring the building more into the spirit of our design guidelines for the village? Certainly but this is good recognition of all the principals of the general guidelines. The guidelines are just that guidelines. Mr. Powers said this is a good effort to bring this into traditional language.

Christian Infantolino said that Mr. Ed Pimentel was unavailable for this meeting. The applicant asked if he can present at the next meeting Mr. Infantolino also asked that their entire application be admitted as exhibits. Commissioner Pendlebury would like the applicant to provide a list of the exhibits. Infantolino does not have another witness for today.

Commissioner Pendlebury asked if the relief requested on 12/9/15 “is this the relief you are still asking for?” We need this information before the next meeting. The applicant is required to present a proforma of the costs and the Planning Commission and town hired Mr. Busch to comment on it to be sure that it balances with the overall requirements and construction costs.

Mr. Eric Busch was sworn in.

He gave the Planning Commission and the audience his background information.

He is our expert so no motion is needed.

Mr. Busch said he thinks in general he was looking at reasonable costs. He found the pro forma is very reasonable and thorough. He at the request of the commission looked at hard and soft costs and benchmarking. When bedrooms are added it may change the numbers.

Commissioner Pendlebury said it is all in the proforma, at the end of the day the developer can make adjustments in order to balance it. There would be a detriment to the pro forma if you ask for all 2 bedrooms for the affordable units as you make the 2 bedrooms affordable It would be the additional cost of the 2 bedrooms.

Catherine Maxwell – asked what kind of income limitation would apply?

Mr. Busch read from the 2015 HUD guidelines.

Mr. Douglas DeSimone - 25 Buckell Cove Narragansett was sworn in.

He does not believe he can do all 2's, if the board would like he can do 3- 2s and 1- 1. He can do it and not have it significantly impact his proforma.

Commissioner Pendlebury would like these things to be formally addressed at the next meeting. The change in the 2 bedrooms correct me if I am wrong but it is entirely within your province to say how you want it. Mr. DeSimone does not know if once the hearing has been opened can he amend his application conditions are typically imposed. This process they have tried their best to work with all the neighbors. Mr. DeSimone said the comment for the fence he does not agree with, everything else the neighbors have said he is in agreement.

A motion was made by Commissioner Cochran and seconded by Commissioner Enright to continue the public hearing to January 20th2016 at 7:00 p.m. So unanimously voted.

The applicant asked if they need their professionals back for the next meeting. No he was answered.

A motion to close the public hearing was made by Commissioner Cochran and seconded by Commissioner Enright. So unanimously voted.

Town Planner Lisa Bryer discussed a future agenda item, she has been working with the owner of the mall building who has been doing research for development to find appropriate use they are submitting an application to EDC to create micro flex units in rear and retail in front and having the town help out with proposals for the building. She would like to be on the next available agenda.

IV. Adjournment

A motion to adjourn was made at 9:35 by Commissioner Enright and seconded by Commissioner Cochran. So unanimously voted.

Attest:

Cynthia L. Reppe

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This meeting was recorded